TRANSFERS AND THE PRIVATE LIVES OF PUBLIC SERVANTS IN JAPAN:

TEACHERS IN NAGASAKI'S OUTER ISLANDS

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Women's workforce participation has been rising in advanced capitalist countries over the past decades, leading to a question about whether concepts of gender and work are changing. Answering the question is important, because that rise has been associated with a drop in marriage and birth rates, worrying governments concerned about who will pay into social security, replace retirees, do military service, etc. The theory linking these trends is that "traditional" gender concepts (e.g., women as the primary homemakers) hamper women's ability to succeed at work.

To address this question I researched public school teachers in Nagasaki, Japan. Men and women teachers work under equal conditions, including the obligation to accept relocations several times during their careers. Relocations challenge teachers' work and family arrangements. Studying how teachers have dealt with them should reveal changes in concepts of work and gender.

Through ethnographic fieldwork (2003-2006) in Nagasaki's outer islands and archival research, I find that even though men and women teachers have long been asked to perform the same duties in terms of teaching courses, leading homerooms, serving on committees, interacting with parents, and accepting transfers and relocations, they respond to this "on-paper" gender-blind work environment in a way which reflects "traditional" gender concepts. Although both choose to

relocate alone rather than disrupt a child's education or a parent's elder care, women feel their absence from the home is a burden on others, so tend to race home often, whereas men feel their presence in the home is disruptive to others, so tend to "tough it out" without returning much. And if the family is threatened by the parents' absence from home due to work, the woman is the one expected to quit. "Gender-blind" policies permit men and women to combine work and family, but men's and women's gender concepts continue to shape how they balance these sometimes competing commitments and goals.

These findings show that equalizing workforce participation does not lead to changes in concepts of work and gender, nor to a diminishment of gender's significance, even when work policies are "gender-blind." Culture can persist despite social and legal changes.

Dedication

To my wife, Sachiyo; my daughter, Gwendolyn Miki; my son, Spencer Eitatsu; and the other women and men in my life who have helped me get this far.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of figures

Acknowledgements

Writing this anthropology dissertation has been one of the loneliest things I have ever done, and yet I have incurred so many debts to others along the way that it also seems like the largest team effort I have ever been involved in. Thanks are due to all these benefactors for their faith and their ongoing assistance. Although they are too numerous to mention and some cannot be thanked by name, I do wish to express my gratitude to them here.

Notes on Language and Common Abbreviations

Notes regarding the Japanese language, including names. Japanese language does not have tones like Chinese and so is a very easy language to pronounce for English speakers. When putting Japanese language into the Roman alphabet, I have chosen to follow the Hepburn system. Japanese vowels sound like Italian vowels: *Ave Maria* gives the sounds of *a*, *e*, and *i*; *Bruno* gives the sounds of *u* and *o*. As for diphthongs, when spoken slowly and carefully one pronounces each vowel separately, but in casual speech one might not catch the difference between, *e.g.*, *mai* and *mae*. In the Hepburn system, macrons signify double vowel sounds, so my major research site, 上五島, which would be spelled out in hiragana as かみごとう and in a one-to-one, non-macron Romanization would be written as *Kamigotou,* I will write as Kamigotō. For those unfamiliar with the Japanese language, it is important to remember that the macron means to hold the vowel sound twice as long; it does not represent the placement of accent or stress. "Salary-man" is put into Japanese as さらりいまん or *sararīman*; the accent is on the *sa*, not the *rī*. But when two of the same vowels appear together they should be sounded separately, because they belong to two different characters (as in ちいき or *chiiki,* where the two *i* sounds belong to two different characters: 地域). Note that the sound Hepburn Romanizes as *r* sounds somewhat more like *ld;* Japanese language does not have a direct equivalent to the English *l* or *r,* which is why Japanese sometimes have difficulty distinguishing the two when speaking or writing English.

Other methods of Romanization are possible. For my own use, I prefer to write out each *kana* without the use of macrons and in such a way as to distinguish ぢ and づ from じ and ず. In Hepburn, both are *ji* and *zu* respectively, which accurately represents that the pairs are pronounced similarly but masks their different "roots," making a dictionary search more time-consuming. Harz-Jordan Romanizes these as *di*/*du* and *zi*/*zu*, conforming to the Romanization of *da* and *do* vs. *za* and *zo,* which helpfully preserves the philological differentiation but which I find misleading when reading. I prefer a modification to the user-friendly Hepburn system: *dji*/*dzu* and *ji*/*zu.* Hence one of the Gotō islands, 小値賀, can be Romanized *Ojika* (Hepburn), *Odika* (Harz-Jordan), or *Odjika* (Connor). Because my preferences are the least standard, I will defer to Hepburn's Romanization, disambiguating where necessary by writing out the word in Japanese at its first occurrence.

Japanese personal names (except for in the Acknowledgements) are presented in typical Japanese order, with last name followed by first name. In order to help protect my interviewees' and informants' privacy, I have assigned them pseudonyms – first name only. With place names, I have decided to Romanize them consistently throughout, rather than decide which are well-known enough to go into print *sans* macron. Hence, I will write Tōkyō rather than Tokyo, Ōsaka rather than Osaka, and Kyūshū rather than Kyushu. (But 松浦 or まつうら will be Matsuura, *q.v.*)

Translation. Appendix B is a glossary of commonly used terms. I translated all Japanese materials myself, with occasional assistance from my wife, Sachiyo Funakoshi Connor, who is from Kamigotō and familiar with local dialects. I aimed to use the same translation for words and phrases across interviews. I tried to signal heavy use of dialect or casual speech by casual or colloquial English expressions and contractions, as appropriate, even though in some cases this fails to convey how unintelligible some of the dialect would be to Japanese-speakers acquainted only with Tōkyō dialect. Any errors in translation are mine.

Common abbreviations. I use the following abbreviations frequently throughout the dissertation: *Nag.* for "Nagasaki" when part of an organization's name, *Pref.* for "Prefecture"; *BOE* for "Board of Education"; *SHS* for "Senior High School" (grades 10-12); *JHS* for "Junior High School" (grades 7-9); and *ES* for "Elementary School" (grades 1-6). Others are identified in the text.

Citations. Works are cited author-date style. I cite my field notes using the format FN *yymmdd*, where FN is Field Notes, *yy* is the last two digits of the year (Western calendar), *mm* is the month 01-12, and *dd* is the date 01-31. So, FN 991012 would be October 12, 1999 and FN 040326 would be March 26, 2004.

Part I: Introduction and Overview

1. Introduction

Women's workforce participation has been rising in advanced capitalist countries over the past decades, leading to a question about whether concepts of gender and work are changing. Answering the question is important, because that rise has been associated with a drop in marriage and birth rates, worrying governments concerned about who will pay into social security, replace retirees, do military service, etc. The theory linking these trends is that "traditional" gender concepts (e.g., women as the primary homemakers) hamper women's ability to succeed at work.

To address this question I researched public school teachers in Nagasaki, Japan. Men and women teachers work under equal conditions, including the obligation to accept relocations several times during their careers. Relocations challenge teachers' work and family arrangements. Studying how teachers have dealt with them should reveal changes in concepts of work and gender.

Through ethnographic fieldwork (2003-2006) in Nagasaki's outer islands and archival research, I find that even though men and women teachers have long been asked to perform the same duties in terms of teaching courses, leading homerooms, serving on committees, interacting with parents, and accepting transfers and relocations, they respond to this "on-paper" gender-blind work environment in a way which reflects "traditional" gender concepts. Although both choose to relocate alone rather than disrupt a child's education or a parent's elder care, women feel their absence from the home is a burden on others, so tend to race home often, whereas men feel their presence in the home is disruptive to others, so tend to "tough it out" without returning much. And if the family is threatened by the parents' absence from home due to work, the woman is the one

expected to quit. "Gender-blind" policies permit men and women to combine work and family, but men's and women's gender concepts continue to shape how they balance these sometimes competing commitments and goals.

These findings show that equalizing workforce participation does not lead to changes in concepts of work and gender, nor to a diminishment of gender's significance, even when work policies are "gender-blind." Culture can persist despite social and legal changes.

1.1 The relationship between the rise in women working and population decline

Over the past fifty years in developed industrialized countries women's workforce participation has been increasing (OECD 2010). This rise in women's employment rates has been associated with a fall in the marriage rates, birth rates, and population (OECD 2010). These demographic trends are creating a worrisome situation for governments concerned about having enough young workers to pay into social security, take the jobs that older people can no longer do, join the armed forces, and so on, given the political and social difficulties associated with raising immigration rates. Understanding what might reverse these trends is of practical as well as theoretical interest.

These trends are explained as due to traditional gender roles – which give men the primary responsibility for breadwinning and women the primary responsibility for homemaking – making it hard for married working women to avoid responsibility for the home, a responsibility which may be rewarding in its own right but which undermines their ability to work the way they are expected or required to work by their employers, or the way they want to work to rise in their careers (Hochschild 1989, 1997). A woman's family responsibilities have often been permitted to disrupt

her work responsibilities, whereas a man's work responsibilities have been permitted to disrupt his family ones (Pleck 1977, Bielby 1992, Nippert-Eng 1996). Given that work is paid and homemaking not, women, like men, are motivated to devote less time to the "second shift," and some prefer to delay marriage until their careers are established, if not avoid it altogether.

If this explanation is correct, then the worrisome demographic trends will not stop unless women begin exiting the workforce, work better accommodates workers' family commitments, or men help shoulder homemaking responsibilities. But how likely are any of these outcomes? Some studies of the U.S.A. argue that gender is becoming less significant in the workplace (e.g., Blau, Brinton, and Grusky 2006; Frone, Russell, and Cooper 1992), but others point to the persistence of "traditional" gender ideology despite the increase in women's workforce participation (e.g., Keene and Quadagno 2004, England 2006, Hochschild 1989). Without a better understanding of women's and men's concepts of work and gender, we cannot sort out what courses of action, if any, might encourage women to marry earlier and/or have more children (Rosenfeld 1996).

1.2   Nagasaki public school teacher transfers as case study

The clearest understanding of what concepts men and women hold would come from contrasting those working in similar circumstances: Do the two hope for and expect the same things from work? Do they hold themselves, and are they held, to a similar standard – the "unmarked" male one which presumes complete availability for work? Rather than finding an organization where men and women work alongside each other and asking them these questions directly, I believe a deeper understanding can be gained by examining how they reason in situations where their work and family goals are in potential conflict – the stronger the better.

For those reasons, Japanese public school teachers in Nagasaki Prefecture provide an excellent case study population.

First, throughout the postwar era, Japanese society has been strongly ordered along "traditional" gender lines, with few careers open to women – usually low-status, casual tracks such as the "office ladies" who provide clerical support to the men in the management tracks (Ogasawara 1998). Women's workforce participation rate has been correspondingly low (Imamura 1996, Roberts 1996). This "traditional" gender allocation of labor is reflected in the curve for Japanese women's workforce participation by age, which has long been distinguished by a pronounced M-curve. The M-curve shows many women entering the workforce up through their early 20s, but then exiting the workforce in great numbers (some 20-30%) upon marriage or childbirth, with only a fraction returning (Roberts 1996:224-225). Some government policy, such as the tax code, actually discourages married women from working full-time (Brinton 1993:89n10, Rosenberger 1996). Some employers, too, encourage their male employees' wives to focus on homemaking, through generous dependents allowances and the like, the better to enable their husbands to devote themselves to work (Atsumi 1988, Rosenberger 1996, Becker 2005). Japanese men are notorious workaholics, known for their miniscule contributions to housework compared to men in peer countries, but their work schedules make it hard to do more (Creighton 1996:213, Rosenberger 1996:17, Levine 2005:363).

Second, despite this strong "traditional" divide, as in other advanced capitalist economies, women's labor force participation has been rising in Japan since the 1970s, with fewer exits and quicker and more frequent returns, softening the dip of the M-curve (OECD 2010, Statistics Bureau 2008, Roberts 1996:227, Holden 1983:41, Brinton 1993). Although the trend began earlier, as greater number of service jobs opened up for women, it was accelerated both by the passage and implementation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law in 1985-1986 (Creighton 1996,

5

Imamura 1996, Roberts 1996) and a decline in men's wages which motivated married women to (re-) enter the workforce to supplement lost household income.

Third, these demographic problems are statistically more pronounced in Japan than in many other such countries. The birthrate has been below replacement level since the 1970s (OECD 2010). This threatens the foundations of the economy and the budget for government services, is forcing Japan to open itself up to immigration against its will (Tsuda 2003), and creates unease about the geopolitical future. Together with the increase in lifespan, Japan is one of the fastest "graying" societies in the world, raising the question, Who will care for the elderly population when their time comes? The government has turned up the rhetorical heat on women, urging them to not delay marriage and to have larger families (Ivry 2009, Imamura 1996:4, Rosenberger 1996:17). So Japanese men and women decide their work-family problems in a context where their decisions are seen as having momentous implications.

Fourth, ideas about gender and work seem to be changing in Japan away from the "traditional" ideas that have so dominated the postwar era. Although some married women already had economic power of a sort at the beginning of the postwar era (seen in their control of the household budget, *cf.* Marra 1996), overall their power grew during the postwar decades (seen in their rise as a major consumer force, *cf.* Creighton 1996:216). Women pursued more higher education (even if they became overqualified for the work available to them as women). They began prizing "love marriage" over "arranged marriages" (Edwards 1989) and held ideal "companionship between the spouses" (Imamura 1996:3). Women grew increasingly discontent with "traditional" marriages to a successor, in which they would have to subject themselves to their husbands and husbands' mothers (Knight 1995; Traphagan 2000a, 2003). Some women went so far as to rule out marriage to an "average" Japanese man – viewed as unromantic, childish, selfish, or worse – in favor of either an "exceptional" Japanese man or a naturally superior white foreign man (Kelsky 2001:151-

156). In response to the threat of a "bride famine," some husbands were happy to compromise in order to marry or to keep good relations with their wives (Knight 1995; Traphagan 2000a, 2003), even if they still asked to put on a front of masculine precedence (Salamon 1986 [1975], Lebra 1984:248, *cf.* Marra 1996).

Even some workaholic men seemed to long for more time with their families, though the ones most able to do so were of lower rank or in a field defined more by technical expertise than by client and/or staff relations, and any man who pursued "my homism" risked being seen as a lightweight at work, or worse, by management and their peers (Atsumi 1975), just as women who worked through their marriageable age – whether married or not – invited judgment (Roberts 1996, Creighton 1996).

Fifth, relocation raises the issue of work-family balance and conflict to the fore, and thus is an excellent way to examine concepts of work and gender. Many studies (*e.g.* Becker 2005; Bielby and Bielby 1992; Gerstel and Gross 1987; Iwao, Saitō, and Fukutomi 1991; Shauman and Xie 1996) have emphasized how "traditional" gender ideology shapes the decisions about whether to accept a relocation as an employee and whether to move with a spouse who is relocated. Relocating for work epitomizes the sacrifice that employees are asked to make of their personal or private life for work. When freely accepted, relocation demonstrates commitment, loyalty, a customer service focus, and professionalism, traits particularly important in service-oriented careers where productivity and performance are hard to measure and evaluate (Lewis 2007, Wilensky 1964).

Transferring, and relocating due to transfer, is very common in Japan, as the next chapter indicates. The "salaryman" or white-collar salaried employee – the prototypical postwar Japanese worker, symbolically if not statistically typical (Imamura 1996:2, Roberson 1998) – acquiesces to transfers. The Japanese employee does so despite the common and special difficulties transfer-related relocations may cause. It is the existence of these difficulties that has been cited as

7

justification for barring Japanese women from entering management tracks at the larger firms – the women are presumed unable to accept a transfer due to other commitments, *viz.* family and how a transfer would disrupt a woman's ability to care for that family (Kelsky 2001:91, Lam 1993:204). For the most part, Japanese women were either not transferred at all or transferred only among posts within commuting distance of each other – perhaps even the same building (Roberts 1996). So studies of transferring led to data from husbands and wives that were dissimilar: the man was the transferee, the woman was the follower or stayer, often no more than part-time employed.

Public school teaching, however, is one of the few middle-class salaried professions that have long been open to both women and men (*cf.* Creighton 1996:193, 215). It is marked by equality in pay, job requirements, and the expectation of devotion to career typical of private sector firms. This includes the expectation that teachers will accept transfers to any school in the prefecture.

In Nagasaki Prefecture, which has many outer islands – a somewhat stiff term designating islands not joined by bridge to the mainland or main island (in this case, Kyūshū) – teachers can expect several relocations over the course of their career. This is because the policy is compulsory – teachers must accept the transfer they are given or resign – and because the policy specifies that all teachers must work in the prefecture's outer islands, mainland cities, and mainland rural and suburban areas for a minimum number of years (4-6 depending on type of school). The fact that teachers get transferred throughout their careers means that teachers can provide rich data about how transfers affected them at various stages of their lifecourse. And the fact that men and women have been working alongside each other as teachers throughout the postwar period gives us abundant historical data on how men and women employees dealt with work-family conflicts. If there are any patterns or conceptual changes they will show up.

1.3   Research questions and methods

The aim of my research is to use transfers and relocations as a lens to understand the

concepts men and women teachers have regarding work and gender, and how they use these

concepts to manage the challenges posed by relocations. The main questions I had were:

(1) What was the origin of the compulsory transfer policy? Has teachers' thinking
about the policy changed since its introduction?

(2) Given that relocations are potentially so disruptive to a teacher's family life, why
do teachers acquiesce to a policy of compulsory transfers? Is this an instance of
consent, hegemony, or something else? What do they see as the policy's good
and bad aspects, and would they prefer to see it changed?

(3) Are there any gender differences in how teachers view the compulsory transfer
policy, in the challenges it creates for them, or in how they deal with those
challenges? What do their reasoning and responses reveal about their concepts
of work and gender?

I based my study in the Kamigotō Islands because the islands saw the heaviest turnover of

staff, maximizing my chances of observing relocations and meeting teachers separated from their

spouses and/or children by transfers (this state of separation is called *tanshin fu'nin*). Primary data for

this dissertation was collected in 2003-2006 from over fifty semi-structured interviews with current

and former teachers, field and participant observation in and around schools during transfer time,

and surveys, as well as Japanese fiction and non-fiction books, newspapers, newsletters, academic

journals, policy statements, pamphlets, government records and statistical reports, and web sites. I

also relied on materials gathered and contacts and memories made during 1994-1997, when I

worked as an Assistant Language Teacher in the public schools of Nagasaki's Kamigotō Islands.

For a detailed discussion of my research methods, see Appendix A.

1.4   Findings

Even though men and women teachers have long been asked to perform the same duties in terms of teaching courses, leading homerooms, serving on committees, interacting with parents, and accepting transfers and relocations, they respond to this "on-paper" gender-blind work environment in a way which reflects "traditional" gender concepts. For example, although both choose to relocate alone rather than disrupt a child's education or a parent's elder care, women feel their absence from the home is a burden on others, so tend to race home often, whereas men feel their presence in the home is disruptive to others, so tend to "tough it out" without returning much. And if the family is threatened by the parents' absence from home due to work, the woman is the one expected to quit. "Gender-blind" policies permit men and women to combine work and family, but men's and women's gender concepts continue to shape how they balance these sometimes competing commitments and goals.

These findings show that equalizing workforce participation does not lead to changes in concepts of work and gender, nor to a diminishment of gender's significance, even when work policies are "gender-blind." Culture can persist despite social and legal changes.

1.5   Chapter overview

This study is divided into four parts. *Part I: Introduction and Overview* contains this chapter and concludes with a short chapter designed to convey a sense of how large-scale a social phenomenon transferring is in Japan.

Part II: Creating and Naturalizing the Compulsory Transfer System (1955-1984) draws on historical data and secondary sources to describe how public school teachers around the country became subject to a system of compulsory transfers during the late Shōwa Era, and explains why Nagasaki Prefecture was one of the first prefectures where this took place.

Chapter 3, "Compulsory Transfers as a Part of the Recentralization of the Education System," locates transfers in the wider Japanese postwar political context. It shows how, beginning in the mid 1970s, public school teachers in prefectures around Japan lost the right to refuse a transfer in the context of a struggle between the unions, which favored a decentralized, democratic, and locally-controlled school system, to the Ministry of Education, which favored a centralized, hierarchic, and top-down controlled one.

Chapter 4, "The Creation of Nagasaki's Compulsory Wide Area Exchange Transfer System," shows how the Nagasaki Prefecture Board of Education in 1976-1977 used persistent staffing imbalances between the outer islands and the mainland along with union excesses to paint union activists as irrational and selfish and drive through an elaborate and compulsory system of transfers which obliged teachers to work in different regions of the prefecture over the course of their career.

Although this narrative highlights the strategic advantages the Board of Education had, I argue that the most significant factor was that the change to a compulsory transfer system was supported by teachers languishing in the outer islands and other peripheral areas of the prefecture. The right-to-refuse system left these teachers trapped in undesirable or unworkable situations for an indeterminate amount of time because it favored incumbents. The compulsory system helped them because, by dislodging incumbents and limiting the length of time teachers had to spend in any post, it relieved their concerns over being trapped in unworkable situations.

Chapter 5, "Responses to Compulsory Transfers, 1977-84: Self-Sacrifice, Enthusiasm, and Apathy," confirms that at the heart of the debate over Nagasaki's transfer policy remained teachers'

concern about how to accommodate their work (or public) and family (or private) responsibilities. The local teacher unions argued that teachers were "not slaves" and that it would be better for the prefecture if teachers' work and personal lives were in alignment, in part because teachers would have the time to get to know and to involve themselves more deeply in their local communities. The Board of Education argued that teaching was not for the "selfish" and that if teachers' work and personal lives were in conflict then teachers would have to sacrifice the personal in order to put the needs of the public first. Cases from archival sources show that many teachers, male and female, had a sense of professionalism which drove them to do their best in their new posts, but also show that when circumstances made it possible, some teachers risked disappointing colleagues and even the students in order to go home regularly, and that it was becoming common in the 1980s for the Board of Education to favor women teachers' ability to care for the family when deciding transfers. With respect to gender, it is worth noting that although some of these responses were the same between men and women, many older female mainland teachers quit rather than relocate, and male rank-and-file teachers faced more scorn when they commuted home, putting family ahead of work.

Part III: Accommodating and Embracing the Compulsory Transfer System (1994-2005) draws mostly on my field research data and prior work experience in the public school system to describe how transfers and relocations can throw teachers' desires for their careers and for their family into conflict, revealing their actions to be shaped by "traditional" concepts of gender and work, even as they demonstrate that men and women alike creatively avail themselves of available resources, be they family or technology, to enable them to continue to meet both work and family demands without having to give either up.

Chapters 6 and 7 discuss the positive aspects of compulsory transfers identified by teachers, and why, when asked to consider the alternative, teachers preferred having them to not having them.

Chapter 6, "Transfers and Professional Development: The Problem of Stagnation" discusses how teachers develop a "transferee consciousness" during the early parts of their careers, and come to appreciate that transfers help them develop into the kind of professionals they want to be. Men and women teachers alike aimed to become a "pro," a teacher skilled and flexible enough to teach any student well, regardless of that student's needs, someone with broad capability rather than a narrow specialist or, worse, someone who just mails it in, rather than "doing their best." In order to gain such capacity, teachers recognized that they must move to different social environments, working with different students and different colleagues. The reason Japanese teachers find it much more natural to enter new social environments in order to change rather than to change themselves individually *in situ* is, I argue, a reflection of the well-described "relational" understanding of the social world prominent in Japanese culture.

Chapter 7, "Transfers Alleviate Social Conflicts and Limits to Growth," discusses how teachers rely on the transfer system to remove them from situations of interpersonal conflict and tension, allowing the teachers to avoid the appearance of immaturity which comes with direct confrontation. As public servants, teachers are "public persons" and their behavior, 24 hours a day, is potentially subject to evaluation and commentary by the public they are to serve. Male and female teachers both spoke of their discomfort with this level of visibility and the criticism they sometimes faced. Transferring gave them the opportunity to escape these undesirable social settings. Knowing that they would transfer helped them to endure them with more magnanimity. Teachers eager to live up to their professional idea but anxious about making themselves vulnerable thereby could risk an intensive involvement because if things went sour, a transfer would eventually carry them away.

Chapter 8, "Sacrificing (For) Family: Filial Piety, Children's Needs, and Life Plans," describes family needs and desires which make relocations difficult for teachers. The factors result from concepts about the Japanese stem family, values of filial piety, and concern about children's entrance

13

exams and peer friendship formation make relocations difficult for families. I found that satisfying the needs of more vulnerable family members – children and parents – takes precedence over rigid adherence to "traditional" concepts of gender as they relate to family, and show teachers avail themselves of support from either the maternal or paternal side of the family. But in Chapter 10 I will explain how these strategies, too, reflect "traditional" gender concepts in their implementation.

Chapter 9, "The Decision-Making Process: Frontstage and Backstage," describes teachers' lack of trust in the formal process, centered on the submission of Request Forms, in securing a workable transfer outcome for themselves – workable in the sense that it allows them to keep working and keep meeting the needs of their family. Teachers instead put greater faith in connections and relationships, and try to appeal to others based on arguments and logics derived from "traditional" gender concepts. These logics are not in the Wide Area policy guidelines, which are gender-blind.

Chapter 10, "*Tanshin Fu'nin,* Gender, and the Relationship between Spouses," explains the pervasiveness of "traditional" gender roles in the postwar era, with men as the primary breadwinners and women as the primary homemakers. Even though the work policies are gender-blind, and there is a great deal of equality between male and female teachers, the environment still favors the "traditional" roles, making it easier for women to prioritize family concerns (and harder for men to do so) and easier for men to prioritize their careers (and harder for women to do so). Scholars such as Atsumi (1988) and Creighton (1996) have laid blame with the management for creating a sexist atmosphere. But I attribute the biased atmosphere in the school system mostly to the high stakes of transfer decisions, which motivates teachers to prioritize securing workable outcomes. Though the policy is gender-blind, many feel that arguments based on "traditional" gender roles are favored. When they strategize based on this perception, they sustain (or "reproduce" in the social sense) a "traditionally" gendered work climate. I also discuss the wider social and cultural context which

makes spousal separation in the face of an untimely transfer less painful, and the gendered response to such separations, which shows in its aims an "untraditional" flexibility focused on results, but in its means more "traditional" differentiation.

Chapter 11, "The Persistence of the Sacrifice-Selfish Frame," returns to the themes of Chapter 5, describing how public school teachers continue to face pressure to be involved in the life of the school district in which they work, despite their own desire to maintain a boundary between work and family more appropriate to their personal circumstance affected as it is by the compulsory transfer system. The urbanization and development of rural areas, including the outer islands, which proceeded through the 1990s and 2000s has made transfers to such areas less onerous on teachers and their families, as more of them can commute home more regularly. These and other changes have reduced the amount of time teachers must spend in the school district after hours, lowering the stakes of transfer decisions and beginning to allow teachers to more easily live according to more flexible understandings of gender and work. But their reduced presence in the school districts leaves them open to criticism from parents and others who hold teachers to an older, higher standard. This criticism occurs in a historical moment, the end of the Lost Decade, in which Japanese people were expressing great nostalgia for the hopefulness and the sense of community they attribute to the years of the postwar recovery. "Traditional" gender and work concepts are part of this nostalgia.

Part IV: Conclusion, containing the concluding chapter, Chapter 12, presents the main finding, that equalizing workforce participation does not lead to changes in concepts of work and gender, nor to a diminishment of gender's significance, even when work policies are "gender-blind." The significance of this for theorists and policy makers alike is that culture can persist despite social and legal changes, so culture warrants close attention. I close by discussing why the hegemony and resistance frameworks were insufficient and by presenting some ideas for future research into transfers and work-related mobility.

15

2. Transferring in Japan: An Overview

筑紫のきわみ、みちのおく、
海山とおく、へだつとも、
その真心は、へだてなく、
ひとつに尽せ、国のため。
稲垣千頴、蛍の光

In the farthest corner of Kyūshū –
Along some deep rural road –
In the middle of oceans or mountains –
However remote and apart we are,
Let our true hearts be never apart,
Let us work as one for the sake of our country.
Iwanagi Chikai, "Firefly's Light (Hotaru no Hikari)"

The poem "Firefly's Light" was set to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne" in the Meiji period.

Like "Auld Lang Syne," "Firefly's Light" is played and/or sung when an event is drawing to a close

– the end of the calendar year, the end of the school year, even the end of the business day at a

shopping centre. In the large ports of the Gotō Islands, one can hear this song played over the

intercom in late March when the ferry to the mainland is readying to carry away recent high school

graduates and teachers, police officers, and other employees of multi-sited organizations transferred

off-island. The melody is well known, though the words less so – particularly the third and fourth

stanzas, which were cut after the war due to their association with imperial expansion. Nevertheless

the third stanza, which I have translated above, captures what the Nagasaki Prefecture Board of

Education expects of and hopes for its teachers: a spirit of service and a pooling of efforts directed

towards the nation, no matter what far corner of it they work in.

Every year in Nagasaki, roughly 3,000 teachers and other school employees are transferred

between schools across the prefecture – both on mainland Kyūshū and in one of the prefecture's

seventy-three populated outer islands. This is one in six employees, meaning few schools do not

experience a transfer in a given year. Since 1977, teachers have been required to serve in each of

three areas – mainland urban, mainland suburban/rural, and outer island – for a minimum of four to

six years, and may remain in the same school for no longer than six or seven years. Teachers

average six or seven transfers before retirement, though administrators are moved more often than

rank-and-file employees and those in elementary schools (ESs) and junior high schools (JHSs) more

frequently than those in senior high schools (SHSs) (Stevenson, Lee, and Nerison-Low 1998:419).

With every teacher needing to work on an island before retirement but only 2,500 or so

island positions available, Nagasaki's islands experience a brisk, heavy turnover. To give a sense of

the scale: six years after I left my job at Kamigotō SHS, a full 96% of its staff of seventy employees

had either retired or transferred off Kamigotō to another school on Nagasaki's mainland. With all

this turnover, the end of each school year finds the island banquet halls and ports swollen with well-

wishers bidding adieu to those departing and welcoming those arriving (Figure 2-1).

I first encountered transfers while working as an assistant English teacher for public schools

in the Upper Gotō Islands (Kamigotō) as part of the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program.

Figure 2-1. Well-wishers gather to see off (*miokuri;* 見送り) a teacher who has been transferred from Kamigotō to mainland Kyūshū.
At the seeing-off, *Firefly's Light,* the school song, and cheers are heard, and well-wishers give the transferee bouquets of flowers and money presents (*o-senbetsu;* お餞別). Colored ribbons connect teachers, parents, students, and others on the wharf with the departing teacher, who is standing on the deck with his spouse. As the ferry pulls away, the ribbons spool out, making tangible their separation. As the ribbons flutter from the ship's railing, the two parties will continue to wave to each other until the ship can no longer be seen from the port. Photo by Blaine P. Connor, March 30, 2005.

I was struck at the time by the fact that teachers could not predict where or when they would be

transferred, and that transfers pulled them away from friends and treasured places. Tears were

commonplace at transfer time, particularly at the many farewell parties. So was frantic activity, as

teachers who were moving had two weeks in which to vacate one residence and find and move into

another. On the outer islands, where so many teachers are transferring to and from the mainland,

those teachers who are staying on the island form work-gangs to help their departing and arriving

colleagues pack, clean, and carry. They are frequently joined in this effort by parents and students.

2.1　Transferring as a common practice and major cultural force in Japan

Nagasaki's school system is not atypical in having transfers. In the entire national public

school system, between 100,000 and 125,000 employees are transferred each year. This represents

17% of all public school employees nationwide, though the percentage within each prefecture varies

between 10% and 22% depending on its personnel policy; Nagasaki is close to the mean/median

(Sawakawa and Kashiwai 1994). Not only teachers, but all public servants employed by prefectures

or the state are subject to transfer.

The practice of transferring is common in the private sector as well. In 2000, the Labor

Affairs Activities Research Institute (*Rōmu Kōsei Kenkyūsho*) did a survey of 300 top companies: 96%

of them had transfers (*Tenkin Famirī Shien Sentā* 2001:143). The Ministry of Labor reported that in

1998, 91% of companies with more than 1,000 employees had transfers (*Tenkin Famirī Shien Sentā*

2001:143). Transferring is a common method for Japanese employers to cross-train employees and

redeploy them to respond to changing conditions, and goes hand in hand with positions within large

organizations enjoying so-called "permanent employment" or "lifetime employment" (Cole 1971,

Dore 1989 [1973], Rohlen 1974, Rohlen 1983:174).

Transferring is a major social, economic, and cultural phenomenon in Japan. A Japanese

person who is not subject to transfer himself or herself is likely to have a friend or relative who is; to

have experienced the transfer of one or more of their teachers, postal workers, police officers, or

other public servants; to have learned about transferring through its use as a plot device in fiction,

television, or movies (*e.g.,* Genji 1965); and/or to have seen transfers written about in local

newspapers, which publish as front-page news the annual transfers of prefectural and municipal

public servants and sometimes also carry notices of major private sector personnel moves.

Transfers occasion farewell parties and presents as well as welcome parties and presents, and the

typical activities associated with moving: transportation and shipping (there are package deals),

changing one's legal residence at the municipal offices, entering into a new lease, changing utilities

and phone service, changing schools or day care arrangements, finding new doctors, and so on.

Etiquette guidebooks help employees give good speeches at transfer time and spell out the proper

amount for a gift to a transferring colleague (when I was in Japan, anywhere from US$30-$50 for

colleagues to US$100 for kin or a well-regarded junior). Word processing software contains

templates for transferees to print out thank-you/just arrived/please visit postcards to send to those

who saw them off. How-to books and internet-based groups are available to help transferees and

their wives – for these books are usually by and for wives – deal with the many aspects of

transferring when it entails the relocation of the husband alone or the whole family (Nomura 2001,

Okifuji 1991, *Raifu Karuchā Sentā* 1994, *Tenkin Famirī Shien Sentā* 2001).

2.2   Transferring and family separation

Although many employees need do no more than change their commutes when transferred,

the number who must relocate is significant. The Ministry of Labor says the percentage of

companies that have transfers in which changing residences is necessary was 20% in 1990 and 1994

but 28% in 1998 (*Tenkin Famirī Shien Sentā* 2001:143). A 2002 Japanese government survey (平成14年

就業構造基本調査結果) reports that of all those who had changed residence from the prior year, 13%,

or 925,900 individuals, gave "transfer" of themselves or someone in their family as the reason,

outpacing education and behind only marriage. (This outpaces Wiltshire's 1995:5-7 estimate based

only on older data of interdistrict transfer-related migrations in Japan.) In contrast, the number of

U.S. employees who relocated after a transfer in 2000 was roughly 800,000 (Shellenbarger 2000); the figure is for employees only, but not every employee is married, and the U.S. has more than twice the population and twenty-four times the area of Japan. Overall, although transfers are increasingly common worldwide in the public and private sectors, Japan outstrips other countries in the number of transfer-related relocations annually (Ntseane 2004:65-66).

How many teachers in the Japanese public school system relocate due to transfers each year? Based on data in Satake (1990: 347-348n4), I estimate the figure to be somewhere between 20,000 and 50,000 year. The upper limit of my estimate comes from the number of transfers between municipalities in the compulsory education (elementary and junior high school) system. That figure has held steady since the 1960s at between 46% and 55% (after a leap from 16.3% in 1958 to 48.8% in 1962). Pause and consider what this means: for at least forty years, roughly half of every teacher transfer in Japan has sent a teacher from a school in one city or town into a school in a different one. The lower limit of my estimate comes from the number of transfers into or out of an officially designated "remote area (*hekichi*)." Nagasaki Prefecture has a relatively higher proportion of transfers requiring relocations than other prefectures because of its many outer islands.

Transfers entailing relocation not only can separate friend from friend, but spouse from spouse and parent from child, as some take up their distant post alone, leaving behind loved ones. In Japanese this phenomenon is called *tanshin fu'nin;* 単身赴任; in English, *commuter marriages* or

22

commuter families. In 1986, there were 175,000 Japanese male employees living as *tanshin fu'nin*, with a great many of them working for Japan's largest employers: "On an average, 217 employees out of every company employing 5,000 or more were on tanshin-funin that year" (Hamada 1992:136).

Shellenbarger (2000) reports roughly 37% of U.S. employees who changed residences as a result of a transfer will quit within three years of the move. The rate is nowhere near as high in Japan. Part of the reason for the difference is surely the greater "traditional" gender division of labor in Japan (Atsumi 1988). The typical transferee is a Japanese man, because many Japanese employers have assumed that women will and/or should prioritize homemaking over breadwinning, and so women were frequently not hired for such jobs. To the extent that women in fact bear the brunt of this work – as is attested to by reports of the miniscule amount of time Japanese men spend on housework on average, for example – women's exclusion from such work makes them available to enable men to accept and endure relocations (Atsumi 1988, Iwao 1993).

This explains why men *can endure* relocations due to transfers, but it does not explain why they *do not oppose* the practice. For rather than oppose it, they seem to accept it as their duty. Atsumi reports, "Nearly half of the male employees surveyed nationwide in 1985-86 considered *tanshin funin* necessary and unavoidable for the sake of the company. The percentage of those who support such a practice is much higher for the middle-aged men among whom *tanshin funin* is most prevalent" (Atsumi 1988:61).

Atsumi argues that men and women face an environment of gender segregation along "traditional" lines fostered by the leading employers and abetted by the government as a way to extract more work from the core male employees. This environment obliges men and women to endure an arrangement neither may prefer (Atsumi 1988:60-61). Recent work by Becker (2005) on multinational companies helping the wives of employees join their husbands who have been transferred overseas to support and enable the husbands to work harder and be of more value to the companies lends support to the view that the gendering of transfers and other practices results from greedy employers looking to extract more value from their employees.

The argument from the perspective of the Japanese wife, then, must be that Japanese men endure transfers in particular and the arrangement that allows (forces) them to devote themselves full-time to work in general either because they cannot see any way to change it since the employers have too much interest in the status quo and too much power (Atsumi's and Iwao's sympathetic reading) or because the men like it for some reason – perhaps because doing well in a career and earning money are more socially valued things to do in capitalist or gender-biased societies, or give them the satisfaction that comes from successfully performing a widely held view of their gender roles. In either event, transfers would be particularly problematic for female employees.

Given the steady rise in women's workforce participation rates and more importantly the adoption of The Equal Employment Opportunity Law in 1986 (Atsumi 1988:55, Creighton

24

1996:195), more women are taking jobs which entail transfers and relocations. While there is some

evidence that women in elite careers accept transfers as required in order to have their careers (Lebra

1984:248), transfers are a part of a broad spectrum of jobs. For many employers, this will be a new

frontier. That is why studying the transfers of teachers is particularly useful. Looking at the

transfers and relocations of public school teachers in Nagasaki Prefecture gives us a rare chance to

look at how men and women alike have dealt with the resulting challenges to their work and family

arrangements over the several decades in which women's workforce participation rates have grown.

This keeps the questions of work and family in the same frame, rather than focusing exclusively on

one or the other domain based on whether one is studying men or women.

Will women be as accepting as men of the necessity of transfers? Studies of women and

work have noted that given the persistence of concepts of gender based on the "traditional" gender

allocation of labor, if women want to have full-time professional careers, they must either have a

"wife" of their own to help them meet "their" domestic responsibilities (Lebra 1984:247, Atsumi

1988:58, Iwao 1993, Hochschild 1989) or else delay or forego having a family. It is through these

carefully nurtured arrangements that a woman can pursue a career. Relocations, however, pull

women away from their networks of support, threatening their ability to satisfactorily meet both

work and family responsibilities in a more direct way than they do men, who under a "traditional"

gender allocation of labor can just "leave all that to the wife."

Given the importance to women of maintaining their networks of support, one would

hypothesize that women in particular could benefit from being able to refuse a transfer. Teachers

initially had that right, but began losing it during the 1970s. Part II, "Creating and Naturalizing the

Compulsory Transfer System (1955-1984)," describes how and why this right was lost.

Part II: Creating and Naturalizing the Compulsory Transfer System (1955-1984)

3. Compulsory Transfers as a Part of the Recentralization of the Education System

Public school teachers in most prefectures in Japan do not have the right to refuse a transfer issued by the Board of Education which employs them. This was not always the case. After the war, as part of the U.S. Occupation's 1947-1948 efforts to decentralize the Japanese education system and put it under democratic control, teachers were given the right to refuse a transfer – transfers were to be based on the person's "wishes" and/or "consent." Unions were allowed to form, and the unions jealously guarded teachers' rights to refuse a transfer.

Teachers began losing their right to refuse a transfer in the 1970s, but the groundwork for this was laid in 1956, after the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) first consolidated its power. At that time, teachers were reclassified as prefectural employees instead of municipal ones. When teachers were considered employees of a particular municipality, they were usually transferred just between schools within that municipality, or, in very rural areas, county. Their reclassification justified their being transferred between schools anywhere in the prefecture. The next steps would be to redefine "wishes" and "consent" and to weaken the unions' influence in personnel decisions.

These next steps were highly contested by teachers and teachers' unions. How, when, and even whether they occurred differed by prefecture, because prefectures differed with respect to their demographics, geography, and politics. For example, Nagasaki Prefecture was one of the earliest to implement compulsory transfers in 1976, whereas nearby Fukuoka Prefecture has kept a voluntary system. The resulting patchwork of policies testifies to the strong resistance to re-nationalizing the school system, but the prevalence of compulsory systems testifies to the depth of support for greater, more "rational" control by the government. That is in part because prefectural governments framed the public discussion about teacher transfers in terms which commonly framed the work-family conflict: in terms of duty to others and self-sacrifice versus selfishness and ease (*cf.* Rohlen 1983:214-215). I show this later in my description of how teachers in Nagasaki Prefecture lost the right to refuse a transfer.

3.1   The post-war decentralization of the education system

After the Pacific War, the U.S. Occupation found in Japan a highly stratified and centralized education system, originally created in the Meiji era, that had been part of the state's war apparatus. The education system had been involved in promoting militant nationalism, instilling obedience to and worship of the Emperor, and training citizens how to fight against Americans and others – to

fight to the death and to choose suicide before capture in their defense of Japanese soil. The

Occupation wished to prevent this from ever happening again, and to use the education system

instead to promote democratic ideals and habits. Where the wartime system had been centralized,

concentrated, hierarchical, vertical, and autocratic, the postwar one was to be decentralized, shared,

egalitarian, flat, democratic, and open to the people (Okano and Tsuchiya 1999:30-36, 48; Rohlen

1983:238-240).

The most noticeable change, and one that has remained in place, was replacing the stratified,

class-based school system with one that was coeducational, open at all levels based on residency and,

for the optional grades, performance on standardized entrance exams. The compulsory system was

extended to nine grades, six in elementary school (ES) and three in junior high school (JHS). As in

the U.S., elementary school teachers typically taught all or most of the subjects for the entire grade,

whereas junior high school teachers specialized in one or more subjects, such as mathematics or

history. The optional three-year senior high schools (SHSs) offered even more specialized

instruction (vocational, college prep) and admitted students based on their entrance exam scores.

Equally drastic in ambition was the Occupation's refashioning of the political and

administrative control of the education system along democratic, federalist principles, so as to

protect the nation from a powerful, central Ministry of Education. The reforms of 1947-1948 put

authority into local hands, including boards of education (BOEs), which were to be created at the

prefectural and municipal level. BOE members were elected by the public, who were also free to

attend BOE meetings. The democratically-elected BOEs chose superintendents, who were

responsible for executing educational policy. The principle was bottom-up: people electing BOE

members; principals advising municipal BOEs, municipal superintendents advising prefectural

BOEs, and prefectural superintendents advising the Ministry. The Ministry's focus was reduced to

regulating, facilitating, and supervising the flow of people and funds to their proper destinations.

The bias was toward preserving local control so as to have a system responsive to local needs. To

that end, public school teachers and support staff, who during the war had been *national* public

servants subject to the national Ministry of Education, were reclassified as *provincial* public servants,

subject to local authorities and laws (Arai 1999:51-53).

As the citizenry was safeguarded by these pro-democratic changes, school employees were

safeguarded by receiving the right to unionize. In 1947, the Japan Teaching and Support Staff

Union (*Nihon Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 日本教職員組合; hereafter, JTU), a federation of prefectural unions,

formed, followed by other unions (Okano and Tsuchiya 1999:36). The unions were allowed to

collectively bargain for teachers, and developed a bottom-up structure which corresponded to the

different administrative levels: school, municipality, county or district, prefecture, and nation.

Transfers and personnel decisions were decentralized in a similar fashion, with greater power

given to the staff, the principals, and the municipal BOEs than the central Pref. BOE. The primary

role of the Pref. BOE was to make sure that staff were qualified and compensated equally across the prefecture, setting pay, pay rates, working hours, and other working conditions. Municipal BOEs made personnel decisions such as appointing (hiring) and allocating (transferring) all public school employees within the municipality, but they were obliged to take into consideration the detailed reports (*gushin*; 具申) of their principals, who supervised staff and decided how to use them in the day-to-day operations. And by law, transfers were to be voluntary or consensual. Employees could not be moved if they did not request it beforehand or at least consent to it afterward – the terms most often used to describe these rights being *kibō* (希望), "wish, desire"; *ikō* (意向), "will, wish, preference"; *nattoku* (納得), "consent, agreement"; and *shōdaku* (承諾), "consent" (Arai 1999:51-55). This was to protect them from being transferred as punishment for criticizing the administration, or as a way to pressure them into subservience or leaving the organization.

In practice, transferring employees within a municipality or, in some very rural areas, a county or some other contiguous, multiple-municipality district was fairly common – every three to eight years or so for rank-and-file teachers. But transferring employees between municipalities or counties – so-called "wide area exchanges (*kōiki kōryū*)" – was rare, especially for ES teachers (*Nagasaki-ken-ritsu Kyōiku Kenkyūsho* 1965:100-101; *Shin Uonome Chō Yakuba* 1996:35-36; FN 031029). The unions guarded employees from capricious or punitive transfers, fought policy changes which

might enable such transfers to occur, and worked to undo unwelcome transfers and arrange

favorable ones.

3.2 Re-centralizing the education system

Scarcely after these decentralizing policies had been enacted, they began to be rolled back.

In 1948, barely a year after the Ministry had recognized the right of teachers unions to engage in

collective bargaining on behalf of the teachers, this right was withdrawn and public servants were

barred from collective bargaining and participating in strikes. Five years later, teaching and support

staff in the compulsory staff were reclassified as national public servants, subjecting them to national

public servant laws and bringing them under greater control of the Ministry. This paved the way for

them to be prohibited from campaigning and other forms of political activity, which happened the

following year (Okano and Tsuchiya 1999:36-38).

The roll back resulted from an anti-left shift in the political climate. As the war in Korea

progressed and Communism seemed to spread, the U.S. Occupation grew increasingly more

concerned with Communism and left-wing political groups and actions in Japan, rather than with

the resurgence of Japanese militarist nationalism. In 1950, the U.S. Occupation led a "Red Purge"

of the central government and bureaucracy, and did not protest when, two months later, the now

more conservative Ministry of Education promoted the singing of the national anthem and the saluting of the national flag in the public schools. (See Okano and Tsuchiya 1999:48-50 for a fuller discussion of why the conservatives wanted a centralized, hierarchical, and nationalist system.)

The recentralization of the education system gained greater legal ground after the right wing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) came to national preeminence in 1955. In June 1956, the Ministry inverted the flow of power in the education system, from bottom-up to top-down. Citizens' control over the education system became "weak and indirect" (Arai 1999:60). BOE members were no longer elected to their posts, but instead appointed by the chief executive (mayor or governor), who was enjoined to include members from several different political parties – substituting a tamed and formal "diversity" for direct representation.

Likewise, control over personnel matters shifted from the local, municipal BOEs to the Pref. BOEs, as teaching and support staff were reclassified as "*prefectural-burden* teaching and support staff (*kenpi-futan kyōshokuin*; 県費負担教職員)," but Pref. BOEs were enjoined to consider the recommendations or internal reports (*naishin*; 内申) of their municipal superintendents, just as the latter had been enjoined to consider the recommendations or reports of the principals (*q.v.*).

Reclassifying teachers as prefectural employees instead of municipal ones justified their being transferred between municipalities, and between 1958 and 1962 the percentage of ES and JHS transfers between municipalities in fact *tripled*, leaping from 16.3% to 48.8% (Satake 1990:347-348n4;

per Satake, the percentage ranged between 46% and 55% through the 1960s-1980s). But most of

the increase in inter-municipality transfers resulted from the creation of Education Offices (*Kyōiku

Jimusho*; 教育事務所), field offices of the Pref. BOE which handled personnel matters and provided

administrative support and guidance for the ESs and JHSs within districts (*kannai*; 菅内), county-

sized groupings of municipalities (Arai 1999:51-56). That is, it was intra-district transfers, rather

than cross-prefecture transfers, which made up most of the increase.

Despite these early roll backs, Pref. BOEs could not yet transfer teachers wherever in they

saw fit, because throughout the 1960s unions remained strong enough to defend the principle that

teachers' transfers should be voluntary or consensual. For the Pref. BOEs to gain this power, they

would either have to win teacher consent, weaken the unions, or both.

3.3   Strong unions protected teachers' rights

Despite the early roll backs, the teachers' unions still had political strength in the 1950s and

1960s. For example, in 1957-1958 the unions successfully fought off the Ministry's Teaching and

Support Staff Performance Assessment Program (*Kinmu Hyōtei;* 勤務評定), a program wherein

principals would rate all their staff on skills and character and then submit this to the overseeing

BOE, who would use the ratings in transfers and other personnel decisions. Even in the face of

violent right wing opposition involving the assault of union leaders and raids on union offices, the unions in December 1958 were able to mobilize "over 440,000 teachers across 40 prefectures … as well as over two million workers from labour unions in *Sōhyō* (the then largest peak union body, consisting mainly of public employees)" to publicly demonstrate against the program, causing a state of emergency and leading the Ministry to abandon the program (Okano and Tsuchiya 1999:38; *cf.* Okano and Tsuchiya 1999:37-46; Hayashi 1984e).

The basis of union strength was the broad support the unions enjoyed among both employees (*cf.* Singleton 1967:106) and the public at large.

First, unions benefited from the high regard accorded teachers relative to the central government. Right after the war, there was a backlash against the central state for having led the disastrous (and in Nagasaki, cataclysmic) war, as evidenced by the left wing victory in the first national postwar elections. Teachers on the other hand were generally viewed with respect, in part because of the long association of the profession with members of leading households, and in part because, due to the nature of their work, they were seen to have moral authority (authority augmented, ironically, during the war). In the early going teachers still had the right to engage in campaigning and other forms of political activity, and they were very effective because of their deep and broad local networks and the respect they commanded from their former students and their parents, and because of the nature of Japanese democracy, where social connections are important.

Second, the unions at this time frequently found common cause with the citizens at large when they campaigned for improved school buildings and facilities, lowered costs to parents and guardians, and greater access to SHS education. At the end of the war, the Ministry had decreed that education would be compulsory and provided to all students through the 9th grade. But the cost of building and staffing these schools was borne by the prefectures, municipalities, and parents. Schools were cobbled together on land donated by leading local households, with buildings erected through corvée, and with materials and salaries paid for by the sale of common assets (Hayashi 1984a, 1984b; *Shin Uonome Chō Yakuba* 1996:35-36; Tamai 1992:59-63). Given that food rationing continued to 1951, one can get a sense of how desperately poor people were and hence how desperately poor the conditions in the schools were. There were shortages of books, lamps for light, classrooms, and land itself (Okano and Tsuchiya 1999:33). The national government would not step in with financial support until 1953.

Finally, unions had an advantage over the government because the government was desperate to hire more teachers and the unions were championing causes which were widely supported by teachers, like better benefits and pay. At the time, teaching paid poorly relative to jobs in the reconstruction and quickly expanding economy. For example, in Nagasaki, well-paying alternatives existed not only in far away Nagoya and Tōkyō but also locally, such as in the booming coal mines and a fishing industry which would become so lucrative in the 1950s and 1960s that a

junior high graduate could earn enough money to buy a house from just a few months' work in one

of Narao Town's deep-sea net-fishing fleets (FN 050605, FN 051009). In contrast, one Nagasaki

teacher told me that in three months a teacher could only earn enough to buy one used suit, while

even a pair of leather shoes cost a months' salary (FN 060127). Desire to become a teacher was so

low, and demand so great (due to the expansion of universal and compulsory education to nine

grades and due to the baby boom), that principals used to wander around recruiting (*Ritō Kyōshi*

Shuzai Han 1984f) and the Nagasaki Pref. BOE opened up recruiting centers in major cities like

Nagoya and Ōsaka (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1975:469; *cf. Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1975:467-488).

The situation had given rise to the expression "*demo kyōshi,*" which meant something like "there's

always teaching" as a fallback job should nothing better work out (FN 060127). In such an

environment, teachers had a great deal of leverage over the administration. With overcrowded

schools and no reserve labor supply, the threat of a strike carried real force.

3.4   Conservative rise leads to greater administrative control and weaker unions

The government attempted to weaken the unions throughout the 1960s, often by

undermining teachers' ability to work independently from the government and the government-

appointed chain of command. For example, one attraction of union membership was union-

sponsored training sessions. As public servants, teachers had a right to training, and they were

meeting this through "self-study," time away from work which could be spent at union-sponsored

events. The Ministry pushed the Pref. BOEs to make it hard to obtain leave for self-study and make

it easy and at times even required to attend Pref. BOE-approved training events instead (Okano and

Tsuchiya 1999:149-151; Arai 1999:58-59; *Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:76).

Throughout the 1960s, the relationship between government and union grew more

antagonistic, with the unions holding ground in some places, losing it in others. But in 1974 the

LDP won decisively in national elections, ushering in a major turn toward greater hierarchy and

centralized control in the education system.

The first moves after this victory involved creating greater hierarchy and administrative

control within the schools. In May 1974, the Ministry decreed that all non-branch schools above a

certain size were required to have a second administrator, the head teacher, on staff in addition to

the principal (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1999:100). In December 1975, the Ministry unveiled

the so-called "manager system (*shunin seido;* 主任制度)," which formalized a number of administrative

roles in the compulsory education system that were to be filled by teaching staff in all schools

(*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1998:120-121). The first such positions included the student guidance

counselor (*seito shidō shunin*), who dealt with behavior problems and discipline, and the academic

affairs manager (*kyōmu shunin*), who worked closely with the principal and head teacher, leading staff

meetings, helping manage the schedules for the week, and so on. More positions were created in

1977 and 1979. Those who had been appointed managers received manager allowances (*shunin teate*)

of 5,000 yen per month (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1998:122; Hirata 1985).

The unions immediately opposed the manager system for three reasons: it had been decreed

autocratically, without union input; it replaced flexible local control with mandated, uniform

hierarchy; and it undermined staff solidarity (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1998:122). They argued that

designating certain people managers for the year prevents staff in schools from working out more

flexible arrangements attuned to local circumstances, might undermine staff solidarity by dis-

incentivizing teachers to assist one another, and would give principals an added way to reward

favorites or withhold favor from troublemakers. Since all staff share responsibility for the smooth

functioning of the school, any additional money should be spread around rather than given to a few.

Opposition to these measures was vehement. Thousands of employees took to the streets

on multiple occasions across the nation to voice their opposition to these policies – particularly the

manager system (Rohlen 1983:235-237). Strikes and other public actions against the "strengthening

of the administrative structure (*kanri taisei kyōka*; 管理体制強化)" (Hirata 1985) occurred around the

country in April 1974; December 1975; March and April 1976; April, November, and December

1977; February and April 1978; and April 1979 (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1998:122). The strike of

April 1974 was the first all-day strike called by the JTU since the 1958 struggle over the job

performance rating system; more all-day strikes followed in March 1976 (Hayashi 1984g). In January

1975, 7,500 teaching and support staff in Nagasaki Prefecture alone were punished for taking part in

strikes (*Shin Uonome Chō Yakuba* 1986:1043).

The Ministry responded to these large demonstrations by promoting a campaign to

"normalize" education, taking firm control of the education system and removing "wild" union

"interference" from school administration – including where to transfer teachers.

Pref. BOEs participating in this campaign meted out harsh penalties for teachers who had

participated in strikes and other union opposition. When some principals and municipal BOEs

refused to endorse these punishments, these Pref. BOEs overrode their recommendations for

mercy. This led to a legal challenge, for Pref. BOEs were enjoined to receive the reports and

recommendations of the municipal superintendents and principals. The Ministry argued that Pref.

BOEs were not obliged to follow the recommendations of municipal superintendents and school

principals because such recommendations were merely advisory, per the 1956 law (Shinohara

1987:49-50). This argument was rejected on appeal but ultimately accepted by the Supreme Court at

the end of the 1970s (Arai 1999:51-60; *Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1979:17-19).

There was a great deal of public support for the Ministry's "law and order" approach.

Parents and guardians in the 1970s had become more interested in their children's education,

because educational attainment had become more important to their economic success. Whereas

JHS graduates had easily found work during the initial postwar recovery, in later years SHS and

college were seen as required for the best jobs, making studying for entrance exams into a national

preoccupation. Parents and guardians came to resent the frequent union strikes, demonstrations,

and other activities because they disrupted a child's studies and did not seem aimed at improving

conditions for learning, which had already benefitted from an influx of money from the Ministry.

With improved school conditions, it became harder to make the case that the unions'

struggles somehow also benefitted students, parents, and guardians. Moreover, some of the unions'

positions were blatantly against parents' interests. For example: a former union officer in Nagasaki,

speaking in 2006, told me that the union leaders opposed moving school festivals to Sunday – which

would have allowed more working parents to attend them – unless teachers received compensation.

Such greed and unreasonableness, he said, fed parents' resentment of the unions (FN 060127).

The Ministry capitalized on this development, demonizing union activists as reckless, violent,

immature, unreasonable, and selfish in contrast to government actions, which were sober, just, and

beneficial to the wider the public (*cf.* Gordon 1993:388-390 on public disdain with public servant

unions' "Strike for the Right to Strike" in 1975). In February 1974, the Chief Minister of the

Ministry of Education even claimed before the Diet (the national assembly) that the JTU advocated

socialist revolution (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1999:100). In this way, the anti-union

conservatives sought to further drive the wedge between the public and the unions. But they also

sought to discourage teachers from associating themselves with the unreasonable union leadership.

As the 1970s wore on, increasing numbers of employees, particularly young ones, began

shying away from the unions (Okano and Tsuchiya 1999:163-172). One reason was that working

conditions had improved, even in remote areas (where, *e.g.,* the Ministry helped prefectures build

more staff housing; *Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1998:177-179). Rank-and-file teachers finally received

a substantial raise in 1974, thanks in part to the improving financial health of the government and

the strategic thinking of politicians like Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei (elected 1972), who

recognized that improved financial conditions would give employees less reason to enter the unions,

and weaker unions would be less able to make trouble for the LDP (FN 060127). Fewer teachers

were willing to spend their afterhours and risk financial penalties in order to support union actions

which seemed selfish and/or undercut the image of teachers as professionals who wish to provide

children with a good education, a self-image many teachers embraced. The divisions within the

unions about policy and goals which caused membership to begin declining in the 1970s ultimately

led to a schism within the union (Aspinall 2001). These internal divisions had implications for

teachers' loss of the right to refuse a transfer.

3.5 "Normalizing" personnel transfers by forcing teachers to accept them

Transfers were by law to be voluntary, based on teacher's requests or consent. This was seen as a protection, for it was recognized that employees who have the power to transfer have exploited it in order to discipline and punish their workers (*cf.* Rohlen 1983, Singleton 1967, Skinner 1983, Vallas 2006:1707, Zwart 1994). But in the 1970s the Ministry argued that although teachers' wishes should be respected whenever possible, they must be subordinate to the educational needs of the prefecture as a whole – as determined by the Pref. BOEs, which bore the legal responsibility for meeting them and therefore should have the requisite authority to do their duty. Likewise, because responsibility and authority are given to the Pref. BOEs, not the unions, the unions should not "interfere" in personnel matters. Without the power to allocate their human resources rationally over the whole prefecture, freely and without interference, Pref. BOEs cannot address imbalances in staff composition that – from the perspective of the prefecture as a whole – are detrimental to students and staff alike and had arisen and become chronic under consent-required transfer systems. In the moral language introduced above: to allow teacher transfers to be determined by individual consent is irrational, and to argue that teachers' wills should come ahead of the needs of the prefecture as a whole was selfishness.

As a "rational" way of addressing chronic imbalances in staff composition between geographically distant areas, policies compelling teachers to serve in multiple areas over the course of their careers were instituted in various prefectures. Under these systems, instead of letting teachers choose where to work and honoring their choice – which in practice usually meant giving preference to incumbents – teachers were now obliged to work in a variety of schools, schools of different types and/or in different settings. The "form" of teacher consent was preserved through the collection of teacher "wishes" prior to each year's transfer decisions, but teacher transfers were in the main shaped – or made "mechanical," as the unions put it – by various rules, such as minimum and maximum tenures at a given school or in a given setting.

Some of the first such transfer policies were created around 1975 in Iwate, Kagoshima, and Nagasaki Prefectures. These prefectures shared geographic, economic, and demographic conditions: *viz.*, a great many remote areas, a relatively poor economy, and a large and continuous population decline due to the out-migration of young adults. The poor conditions in remote areas made teachers very unwilling to voluntarily leave a more comfortable urban post to work there, and the greater number of them – Kagoshima has the second highest number of remote area schools, behind Hokkaido and ahead of Nagasaki and Iwate at the top end of the list; for reference, roughly 25% of Nagasaki's school employees worked in remote areas in 1962 (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1975:496; *Nagasaki-ken Kyōshokuin Kumiai* and *Kōkō Zennyū Mondai Nagasaki-ken Kyōgi Kai* 1962:25) –

45

led to chronic shortages of qualified staff. The poor economy made teaching more attractive for

those who wanted to stay, but the population decline and the end of the baby boom's transit

through the public schools meant there was less demand for teachers. With no mandatory

retirement age forcing older staff to quit and greater number of students going on to college, in

some disciplines there was a surplus of qualified teachers. This weakened teachers' power relative to

the Pref. BOE, as did the growing intolerance for teachers' forms of protest. The poor local

economy made parents even more eager for teachers to teach rather than protest, the better to help

their children enter a good college or trade school, recognized as more important as the

reconstruction jobs began to fade and manual labor came to be seen as dirty or dangerous.

These policies did not come from nowhere, but instead were created and/or nurtured by the

Ministry. Kagoshima's policy was created by an "advisor" from the Ministry of Education who had

come to the Kagoshima Pref. BOE in the early 1970s to assist with the prefecture's "Normalization

of Education" reform movement (Imamura 1994; *cf.* Schwartz 1998 on the role of "advisors" in

Japanese governance). Per this compulsory and highly systematic policy, all Kagoshima's schools

were categorized into urban areas, remote areas, and other areas. The policy established minimum

and maximum terms to be spent in each of these three areas, which necessitated the "exchange" or

transfers of staff between them. Also, no one could be promoted to the position of head teacher or

principal without having worked in a remote area (Imamura 1994:5). Kagoshima's wide area

exchange policy was very similar to the one Nagasaki would develop the following year.

Similar policies came into being around the same time elsewhere, such as in Kantō

(Mochizuki 1991). Tōkyō began a compulsory system in 1983. Like Nagasaki, but later, Chiba

began with a "Ten Years Transfer" in 1976, expanding their system in the 1980s. Saitama began in

1978 but made major readjustments in 1989, and Kanagawa began in 1989-1990. But such policies

were not implemented everywhere. Fukuoka, *e.g.*, kept a voluntary system to at least the time of my

research. Geographic, economic, and demographic conditions are important, but not determinative.

Each prefecture has its own political dynamic, its own cultural history.

That there is a patchwork of policies testifies to the continued resistance to re-nationalizing

the school system, but the prevalence of compulsory systems testifies to the depth of support for

greater and more "rational" control by the government. Pref. BOEs won this support and the

ability to transfer teachers wherever they pleased by successfully framing the public discussion about

teacher transfers in terms of duty to others and self-sacrifice versus selfishness and ease. This frame

is how the work-family (or public-private) conflict is commonly discussed in Japan, not just in the

public sector (Gordon 1993). It plays on the Japanese analogue to the Protestant Ethic and the

Spirit of Capitalism: the moral goodness of effort, exertion, and hard work – in and for a larger

group. The next chapters show how this happened in Nagasaki Prefecture.

4. The Creation of Nagasaki's Compulsory Wide Area Exchange Transfer System

Nagasaki Prefecture was one of the earliest prefectures to adopt a system which obliged

teachers to work in multiple geographically distant areas over the course of their career, and its

transition from a voluntary to a compulsory system is well-documented. A close look at this history

shows how the geographic, economic, and demographic factors, along with the particular history of

decisions made by the Pref. BOE and the unions along the way, generated a political climate in

which the Pref. BOE could successfully overcome the unions' strong and very public opposition by

appealing to broadly held ideas and values about duty to others, self-sacrifice, and hard work.

4.1   Chronic staffing problems in Nagasaki's outer islands

When the Nagasaki Prefecture Board of Education announced the Wide Area Exchange

Personnel Transfer policy in 1976, it was the culmination of two decades of attempts to deal with a

chronic staffing problem in its outer islands. ("Outer islands (*ritō*; 離島)" are islands separated from

the mainland or main island – in this case, Kyūshū – and typically not linked by a bridge.) Nagasaki

Prefecture contains sixty-odd populated outer islands spread out over an area nearly the length of

the island of Kyūshū itself. The most prominent outer islands are the distant chains of Tsushima

(where one can pick up Korean radio), Iki (closer to Fukuoka than Nagasaki), and Gotō (a historic

refuge of Christians). As early as 1954 the Pref. BOE had noted that schools in the outer islands,

like those in remote areas elsewhere in Japan, had more young teachers and fewer licensed teachers

than schools in more central areas. At that time, nearly 50% of the outer island teaching staff were

30 years old or younger, and 40% of them lacked a full teachers license (compared with 20% for the

prefecture as a whole) (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1975:496; *cf. Nagasaki-ken Kyōshokuin Kumiai* and

Kōkō Zennyū Mondai Nagasaki-ken Kyōgi Kai 1962:25-29).

These staffing problems plagued remote areas because they were generally among the

poorest areas in the country, with inferior facilities for medicine, education, transportation, and

communication. Ferry cancellations due to stormy seas cut off islands from newspapers, mail, and

foodstuffs. Whereas teachers on the mainland could drive cars and see films, a teacher at I-no-seto

elementary school in the Upper Gotō islands (Kamigotō), told a researcher in 1964, "I have

forgotten what it is to live a cultured life" (*Nagasaki-ken-ritsu Kyōiku Kenkyūsho* 1964:29). In Ōta, then

one of Kamigotō's more convenient places to live, 98% of 4th graders and 100% of 6th graders

lacked a phone in their home (*Nagasaki-ken-ritsu Kyōiku Kenkyūsho* 1962:238-243). Writing about

conditions in Chūchi, one of the most remote school districts in Nagasaki Prefecture, then-principal

Nagahara Katsuji reported that "No house has more than one or two faint light bulbs (*ca.* 20-watt),

so it is very difficult to study at night" and "one can only depend on a few kettles of water.

Therefore the children's feet and hands are covered in dirt, the hair on their heads is infested with

lice, and their bellies are continuously infested with intestinal worms – the sanitary conditions are

just that bad" (*Nagasaki-ken-ritsu Kyōiku Kenkyūsho* 1962:40).

Qualified teachers were in short supply generally, and few of them chose to work in these

conditions, unless they were natives. Many natives who had left for education stayed away. New

hires and veterans assigned to the islands refused or abandoned their posts in significant numbers

(*Nagasaki-ken Kyōshokuin Kumiai* and *Kōkō Zennyū Mondai Nagasaki-ken Kyōgi Kai* 1962:25; Oku 1979a).

In April 1962, *e.g.*, eight of the forty-seven new teachers posted to the Gotō Islands, and nineteen of

the forty posted to Tsushima, refused their transfers (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1975:498).

4.2   Failed attempts that respected the principle of voluntary transfers, 1952-1975

As discussed above, this was a hard time for schools, because there were so many better-

paying jobs than teaching, yet the need for teachers was increasing to accommodate the baby boom.

The Pref. BOE therefore could not force teachers to accept outer island posts, but had to try to

address the staffing problems within the context of a voluntary system. It tried helping local-born

assistant teachers get their licenses, providing college scholarships to teachers who promised to work

in the outer islands, and finally creating a special volunteer or "dispatch" program with even more

perks, such as travel allowances, study leave, and a guarantee of return to a mainland school of their

choice. Each of these measures helped to some extent, but in the end proved insufficient.

The first of these measures, the Teaching Staff Development Centers, had great success but

fell victim to a budget shortfall. Locals lacking licenses were already teaching in the outer island

schools as a matter of necessity because of the staff shortages. By studying for two years at one of

the two centers, which opened in Gotō and Tsushima in 1952, they could earn regular teaching

licenses. Although fairly successful, the Pref. BOE chose to close these centers in 1959 in part

because of a budget shortfall created by a change in the Remote Area Allowance law, described

below (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1975:488-490, 503-504).

In place of these centers, the Pref. BOE created scholarships for would-be teachers at the

prefecture's university who agreed to work in the outer islands. But this program supplied far fewer

new, licensed teachers to the outer islands, and there were even cases where scholarship recipients

refused to take up the outer island posts as promised (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1975:490-491).

Teachers working in outer islands and other remote areas, like other public servants, receive

a "remote area allowance (*hekichi teate;* へき地手当て)," a type of hardship pay indexed to the overall

difficulty of living and working in the post as determined by the government. In the first postwar

decade, prefectures had diverged with respect to the size of these allowances, prompting calls to

make payment of the remote area allowances mandatory, reasonably high, and standard nationwide.

In 1959, the Ministry did so by revising the relevant portion of the Promotion of Education in

Remote Areas Law (*Hekichi Kyōiku Shinkō Hō,* へき地教育振興法). The law established consistent

criteria for categorizing schools into remote area classes, with each class to receive an allowance

equal to a set percentage (up to 25%) of their salary (plus any dependent allowance). The Ministry

did this expressly "on the principle of equal opportunity for education, in order to raise the

educational level in and secure excellent teachers and staff for public elementary and junior high

schools in remote areas (mountain areas, remote islands, and other areas not blessed with good

transportation/access, natural, economic, and/or cultural resources)" (MEXT 2004). These

allowances are still paid at a sizeable expense – for example, the 2003 budget for remote area

allowances was 24 billion yen (at 120 yen to the U.S. dollar, $2 million) (MEXT 2004).

Because it forced Nagasaki to classify more of its schools at higher rates, and because the

costs of each allowance is split between the Ministry and the prefecture for which they work, the

1959 revision put an incredible financial burden on Nagasaki, which has the third highest number of

remote area schools in all Japan (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1975:496; *Nagasaki-ken Kyōshokuin Kumiai*

and Kōkō Zennyū Mondai Nagasaki-ken Kyōgi Kai 1962:25; *cf. Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1976a:252-266).

It was due to that burden and other new requirements that Nagasaki decided to close its

Development Centers. Yet, then and now, the assessment of teachers was that these remote area

allowances, though welcome, were not enough to help them truly recoup the costs of moving to and

living in the outer islands. They were seen as offsetting the hardships of remote area life, not as

attractions in their own right.

To attract licensed, veteran teachers from the mainland to the outer islands, the Pref. BOE

in 1959 created the Remote Area Dispatch System (*Hekichi Haken Seido,* へき地派遣制度). Teachers

who completed a minimum three-year dispatch would receive a pay raise and priority for transfer to

the area of their choice (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1975:502-503, 1998:124). Initially the program

was a big hit: that March saw seven principals and seventy-four rank-and-file teachers transfer from

the mainland to outer island remote areas (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1976a:209-210).

Although interest held steady for roughly a decade, it dried up afterwards because the Pref.

BOE was unable to keep its commitments and return the dispatchees. The reason it could not do so

was because it had chosen to give precedence to the transfer requests of teachers working in former

coal towns whose populations and enrollments had suddenly crashed. Coal-rich northern Nagasaki

had experienced boom times during the early postwar reconstruction and Korean War period, but

the boom became a bust when the nation switched from coal to petroleum and, later, nuclear power.

Nagasaki's mines began closing around 1963 and continued to do so throughout the 1970s.

Populations and school enrollments plummeted. In Sakito Township, for example, overall ES enrollment fell from 4,214 students in 1959 to 242 students in 1974; overall JHS enrollment fell from 1,319 students to 154 students over the same period: a combined drop of over 90% in fifteen years' time (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1975:471-474, 501-502).

Prioritizing these teachers' transfers left fewer mainland positions for dispatch teachers, who found their outer island terms extended. Those who had been sent to the outer islands as new hires, too, found it hard to leave. As this situation became clear toward the end of the 1960s, the number of volunteers began drying up, falling from an annual average of 72 volunteers during the first ten years of the system to 55 over the final six (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai 1975*:503-504; Hayashi 1984f). Reneging undermined the BOE's ability to use *any* incentive structure to attract volunteers for the undesirable outer island posts.

The Pref. BOE tried to create more room in the mainland schools by encouraging teachers there to take early retirement. As early as the 1959 personnel policy, the Pref. BOE had invited teachers over age 55, in poor health, and/or whose household circumstances would permit it (*i.e.*, married women teachers whose husbands worked) to retire so as to open up the profession to young, would-be teachers, to the betterment of the prefecture's children, who will learn best from a balance of young and old, energetic and experienced, working together – a moral appeal or guilt-trip argument. Full pensions and other retirement benefits were offered to some in these categories

(*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1976a:208). But retirement, like transferring, was based on consent: a mandatory retirement age (60) would not be established for teachers until 1984 (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1998:125-126; *cf.* Rohlen 1983:176). So the Pref. BOE still faced the problem of insufficient incentives – falling short of target numbers which continued rising as more coal mines closed.

And so the staffing problems worsened. Outer island schools continued to have more irregular, fixed-term teachers; teachers with substitute licenses rather than regular licenses; teachers responsible for subjects in which they did not hold a license; and very young teachers, many who had been sent right after graduation. In the major mainland cities, teachers were disproportionately older and also had mismatched licenses, because their requests were prioritized due to their seniority, rather than their fit for a school's needs (Oku 1979a, 1979c).

The unions' preferred solution was to raise the incentives in order to make outer island service less of a hardship and attract more volunteers: the Pref. should offer larger allowances and more time for shore leave – to be made possible by a further investment of money and an increase in the staff sizes so that teachers could take leave more easily to attend to family or private matters.

But conservatives felt that an incentive-based approach aimed at motivating employees to choose the desired behavior, whether to retire or to transfer, was wrong-headed. To them, the administration should not be begging and cajoling *public servants* to do what was needed. Teachers were in a "sacred profession," with a duty to serve the nation's children, not just performing some

run-of-the-mill job. These conservatives wanted to start anew with the premise that staffing

decisions must be made on the basis of the educational needs of the entire prefecture. As they

gained more prominence politically, as the labor market conditions turned in the administration's

favor, and as the staffing problem grew more acute and affected more parents and teachers alike,

their attempts to force teachers to accept transfers grew stronger and more successful, even as the

unions' responses grew more strident.

4.3   Considering compulsory solutions to the staffing problems, 1965-1975

Autocratically transferring mainland teachers whom the Pref. BOE did not mind retiring

would help solve the staffing imbalances. If the teachers accepted the transfers, they would vacate a

mainland post and the islands would gain a veteran hand. If the teachers did not like the transfer,

they faced a hard choice. They could retire to avoid the transfer, but finding another comparable

position would be very difficult, since pay was tied to seniority within the organization rather than

years of experience in a given trade, particularly among middle-class white collar employees in Japan.

Or they could challenge it by bringing a case before the Personnel Authority – which obliged them

to take the outer island post, because failure to report to one's post would be grounds for

termination, and only current employees can bring cases before the Personnel Authority (*Nagasaki-*

ken Kyōiku Iinkai 1977:16). In the latter case, the Pref. BOE had merely to drag its feet in order to

bully the petitioner, obliging him or her to remain in place until the Pref. BOE felt forced to act.

Granted, this flouted the idea of consent and risked public outcry, but in practice it might work.

The Pref. BOE was accused of taking this heavy-handed approach in 1965, and that effort

backfired – due to a tragic chance event. That year, several elderly SHS teachers brought suit before

the Personnel Authority, claiming they had been transferred from the mainland to the outer islands

in retaliation for not accepting their early retirements (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai*

1998:23-24, 57). The Pref. BOE took the position it was "putting the right people in the right place

(*tekizai tekisho;* 適材適所)" in order "to promote outer island education" and "raise the educational

level within the prefecture" – these vague principles having been part of Nagasaki's personnel policy

since at least 1959 (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:58; *Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai*

1976a:208). Because the prefectural administration had a *duty* to oversee the education system and

insure its quality for the public, "personnel transfers are a matter for administrative management (人

事は管理運営事項)," not unions or even employees (*e.g., cf. Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai*

1998:143). But the administration's argument was derailed by an unexpected event. While the Pref.

BOE had been dragging its feet in the case, one of the elderly petitioners who had been working in

an outer island school awaiting a judgment, died. The unions whipped their membership into an

uproar, calling on members to refuse any and all invitations to take early retirement. In the face of

this response, the embarrassed Pref. BOE pledged to never move personnel without working to gain

consent and to cooperate more fully with the union on staffing problems (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō*

Kyōshokuin Kumiai 1998:23-24, 57).

But the Pref. BOE had better luck with the heavy-handed approach six years later, in 1971.

At that time, there were over 100 teachers aged 60 and over in Nagasaki Prefecture's public SHSs

alone (or about 3% of all SHS teachers at the time) (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai*

1998:57, *Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1998:806-807), and the Pref. BOE had threatened to transfer

those who refused to take early retirement to the outer islands, just as before. That March, 22

elderly teachers retired and 87 were transferred – 13 of them being aged 60 or over and sent to the

outer islands, and twelve of these thirteen being union members (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin*

Kumiai 1998:58). Six of the thirteen who received the so-called "compulsory transfers (*kyōsei haiten*

強制配転)" brought suit before the Personnel Authority. The Pref. BOE again argued that the

transfers had been legal and necessary for the good of education, because of the severe age

imbalance (*cf.* Oku 1979c). But this time, while the cases were being heard, the Pref. BOE altered

the laws regarding pensions, prompting the six to retire to preserve their full amounts – thereby

dropping their suits (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:57-59, 78).   This result was a

practical victory for the Pref. BOE, but it left the principle untested.

Also in 1971, the Pref. BOE created a "mechanical" justification for forcing teachers to accept transfers in a given year (if not ultimately to a given place). Arguing that the flow of staff, particularly between the mainland and the outer islands, had become "congested" or "stagnant" (*teitai;* 停滞), the Pref. BOE instituted a "Fifteen Years Transfer (*Jūgo-nen Jinji;* 十五年人事)" policy, whereby all staff who had been at the same school for fifteen years or more would be marked for transfer between districts or between the mainland and the outer islands (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1998:124). But when this policy was used by a principal to weaken his SHS's union chapter by transferring three union officers without their consent, the Pref. SHS Union held a demonstration which caused the Pref. BOE to back down, apologizing to two of these teachers, returning one of them to his former post immediately (the other had to wait several years), and pledging again to "sound out the preferences (*ikō dashin;* 意向打診)" of employees before transfer (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:58).

To show it meant business, the Pref. BOE created a Personnel Transfer Adjustment Committee (*Jinji Chōsei Iinkai;* 人事調整委員会) to handle any serious problems that arose after the internal and informal announcement (*naiji;* 内示) of the upcoming years' transfers, which then occurred several weeks before the official appointment (*jirei;* 辞令), which was dated for April 1, the beginning of the school year (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:80). Also around this time, the Pref. Teachers Union established what became known as the "'check' negotiations (*chekku*

kōshō; チェック交渉)" (Oku 1979d; *Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1977:12-13), meetings between union

officers and administrators at which the union would make sure ("check") that all transfers or lack

of transfers had the consent of the individuals concerned.

With these checks and balances in place, the Fifteen Years Transfer policy remained in effect

until 1976, with only one reform: When a city-administered SHS in Sasebo City joined the system of

prefecture-administered SHSs in 1972, many teachers in the Sasebo area voluntarily transferred into

and out of it, thereby escaping a "Fifteen Years Transfer" that would have relocated them to a

different district. The Pref. BOE responded by lowering the bar for the April 1976 transfers from

fifteen years at the same school to *ten* years (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1998:125; *cf.* Mochizuki 1991

for Chiba Prefecture). This "cheating the hangman's noose" experience inspired a rule in the Wide

Area Exchange Personnel Transfer policy, which would be announced later that year.

Faced with an increasingly autocratic administration, a worsening staffing problem, and

outcry from members eager to leave the outer islands, the unions proposed revamping the Dispatch

system to offer volunteers greater financial incentives (a travel allowance for training purposes) and

ironclad guarantees not only of return but also of placement (they could pick the island post to

which they would be sent). In exchange for the Pref. BOE agreeing to implement this new Outer

Island Dispatch Registry System (*Ritō Haken Tōroku Seido*; 離島派遣登録制度), the unions volunteered

to gather the volunteers themselves. The system's first year was 1973 (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1998:124, 19; Hirata 1985; *Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1977:13-14).

As with the previous dispatch system, the Registry System had an auspicious start, but interest very quickly tanked. Few of the mainland branches of the union gathered their annual quota of volunteers. One union member later confessed, "Well, the number that fulfilled 100% of their quota was only two, I think. Nagasaki City totally failed" (Oku 1979d; *cf. Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:80-81, *Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1998:124-125). Union officers resorted to putting their own names down on the registries just to keep the system afloat (Hayashi 1984f, 1984g). Although they managed through such devices to get enough fresh dispatch teachers to let those registry dispatchees who completed their tenures return as promised, the system did nothing to help the teachers who were *not* on this dispatch system, but nevertheless had been many years waiting in the outer islands for a way home. Within four years, the Registry System was ended – to make way, finally, for a compulsory transfer system.

4.4   "Normalization" and Wide Area Exchange Transfers, 1974-1977

The political climate shifted decisively in favor of a compulsory policy in 1974-1976. In April 1974 – the same month as the JTU's first all-day strike since 1958 – Nagasaki's conservative

governor, Kubo Kan'ichi, was reelected in a landslide. In October 1974, conservatives in the

Assembly called on Governor Kubo to reign in the teachers' unions by enacting harsher penalties on

teachers who engage in strikes and to deal decisively with the staffing problem by implementing a

compulsory, systematic, wide area personnel transfer system (Hayashi 1984e). In April 1975, the

LDP won an overwhelming majority in the Prefectural Assembly. They ordered the Pref. BOE to

review every agreement and statement of understanding between the administration and the unions

with an eye to "returning" power to, or centralizing power in, the Pref. BOE. In December 1975 –

the same month that the Ministry unveiled the manager system, inciting more protests from unions

locally and nationally – the Illegal Strike Investigation Special Committee was formed to study the

best way to handle the problem with the unions. In its March 1976 report to the Assembly, it

suggested penalties for employees who "engaged in union activities without taking vacation"

(*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:73) and found that although the Registry System

was helping increase transfers between the mainland and the outer islands it was an insufficient

means to solving the problem (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:77).

The conservatives in Nagasaki had been gaining momentum, but they crossed a major

watershed on April 21, 1976, the date of the so-called "Tsushima Incident." During March and

April 1976, the unions were protesting the harsher penalties which had just been announced and the

first implementation of the manager system. As part of this effort, on April 21, a union delegation

at Imazato JHS in Tsushima was negotiating with the principal about the manger system. When the

principal attempted to leave (and thereby end the negotiations), the union delegation trapped him in

his office. Police were called to the school and four union officers were arrested and jailed (Oku

1979c, 1979d; Hayashi 1984e). This sensational event was the first of its kind in the country, and it

drew national attention (feeding into the growing anti-union climate, Gordon 1993:388-390).

Governor Kubo seized this chance to act decisively against the union. Deeming individuals

from the education world too "soft" on their fellows, Kubo tapped an outsider, Mimura Nagatoshi,

to lead the Pref. BOE as its new Superintendent. Taking office in June 1976, he declared he would

enact a compulsory system even if it meant a confrontation with the union, and within four months

he had done just that (Hayashi 1984g; *Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1976c:10; Oku 1979c).

The Basic Policy of the Wide Area Exchange Personnel Transfers, Nagasaki's compulsory

transfer system, was finalized and promulgated on September 11 – a Saturday. At 1:00 PM – the

end of the work day – the BOE dropped off copies of the policy to the unexpecting union officers.

Attempting to set the terms of the debate before the stunned unions could respond, on

September 13 the Governor mailed out a pamphlet to all employees, all parents and guardians, the

municipalities, and the press (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:74, Oku 1979c). In

this pamphlet, entitled "On 'The Normalization of Education,' (*"Kyōiku no Seijōka" ni tsuite*;『教育の

正常化』について)," Governor Kubo blasted the "criminal" unions for their "wild" and selfish

behavior, pointing to the Tsushima Incident as proof that some teachers have "abandoned their podiums" and "are coldly depriving pupils and students of their right to receive an education," with the situation so dire that "we have schools, but no education" (Oku 1979c). Governor Kubo also derided the unions for interfering with transfers, as shown by the "check" negotiations, aggravating and prolonging rather than helping to solve the staffing problems. The solution would be the "Normalization of Education," in which Nagasaki's education system would be set on rational grounds, with authority centered in the prefecture where by law it belonged, rather than in the hands of the wild and criminal unions, who had failed to solve the problem despite being accommodated for years. The time had come for the Pref. BOE to enact a just, rational, all-prefecture Wide Area Exchange Personnel Transfers system, whereby all teachers have to work in the outer islands for some period during their careers, and no teacher can rise to the level of administrator without having done so. Furthermore, those who disobey work orders, disrupt school management, or participate in illegal strikes should be duly punished (*i.e.*, punished more harshly), whereas those who have a real passion for education should rightly receive bonuses (*i.e.,* receive manager allowances) (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:74-77).

The first public union response came eight days later, on September 21, when the Nag. Pref. SHS Union sent to all PTA officers and all employees "An Opinion on the Governor's Document: The Opening of a Road to the Autocratic Domination of Education." The union indicated its legal

64

justification to engage in collective bargaining tactics such as strikes, accused the governor of

slander, and protested his blaming the prefecture's long-standing staffing problems entirely on the

unions (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:75).

In October 1976, the Pref. BOE published two pamphlets, giving people their first look at

the Wide Area Exchange policy, justifying the policy with quantitative data on the staffing problem,

and asking for cooperation (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1998:127). "For the sake of the education of

our children, who carry tomorrow on their shoulders" was the title of the one for parents, which

was shorter (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1976b). "Let's bear the burden equally" was for the staff

(*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1976c). Both bore on their covers an illustration of a circle of students,

parents, teachers, and administrators holding hands and smiling, standing on top of a map of

Nagasaki Prefecture. Their overall tone was one of restraint and reasonableness. Teachers were

praised for their dedication. The Pref. BOE asserted that all good, reasonable teachers believed in

their calling to help every child in the prefecture, so they would want to support this policy and turn

away from the unions, who had lost their way and were leading their members astray. But most

space was devoted to appealing for allies, rather than on demonizing the unions, which Governor

Kubo's pamphlet had done.

The need for the Wide Area policy was supported with numbers. One chart showed that all

the islands (except Iki) had younger staffs than the mainland cities (the Gotō Islands were the lowest

at 38 years old; Nagasaki City was the highest at 44). The Pref. BOE's policy would lead to balance: in the islands, experienced teachers to help mentor the younger staff; on the mainland, energetic, physically active teachers to keep pace with the children (Oku 1979c). A second chart showed the problem of surpluses and deficits of JHS teaching licenses. One county might have 10 more English teachers than it needed; another county might lack 8 English teachers. If staff could be optimally placed based on teaching license – *i.e.*, "rationally," without union interference – each county would improve. An extra graph in the staff's pamphlet showed the steady drop in the number of volunteer dispatch teachers, leading to an overall deficit (not enough volunteers to replace the ones who went in the beginning) that grew year by year. This suggested that the unions' way had been tried but failed, which is why the solution had to be something else.

The Wide Area Exchange Personnel Transfers policy was presented as just and systematic. Developed "in close cooperation with municipal BOEs," its goal was to "normalize and make more efficient school management, in order to bring about an improvement in the educational level of this prefecture, in order that prefecture-wide personnel transfer exchanges might be fairly and flexibly implemented" (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1976c:9; *cf. Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1976b:2).

The Wide Area policy established how staff would be "exchanged" between different areas across the prefecture. The principal requirement was that all staff spend a minimum number of years (four to six) in each of three different areas: Area A, mainland urban; Area B, mainland other;

66

and Area C, outer island. Staff could not work in the same school for more than six years in a row; the same municipality for more than twelve years; and the same area for fifteen. These overall maximums and wide-area minimums marked some employees as potential transferees in a given year (those not marked would likely remain put). Having maximums for both school *and* municipality prevented evasions like the 1972 Sasebo SHS switcheroo, and having maximums for areas prevented employees from being left in the outer islands (or able to avoid them) for their entire career.

The process was not all clockwork. There was some flexibility. A saving clause allowed the Pref. BOE to cite "educational need" as grounds for moving or not moving any teacher. Second, a grandfather clause made the requirements lighter for older staff. Depending on a person's age, he or she might need to work in only one other area rather than two, and/or for a shorter tenure in the other area(s). Third, teachers who felt their personal needs were extreme and who won the support of their principals could have their cases reviewed by a special panel, which might choose to postpone or accelerate their transfer or keep it within certain geographical bounds. Apart from this, teachers were given Request Forms upon which they were to list their preferences and any circumstances (health problems of self and family, birth or marriage plans, home ownership, length of commute, children's year in school, and anything else) they would like the Pref. BOE to take into consideration when deciding where and whether to transfer. I will discuss these forms more below.

There was also some added structure. A "main work area (*shutaru kinmuchi;* 主たる勤務地)"

was assigned to all ES and JHS staff member (but not to SHS staff). This home school district was

where a staff member could expect to spend most of his or her career. It was a teacher's hometown,

or where a teacher's parents lived at the time of hire/assignment, or some municipality chosen by

the teacher if that teacher was not from Nagasaki. The assignment was made once and was nearly

impossible to change, except when a teacher married another teacher or public servant, in which

case the teacher was offered, once, that year, the chance to change to the spouse's main work area.

4.5   Dealing with the consent issue: the Request Form

The Pref. BOE finessed the issue of obtaining consent by requiring each teacher or other

school employee to complete a Request Form (literally, "Survey of Preferences": *Ikō Chōsa-sho;* 意向

調査書 – later shortened to *Ikō Chōsho*). Teachers were asked if they wished to be transferred (yes,

no, or indifferent) and in the event that they were transferred, to list their three preferred

destinations in each of the three areas (municipality and school name). They listed the name of all

their prior workplaces and duration there, where they lived (the location and whether it was staff

housing, a private apartment, or a private home), the length of their commute, whether they have an

automobile or boating license, the names of any kin working elsewhere in the prefecture (working in

the same school as kin was usually prohibited), and (*q.v.*) any personal circumstances which they

wished the Pref. BOE to take into consideration when making its decision.

Employees were told to complete all parts of the Request Form and return it to their

principals by November 19, less than three weeks after they had received it. But the unions quickly

advised its members not to complete the form as instructed, but to write "I wish to remain put

(*zanryū;* 残留)" and cross out the rest. They suspected – correctly (Muroi 1987) – that filling out the

form completely would enable the Pref. BOE to transfer teachers to one of the municipalities listed

and be able to argue that since it was on the form it was the teacher's "desired workplace (*kibō*

kinmuchi; 希望勤務地)" (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1979:6-8, 1998:82-83).

Mimura's BOE countered by sending all employees a FAQ sheet (*Kōiki Jinji Mondōshū*; 広域人

事問答集) in which the question, "What if I don't complete the form entirely?" was threateningly

answered, "Then we will assume you wish to leave the decision entirely up to us." Many principals

returned incomplete or otherwise improperly completed forms to staff with instructions to "Fix it"

(*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:82-83). Worse than this was alleged by the Pref.

Teachers Union, who said that two teachers claimed they had been ordered to complete their forms

in pencil and later found the forms had been erased (Hayashi 1984n).

4.6   Strikes, demonstrations, and protests – but no union victory

Protesting by the unions and their allies were relentless. From October 20-23, crowds 400-strong demonstrated outside the Pref. Govt. Offices; the administration responded by calling in the riot police. On November 9, the Pref. Teachers Union, with the support of another labor union, mobilized 4,000 people to march in protest (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1999:101). On February 15 there was a massive strike by the Pref. Teachers Union and the Pref. SHS Union. Throughout the winter, protestors mobilized at the municipal BOEs and the Education Offices to bring pressure on the administrators in the field to reject the Wide Area system. To rally support against this pressure, Superintendent Mimura and various bureaucrats and members of the Pref. Assembly jetted around the prefecture, particularly the outer islands. A war of letters filled the local newspaper (Hayashi 1984h; *Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:82-84).

The transfers were finally announced on March 22. A record number had been transferred: 4,512 employees (370 from SHSs), or roughly a third of the workforce. Of this figure, 1,289 transfers were of the "wide area exchange" type and 229 involved employees transferring from the mainland to the outer islands – more than twice the previous year's figure of 99.

The unions responded with huge demonstrations on March 25-29, mustering 500 teaching and support staff on the first two days, and, with the support of other labor unions, 2,000 people on

March 28. Protesters converged on the Pref. Govt. Offices. Vehicles with megaphones drove by

the home of Superintendent Mimura, who sent his family to the country while himself taking a room

at a nearby *ryokan* (Oku 1979a; Hayashi 1984h; *Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:87).

The unions' greatest threat – and Mimura's greatest fear – was that large numbers of

teachers would just refuse to take up their new posts on April 1, throwing the education system into

disarray. The Pref. BOE let it be known that any employee who refused a transfer would be fired.

But in the end the unions did not call for such an action. And so a new school year began. Mimura

had won (Oku 1979d; Hayashi 1984h).

4.7 Why Nagasaki's unions could not muster enough opposition

By cowing some teachers and convincing others – plus a little luck – the Pref. BOE was able

to successfully take full control over the personnel transfer process and avoid greater protest.

The Pref. BOE made those who protested pay a heavy price financially: after Governor

Kubo was reelected in 1974, the punishment for teachers who participated in "illegal" union strikes

was levied not once per *year* but once per *offense*. As a result, some teachers lost 3 months' pay on

three separate occasions within a single year (Oku 1979c). Teachers were more vulnerable to these

punishments because the Pref. BOE no longer needed the consent of principals or municipal BOEs

to punish in this way (Arai 1999:51-56).

More teachers might have refused to take up their Wide Area posts if they had financial

support from their unions, but the higher penalties and other strategic considerations led the unions

to withhold such support. The JTU, the national parent organization, decided not to involve itself

in a costly campaign it felt sure to lose and furthermore was wary of the political cost of supporting

the Nagasaki unions in light of the Tsushima Incident. The prefectural unions, too, elected not to

push the teachers out of financial and strategic considerations. Then Secretary General of the

Nagasaki Pref. Teachers Union, Mr. Kondō Reiji, wanted to muster a strong showing in the

activities planned for the upcoming parliamentary elections – activities which, if successful, would

have a larger impact on teachers' predicament. He worried that he would not be able to do so if

teachers suffered too grievously for refusing their Wide Area posts (Oku 1979d; Hayashi 1984h).

But the bigger reason unions could not muster enough opposition was that so many teachers

– even union members – thought the compulsory Wide Area policy would better meet their needs.

(*Cf.* Gordon 1993:385-387 on the significance of internal divisions in union defeats.) The incentive-

based programs had failed to attract enough mainland teachers to volunteer for the islands to meet

the desire of island teachers to work on the mainland. As Mimura put it in a 1984 interview: "The

union insisted on 'making personnel transfers based on understanding and consent.' Of course that

reflects the ideal, but I'd like you to look back one more time and see just how many teaching and

support staff crossed the sea through that method" (Hayashi 1984q).

Also, only dispatch teachers got these incentives – a situation temporarily corrected in 1965,

six years after the first dispatch policy was instituted, but reintroduced with the 1972 Registry

dispatch system (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1975:503-504). In April 1976, *e.g.,* those who had

finished their dispatch returned to the mainland after three to five years, whereas others who got

mainland transfers had been there twice as long – ten years or more in the islands of North

Matsuura County where so many mines had closed and eight or more for other islands (*Nagasaki-ken*

Kyōiku Iinkai 1977:8; Oku 1979c). The unions promised to spread the benefits of the Registry

system to all outer island teachers (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:81), but few

trusted the unions to be able to deliver. The union leadership was seen as having allowed the

problems to fester for so long.

Hence most outer island teachers who wished to leave preferred the Wide Area policy,

because although Registry dispatchees could reliably predict when they would be returned to the

mainland, others had to wait for an indeterminably longer period of time – a period of time that had

grown longer when the mainland unions and the Pref. BOE gave preferential treatment to teachers

in mining towns on the mainland (Oku 1979d). One active union member told me that at the time

the Wide Area transfers were announced, he had been in the outer islands, so he was glad to see the

73

policy go through, because it meant that he knew that he and his family would eventually get back to the mainland. Reporters from two different newspapers found that this was a widespread sentiment among employees in outer islands at the time. Women in particular were receptive to this policy, because they did not want to pass the window for finding a spouse – the idea of a "marriageable age" beyond which women were no longer desirable as spouses had salience at the time (Oku 1979c, *Ritō Kyōshi Shuzai Han* 1984i).

The Wide Area policy also appealed to those who wished to leave peripheral locations – the "coastal belt (*nagisa chitai*; 渚地帯)" – and small schools on the mainland. Sadly, such peripheral posts are just where most teachers who finally got off the islands had been being transferred (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:80). The Wide Area's tripartite division and requirement gave these teachers hope of working in a major city, and for that reason might be seen as a master-stroke.

With the Wide Area policy having support from select teachers, efforts by the union leadership to reverse it in the 1970s and 1980s failed. Unions grew less able to muster opposition to the policy as memberships declined throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s (Oku 1979d; *Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:93; *Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1998:775) and as the Wide Area transfers themselves had made organizing difficult by dispersing active members to the islands and elsewhere across the prefecture (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:94). Unions' calls for a return to a voluntary system were ignored by the Pref. BOE. Cases brought before the

Personnel Authority alleging abusive transfers likewise were inconsequential (*Nagasaki Shinbun,* June

23, 1977; *Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:89-90, 116-119, 142-143). And as I

discuss in the next chapter, unions' exposés accusing the Wide Area transfers of disrupting school

goals, community activities, and teachers' personal lives were widely dismissed by the Pref. BOE and

the public as self-centeredness unbecoming public servants and teachers.

5. Responses to Compulsory Transfers, 1977-84: Self-Sacrifice, Enthusiasm, and Apathy

The measure of human beings' emotions – their 'ease' or 'satisfaction' – is something which lies within each person's heart. Even in the same conditions, "A" may be satisfied and at ease, but "B" is unsatisfied and not at ease. So it is impossible to make conditions which will satisfy and put at ease 10,000 people. The important thing for teaching and support staff seems to be the question of how much weight to attach to their awareness of their duty as educational public servants (*kyōiku kōmuin toshite no shimeikan;* 教育公務員としての使命感) and how much to their feelings of ease and satisfaction in their private lives (*shiseikatsu no manzokukan, anshinkan;* 私生活の満足感、安心感)" (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1977:19-20).

Just three years, right? Teachers have two paths. One is the 'Since I've come all the way out here, I'll go ahead and do my best' type. The other is the 'Well, I'll just wait out this fixed passage of time' type. If the former is the 'enthusiastic type (*yaruki kei*),' the latter is the 'apathetic type (*mukiryoku kei*)'" (Mr. Taguchi, then a 48 year-old teacher working in the outer islands, quoted in Oku 1979b).

Concern about teachers' willingness and ability to be active in their communities in the face of mandatory Wide Area transfers was a major part of the public debate between the unions and the Nagasaki Prefecture BOE about the policy in the first decade after its passage. The union argued that non-consensual transfers put the teacher's personal and professional desires into conflict, and schools, communities, and the prefecture as a whole will be the real losers – not to mention the cost

to teachers and their loved ones. The Pref. BOE argued that teachers' personal desires were either immaterial or ultimately secondary considerations, given the special nature of teaching and public service as professions, professions in which the public need must come first (*cf.* Rohlen 1983:214-215). Transferees' actions were given meaning within this ideological battle. A 1984 report on transferees, particularly outer island teachers, presents teachers creatively and heavily involved in their outer island communities, which would suggest that values trump the hardship of relocation – *i.e.*, that many teachers of the time put work ahead of family. But a closer look reveals that local environmental factors promoted teachers' local involvement and made alternative action too difficult or costly to implement.

5.1   The unions: "mechanical" transfers erode teachers' ability to be involved

The unions argued that the Wide Area transfers would tear teachers away from communities they were dedicated to and active in, depriving those communities of some of their most valuable human resources. Teachers could not be expected to give their all to a community far from their home if they were moved against their will. They would be too exhausted and/or emotionally distraught from their long commutes or concerns about absent family members to be able to devote

themselves properly to the lives of their schools and school districts. After all, it was human nature for them to care for their own families, and their human right to do so should be recognized.

Pref. Superintendent Mimura had met with officials from both unions after the February15, 1976 joint strike. In that meeting, the unions pressed for a policy that would better accommodate teachers who had special circumstances (successors to the headship of a temple or shrine; those bearing a certain teacher's license; those married to a working spouse; etc.). Mimura countered that to do so would be unjust to other teachers – those who were unmarried, single, etc. – leading to "inequalities (*fukōhei*; 不公平)." He asked that they, as "professionals (*shokugyōnin;* 職業人)," accept that the policy must be err on the side of uniformity (*cf. Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:84-87).

In *The Truth About "Draft Notice" Transfers* (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1979) and pamphlets with names like "Give Me My Mommy Back," the unions presented cases of such "mechanical" transfers which tore teachers from their families and communities, seemingly without regard for the effects on them personally or the good of the prefecture. One can also find such cases in a "neutral" source, *Outer Island Teachers,* a series which ran in the *Nagasaki Shinbun* between January and September 1984. Below I present four cases from these varied sources which give a sense of the problems the union saw with the compulsory transfer policy.

78

Case 1, Kitamura Yoshiaki, was born to a temple family on the island of Ojika in the Gotō

islands. Returning in 1951 after graduating from college in Kyōtō, he began a career that would

span more than three decades, all of it Ojika Town. He worked 14 years at Ojika JHS, then 1 year at

Madara JHS on a separate island, then back to Ojika JHS on the main island for 11 more years.

Having spent almost his entire life in his hometown and very active in local events, Yoshiaki was like

a "walking dictionary" – in fact, he *wrote* much of the Ojika Town History that sits in libraries. His

aim was to instill pride in and love for Ojika in his students, so many of whom left after graduation,

returning only at the annual *bon* and New Year's holidays. The Wide Area Transfer policy marked

him to leave Ojika in 1977, but he secured a rare dispensation to stay by transferring from the JHS

to Ojika ES, where he closed out his career (*Ritō Kyōshi Shuzai Han* 1984e).

Case 2, Abiru Hirofumi was born in Kamiagata Town, Tsushima and had worked as a JHS

teacher on Tsushima since he began his career. Mr. Abiru had been a volleyball team coach at Koto

JHS. In Tsushima, like other islands, sports teams from one school must travel to other towns to

find other teams to practice with and play against. Bus service is inadequate, so some players'

parents had loaned him a car. Transferred to Hitakatsu JHS in 1981, Mr. Abiru decided to buy an 8-

seater wagon for the purpose, using his own money. He pays all the gasoline costs and so forth out

of his own pocket, too. He has even taken the team to Izuhara Town, which is 90 kilometers distant

from Hitakatsu: a 5 hour round-trip. But he downplays his actions: "If you think about the cost for

tackle and use of a ship and all that someone whose hobby is fishing would pay, then it's cheap. My

hobby is sports; I practically eat and drink it, so ..." (Hayashi 1984p).

Case 3, Hisano Masayoshi, a 40 year-old carpentry teacher, was transferred from Ōmura

Technical SHS to Sasebo Technical SHS in 1977 (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai*

1979:35-39). He felt he had been cheated by the switch from a consent-based policy to a

compulsory policy; it was the ability to avoid transfers that had led him to leave his job in Ōsaka in

1966 and accept the offer of employment of the then-principal of Ōmura Technical SHS. "We are

not slaves," he wrote. "We did not put our lives unconditionally in their hands" (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō*

Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai 1979:37-38).

One frustration was that he could no longer draw on twenty years' experience when advising

students about their careers. Despite the fact that he does not know the local companies, the past

graduates, or the way things are done at Sasebo Technical he still is asked to advise them.

> In vocational schools, one transfers every six years. Because one leads a homeroom
> once or twice before being transferred to a new area, one has no time to understand
> a locality's special qualities and so on. Technical SHS students become members of
> society [= start working] at the same time that they graduate, and this six years is a
> rather short period of time in order to confirm whether or not the career paths at the
> companies and so on are appropriate for them. It is difficult to give career guidance
> at the place to which one has been freshly transferred without knowing the
> circumstances in the companies and other places where they will pursue their careers.
> In the past there were staff members who were like 'walking dictionaries,' and they
> could give such advice as how graduates had turned out [at such-and-such a place]
> and so on (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1979:38).

Three years into his new post in Sasebo he still felt that he did not know enough to properly advise his students as he had at Ōmura Technical. His ability to learn was complicated by the fact that for financial and elder care reasons he had chosen to commute from his home in Nagasaki rather than move as a *tanshin fu'nin* to Sasebo.

Case 4, Furuga Masamori, a commercial studies teacher in his mid 40s, had sought a transfer within commuting distance, but in 1979 was transferred from Sasebo East Commercial SHS to Obama SHS on the Shimabara Peninsula (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1979:74-77). He took up his post alone, leaving behind three children, his full-time homemaker wife, and bed-ridden mother. Besides concern about abandoning them, he had concerns about his community:

> For several years I have done jobs related to the children's association in the Haiki school district [near Sasebo]. In July, the Prefectural Foot-Baseball Association was organized. Because I thought that I will not be very helpful since I will part from the locality, I had declined, but through the strong requests of the people interested in forming a group, and thinking of my daughter [who would enter Haiki ES], I finally took charge of the association. In this case it has finally begun bearing fruit, but putting a local-based group together and getting it up and running takes a lot of effort. What can we expect residents who are mere spectators to do for an area that they know nothing about? So it isn't just school education, but local activities that are negatively affected by wide-area transfers (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1979:76-77).

Sympathetic people in Haiki began a petition drive to return him to the Sasebo area, Furuga said.

Cases 1-4 argue that a "mechanical" application of the Wide Area policy deprives even island communities of their best teachers. When a teacher works in a place to which he or she is committed – *i.e.*, when a teacher's personal interests, loyalties, and affections operate in tandem with their professional ones – teachers are not only more satisfied personally and professionally but more effective, they state. This benefits communities doubly, in both the classroom and local civil society. A teacher may commit to a new school, but if his or her transfer occurs at an inopportune time, one determined "mechanically" rather than reflecting his or her personal circumstances, then the teacher will face the hardships of commuting and/or separation from their family. And because they will again be transferred mechanically, they are unlikely to have enough time to become as useful as the teachers they are replacing. What's worse, many teachers – especially veteran women teachers – were quitting rather than taking up their outer island posts that those island schools were staffed mainly by fixed-term temps (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1999:103). The union therefore again called for a system of transfers based on teacher request and consent, a flexible system which would allow staff to "give their undivided attention to education" and sustain "education rooted in localities" or "hometown education"(Hayashi 1984p; Kondō 1984; *Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1977:19; *Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:91; *Nagasaki-ken Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1999:102; Oku 1979a, 1979b). Love of family and love of hometown were natural desires and a sensible personnel policy would build on and support them, rather than undermine them.

82

5.2 The Pref. BOE: correct values and professionalism lead to involvement

The Pref. BOE argued in the media and a White Paper on transfers that "hometown education" was unattainable because there weren't enough island-born teachers and if teachers never left their hometowns, the staffing problems in the outer islands would persist, and that it would be unjust because it would force college graduates from the "wrong" hometowns to do something else until an opening for which they were qualified appeared (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1977:20).

The Pref. BOE tried to goad and inspire teachers to all act as the most exemplary ones were doing. Any teacher worthy of the title had a duty to serve whatever public they were assigned to, because they are public servants and teaching is a sacred profession, a vocation – the public entrusts its children to them and should expect such service in return. Teachers who do not think this way were often derided as "salaryman teachers," teachers who were inappropriately trying to apply the standards of any run-of-the-mill salaried job to the special situation of a public school teacher. (Rohlen 1983:208 found a similar concern in Kobe SHSs during 1974-1975. Singleton 1967:113-118 gives a detailed discussion of the contrasting "role behavior" ideals promoted by the teachers unions – emphasizing the educational white-collar professional with possession of trade knowledge but also a laborer/employee in need of protection – and the administration – emphasizing the more open-ended scholar and teacher, interested in holistic education of both learning and character.)

If teachers were true professionals, then they would involve themselves in community life to the necessary degree no matter where they were assigned. Whenever such after-hours activity was required for the good of education, then teachers should be required to do it. In those cases, it was their duty, not a gift to be given or not. To not do so was to be derelict. If, however, such activity was not required, then it was a personal matter and as such a *non sequitur* in the debate about the merits of the Wide Area policy. The Pref. BOE noted how some teachers who complained that transfers had lengthened their commute, making community involvement impossible, did not move into locally available staff housing, which would have enabled them to get involved. That they aren't only shows the speciousness of their argument (*Nagasaki-ken Kyōiku Iinkai* 1977:20).

The Pref. BOE's response to those teachers who think it unreasonable to have to endure some personal sacrifice can be found in a letter to the editor quoted in the Pref. SHS Union's exposé, *The Truth about "Draft Notice" Personnel Transfers.* That exposé's author tells the story:

> In response to the Pref. Teachers Union Shimabara South Branch publication entitled 'Give Me My Mommy Back (かあさんをかえして)' which was distributed to homes in the area, a thirty-five year old full-time homemaker from Shimabara City wrote anonymously to the *Nagasaki Shinbun* the following expression of 'sympathy':
>
> > "…I understand well how necessary the mother (= the teacher) is for her child. But saying that 'Wide Area Transfers' are abnormal and inhumane? Now that she has become a teacher, she cannot be allowed to be selfish about her place of work. I fully understand the feeling that you want to look after your own children and family, but,

in awareness of the great importance of a teacher's position, I think
she will simply have to choose one or the other."

When I read this opinion, I thought this mother's 'common sense' was extremely
murky, because she is saying: *Just quietly obey the personnel transfers ordered by the BOE
without thinking clearly about what kind of conditions are needed for the sake of educational
activities – and if you don't like it, go shut yourself up in your home.* Deluded that she just has
'her own opinion' regarding education, without perceiving her own cold-bloodedness
– truly, a 'courageous' submission (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai*
1979:112).

The author calls into question whether this anonymous letter, which so clearly supports the Pref.

BOE's position, is really from a full-time homemaker and mother who is just giving 'her own

opinion.' In any event, the response is clear: if you cannot perform your professional duty due to

your family situation, then you should quit. Transfers are required for the good of the prefecture

and good teachers are making them work.

Evidence that Wide Area transferees with good motivation and values were fully able to

throw themselves into the education of their temporary posts came from *Outer Island Teachers,* the

series mentioned above. The following four cases demonstrate that even non-local teachers who

lacked comparable prior experience were effective and gained local respect because they chose to be

active even though it meant sacrificing weekday nights, weekends, and some creature comforts.

Case 1, Tokunaga Senji, was put in charge of the science club of Ishida JHS on Iki island

upon his transfer there. Not from Iki himself, he tried to think of some project that would interest

the students and be relevant to the locality, and struck upon the idea of researching a species of crab native to southwestern Japan which some studies had suggested nested on Iki's beaches. Within two years, they had found nests and at the time of the article were studying how to keep and raise them (*Ritō Kyōshi Shuzai Han* 1984b).

Case 2, Hamaguchi Joan, then a 38-year old teacher and former SHS trumpeter, created a trumpet-and-drum corps soon after his arrival in Narao ES in 1979. In 1984 it numbered 120 5th and 6th graders. Hamaguchi said, "Playing a trumpet is hard to do, but if you keep practicing, you become able to do it. I want to let the children taste that experience." Hamaguchi tasted that experience in 1970, when, eight years after becoming a teacher, he was transferred to Aokata ES and asked to take over the special education class. He did not have a license in that, but nor did anyone else on the staff, as the previous teacher had been transferred elsewhere. This problem was not uncommon in outer island JHSs at the time because some were so small that not all the licenses needed could be found amongst the staff (*cf.* Takahashi 1984b, Yokose 1984d). Hamaguchi agreed, expecting to lead the class for two or three years, "until this one learns to talk, or this one learns to write his letters," but he remained in charge of it ever since, first at Aokata, then Iwaseura, and then Narao. Describing the time a certain girl responded verbally to a question from him for the first time, Hamaguchi said, "Someone in charge of a regular class cannot understand how powerfully moving that event was. To know that, by persevering even when I thought it might be futile, I was

able to reach the children was wonderful." His special kids participate in the town parade along with

his trumpet-and-drum corps (*Ritō Kyōshi Shuzai Han* 1984a).

Case 3, Iwamoto Taiji (age 30) and Minako (age 29), a teacher-teacher couple transferred in

1981 to the tiny Kuroshima Branch campus of Takashima ES (North Matsuura County). The

couple noticed that the lively, well-behaved children – most of whom were related – became shy,

withdrawn, and quick to give up when they left Kuroshima island for athletic meets and so on. To

help the children gain self-confidence in front of strangers through a sense of accomplishing a big

goal, the couple devised a "Let's All Run To Tōkyō!" athletic program: Almost every day, the seven

pupils and four staff members gather to run, tallying their daily progress toward Tōkyō, 1200 km

distant. Four months after its inception the school had "reached" Okayama Prefecture.

Their local involvement extended beyond the school grounds. In their first year Taiji

organized a summer softball tournament for five all-ages teams; it became an annual event. He also

was frequently asked by the older people to join in their gateball games. The head of the PTA said

that Taiji "takes the lead in participating in island activities, and takes good care of our children. For

the residents, he is a true leader. If possible, we'd like him to stay a long time." As for Taiji, even

though he has completed the six years of required Area C service, he isn't hoping to leave

Kuroshima: "The local people do so much for us," he explained. Minako, who just gave birth, has

a slight reservation because the nearest health clinic is on the main island of Takashima, while

hospital care requires a trip to the mainland. When her son has become feverish after regular ferry service had ended for the day, she had to seek help from local skippers. But Minako's mother, a retired teacher who served in the outer islands, supported an extended say: "They'll do fine. I'd like them to treasure the heart-to-heart links between themselves and the local people, and do their best for the sake of the children" (*Ritō Kyōshi Shuzai Han* 1984f).

The story of hard-working, caring teachers overcoming their initial trepidation by diving into the welcoming arms of the local community and finding along the way that they wish to linger is a heart-warming one, which is why it appears several times in *Outer Island Teachers*. The most memorable stories involve teacher-teacher couples working at small branch ESs, which are the rare exceptions to the rule that married teachers cannot work at the same school. Besides the Iwamotos, the series also introduces Ōno Yoshimitsu and Akiko at Tsuki-no-ura Branch ES (Gotō Islands) and Honda Yoshimitsu and Sachiko at Mushima Branch ES (Gotō Islands).

Case 4, Osaki Taketoshi, was transferred from Nagasaki City to Tomie ES (Gotō Islands) in 1982. A former championship pitcher, Osaki approached the principal and the head of the PTA about starting up a school softball team, with the goals of going to the prefectural championships in three years and winning the all-Kyūshū championship in five years. With their agreement, the team was born that July. At first, many parents thought he was too strict, and many children quit the team. Over time, however, parents – and fellow teachers, too – began to see the fruits of his tough

regimen. Some of their comments: "They have developed a greater sense of responsibility in all their actions." "Their morals are now correct." "They are more willing to study and their ability to concentrate has improved." "You have to be that strict if you are going to build a solid foundation all the way from nothing." Parents began coming to watch practices and the team began winning.

This story hit several popular and enduring Japanese cultural themes: the goodness of self-sacrifice in pursuit of a goal; the love hidden inside a master's hard training (Kondo 1990:234-241). Gym teachers exemplify the whole-child education approach to the teacher role (Rohlen 1983:233). But it was Osaki's choice to dwell within his school district that really caught the journalist's eye:

> They say that there are few teachers these days who really immerse themselves in a local community. When he was posted to Gotō, Mr. Osaki's wife, Fumiko (age 35), wished to live in Fukue City, where the living is more convenient. But in spite of her opposition they moved into the teaching staff housing. From the school to their home the distance is barely 100 meters. Now, even Fumiko helps out by bringing barley tea to the children at practice. As they grow ever closer to the community around the teaching residence, the great flowering of Mr. Osaki's strong community-oriented education is upon them (*Ritō Kyōshi Shuzai Han* 1984c).

Even though he could have commuted from the largest and most comfortable settlement in the Gotō Islands, Taketoshi knew that doing so would prevent him from devoting time to the students. The story suggested that it was in large measure this personal sacrifice and dedication that gradually won over the community. (If you are cynical, however, you might say that he put his own interest in softball above his wife's comfort!)

89

The importance of being dedicated to one's task and accepting of personal sacrifice was

summed up by Matsuo Setsuo, who in 1984 had recently completed his required outer island tenure,

also on Fukue Island, and was then the principal of East Nagasaki JHS in Nagasaki City. Matsuo

claimed to have been rejuvenated by his three years at the little island school. He conceded that an

outer island assignment creates much unease in terms of living conditions and one's relationships.

But those hardships are made bearable by focusing on what one can do working with one's fellow

teachers for the outer island children. In this, Matsuo was trying to exemplify a maxim he attributed

to a writer named Takeshita: "It is extremely important to accept the conditions which have been set

before you, stand firm above them, and work hard on yourself" (Matsuo 1984).

Like the softball coach Taketoshi, Matsuo had to overcome the suspicion of the locals:

> how many times did I hear some people of the island say, 'Teachers will soon return
> to where they came from, so ....' But at those times, I remembered the words at the
> outset [= Takeshita's maxim], that if I work with a sincere heart, I will certainly gain
> their understanding. Privately, I muttered to myself that I wanted to be a person
> from whom they were unwilling to part.

Although some locals might be suspicious of the commitment of transient teachers given that their

deepest interests are expected to lie elsewhere (*cf.* Siu 1952), for Matsuo, his transient condition

could only be accepted, leaving him the choice of how to face it.

Matsuo's argument conforms to the Pref. BOE's, that teacher involvement in the school and school district is a teacher's duty, but like any duty, discharging it well warrants pride and praise. In the same paper as Matsuo's article ran then Pref. Superintendent Itō Shōroku's summary reflections on the profiles of the active Outer Island teachers contained in the year-long newspaper series:

> Teachers who are covered in dirt and earnestly getting down to work with the children of outer islands face to face; schools in which the mutual training of teachers is made whole and right by the correction of imbalances in their age composition; schools where **education rooted in local areas** is implemented by teachers having a variety of experience: Grappling with school-making in this way is born from teachers' desire and sense of duty (Itō 1984, emphasis added).

Waxing poetic about teachers' heroic perseverance in the face of hardship, Itō asserts that "education rooted in localities" is a matter of "desire and sense of duty" – implicitly refuting the unions' position that it is dependent on a teacher's birthplace or personal preference. Framing the matter this way made teachers who complained appear petty or self-absorbed.

5.3   What to make of these stories of heroism and sacrifice?

Not all the stories in the series are straightforward cases of the will to do one's duty overcoming all obstacles. One of the more complex stories is that of Sakamoto Yukihiro, a JHS teacher marked for Wide Area transfer (Hayashi 1984j, 1984k, 1984m, 1984n, 1984r, 1984s). His

91

story reveals how unbidden Wide Area transfers could force teachers' personal and professional lives into conflict, and how either choice, personal or professional, can involve heroic self-sacrifice.

Sakamoto Yukihiro in 1980 was a 40-year old JHS teacher living in Sasebo with his wife Junko – three years his junior and also a JHS teacher – and three ES-age children, very near to both their parents. Having spent his entire career in Sasebo, that April he was transferred to Ariake JHS, far away on the Shimabara peninsula. Because both sets of parents had health problems, Sakamoto went to his post alone (as a *tanshin fu'nin*). But after he left, his youngest daughter, a daddy's girl, began to have stomachaches. The doctors could find no medical cause, so an emotional trigger was suspected. For her sake and in order to be with his parents, Sakamoto decided to return home every weekend. As it turns out, his father would die a year after his transfer, and his mother thereafter became bed-ridden and entered a nursing hospital, which would seem to vindicate his decision. However, he expressed guilt to the reporter for not getting to know his students well enough and hence forcing his students to pay a price for having a transferee teacher. "For the four years I was at Ariake JHS, because Saturday and Sunday were shot, I didn't have club activities. Clubs are an important link to student guidance. I regretted doing that and I feel rotten for the students," he confessed (Hayashi 1984j).

At the end of his required four-year Area B stint, he was marked for an Area C transfer. Although he hoped for some island with good access to Sasebo, he was transferred to Tsushima.

92

Junko, meanwhile, had been marked for a Wide Area transfer the year before, but had received consideration of her need to care for their ill parents and been assigned to an Area B school only an hour by bus from the family home. Once again there was nothing for it but for Sakamoto to go to his post as a *tanshin fu'nin*. This time, too, he had resolved to come home as often as possible, but because of the expense and distance he was not sure that he could make it as often as once a month. There is airplane service from Nagasaki to Tsushima, but the few seats quickly filled up, particularly when flights were cancelled due to poor weather, which often occurred. Ferry service was more reliable, but it took almost six hours to reach Kyūshū, and the port of call was not in Nagasaki Prefecture but in Fukuoka Prefecture, at Hakata. From Hakata to Sasebo took another three hours by train or highway bus: a nine hour trip each way.

So, unable to go home regularly, as a consolation he became a proper teacher and public servant again. He took charge of a homeroom, managed the girl's volleyball club, and joined a community folk dancing circle. Although the Wide Area policy will have caused him to miss almost eight years of the lives of his children, not to mention his wife and other important people, he told the journalist that he accepted transferring because he recognized that outer island service is necessary in Nagasaki Prefecture. Thinking about his new school, he said, "I think all teachers think like this, but whatever I have, I want to give it all to the students" (Hayashi 1984s).

Sakamoto's case illustrates the transferee's dilemma. What was at stake was not an individual or self-contained problem, "feelings of ease and satisfaction in his private life," but a social problem, his competing obligations to two different social groups, family and work. Sakamoto desired to be a good father, son, husband. He also desired to be a good teacher, coach, co-worker, community member. He accepted the situation – having to transfer, being transferred to Shimabara, being transferred to Tsushima – and then worked as best he could. When commuting home frequently was possible (even if costly), he chose family. (But he felt bad as a teacher.) When it was impossible, he chose work. (But he felt bad as a family member.) In both situations, he had to sacrifice something dear to him and work hard to try to hold the two together, and so his actions could be seen as heroic. But he could do neither perfectly, which makes his situation tragic.

Forcing teachers to take up distant posts contrary to their requests may spur their development, but it will also force their personal and professional goals and responsibilities to compete. On this dilemma, the unions and the Pref. BOE staked out either-or positions during the policy's first decade. For the unions, teachers' family and personal lives will and should come first, so education will suffer. Self-motivated "enthusiastic" teachers will be replaced by "apathetic" and "exhausted" ones, and as this continues teachers will not begin or join new long-term projects. For the Pref. BOE, teachers' professional responsibilities to their school district should and must come first, so teachers must either accept that fact or find another profession. Education must and will

94

not suffer as a result. Yet the evidence suggests that for a majority of teachers, the response to a

compulsory transfer was not a simple case of either-or, but rather, like Sakamoto, an at-times heroic

process of striking some new balance which would allow them to meet as much as possible both

their personal and professional duties and desires.

As the rest of this dissertation shows, the themes of self-sacrifice and selfishness continued

to frame the public school teacher transferee's dilemma through the 1990s and 2000s, even as

changes in transportation and communication technology, demography, policy, and commercial and

civil development in the outer islands (where local involvement or a public and professional role was

harder to avoid and easier to meet for teachers, who were and are conspicuous and the target of

discussion) altered the field within which transferees had to make their decisions about where to

strike the balance between professional and personal duties and desires.

Part III: Accommodating and Embracing the Compulsory Transfer System (1994-2005)

6. Transfers and Professional Development: The Problem of Stagnation

The compulsory Wide Area transfer system had become a "natural (*atarimae*)" part of the job

of public school teacher in Nagasaki Prefecture by the time I returned to begin my fieldwork in

2003, a practice that was "ordinary (*futsū*)" or in any event "couldn't be helped (*shō ga nai*)." Part of

this had to do with the passage of time. Everyone I met under the age of 40 had, for all practical

purposes, only known the Wide Area system, it having become the law of the land prior to their

entering high school. Those who had worked under both the right-to-refuse system and the

compulsory Wide Area transfers were over the age of 47. And after the implementation of the

policy, the teachers unions continued to become weaker and more marginal, so teachers grew less

and less able to imagine a means to effectively challenge the policy (Gaventa 1980, Turner 1995).

But my research showed that hardly a soul wanted to. And this was not limited to Nagasaki

teachers. A mid-1990s U.S. Department of Education study of the educational systems in Japan,

Germany, and the U.S.A. presents Japan's practice of frequent transfers favorably, with benefits for

both students and teachers: it helps the former receive "equal quality" and the latter opportunities

for the "development of teaching competence" by allowing teachers to teach a variety of students and work with a variety of colleagues (Stevenson, Lee, and Nerison-Low 1998:419-420).

The study's main report had an administrative focus, so it might not be surprising that transferring was presented in a positive light and that the benefits of transferring touted therein are the same that the Nagasaki Prefecture BOE touted when it unveiled its Wide Area policy. But a sub-report by Carol Kinney (1998), based on interviews with teachers in select prefectures on the main island of Honshū in 1994 and 1995, showed that teachers too evaluated transferring positively.

Kinney's teachers accepted that not every one could get their wish with respect to transfers. Although "teachers have almost no control over their assignments," Kinney (1998) wrote, they did not see the practice as "coercive" but rather "a natural part of teachers' work careers," "necessary" to give them broader experience, and "important for both the development of individual teachers and the morale of the school." They desired transfers for a variety of reasons: They wanted to move on once they became "too intimate" or "comfortable" with a school, feeling that if they were too long in a place they would grow complacent about problems rather than fixing them. They wanted the challenge which a new assignment would bring. They wanted to learn "about many aspects of a school" not just their own specialty. And they felt that "learning about the diversity within their own society" was "an essential part of being a teacher" and that such learning came from working with children of different class backgrounds and achievement levels.

Surprisingly, despite the fact that Nagasaki has a high number of remote area schools and is

a place where transfers often entail relocation and the separation of spouses, despite the fact that I

discussed transfers in the context of their life history and explicitly asked them to give me both the

positive *and the negative* aspects of the practice, and despite the tears I had seen streaming down the

face of departing teachers in 1995-1997, my Nagasaki interviewees gave similar reasons for desiring

transfers and ultimately accepted and approved of the compulsory system of frequent transfers.

When I asked my informants to list the good points of transferring, all answered that it

prevented "*mannerika suru* (マンネリ化する)," for which my dictionary offered "getting in a rut."

Here is a typical response from Yoshihiko, who links "getting in ruts" to "human nature":

> You get refreshed (*jibun ga rifuresshu*). New (*shinki*). All over again, this feeling that
> you want to do things once more – you can make your heart fresh. So if you're here,
> say, 6 years, you're in the same place for 6 years – I mean, you get in a rut (*manneri
> narimasu*), you know? With human beings, right? No matter what, even if they think,
> 'Every year, every *single* year, I want to do my best,' even then, you know?, they can
> get too used to things and start getting lazy (*dara-dara to suru;* sluggish). So for that,
> too, in order to get refreshed, aren't 'transfers' necessary? Or if not necessary, then
> at least as far as merits go, they have that one (FN 031219).

When I first heard answers like this, they struck me as rather facile. But the answer kept surfacing as

one of the top two reasons, and since my interviewees kept saying that they preferred having

transfers to doing without, I realized I had better think more deeply about "getting in a rut" and

how it related to the other things they were telling me. Perhaps the term meant something more

complex, but even if it was simple, it was undeniably central to their feelings.

Some insight came when I shifted my view of "*jinji idō* (人事異動)*,*" the term which appears

in the title of the Wide Area policy and is used in newspapers when summarizing and discussing the

annual movement of personnel in schools, the police force, major companies, and so on. Keying

off the first translation offered by my dictionary, I had thought of it as a synonym for "*tenkin* (転勤)"

and "*tennin* (転任)" – "change of work(place)" and "change of post," respectively – events that

happen to individual employees. Japanese people will use "*idō* (異動)" this way. But I came to

realize that a closer English translation than "personnel transfers" might be "personnel reshuffling,"

which throws the focus onto rearrangement on a broader social scale. My dictionary had offered

this alternative, but I had resisted it because the term "reshuffling" sounded aimless, because it

focused on groups instead of individuals, and because it had bureaucratic and rationalist overtones,

and so I had worried that to use it would be to concede conceptual ground to a management

ideology which minimized the individual employee's suffering, suffering which my research was

going to uncover (!).

Thinking of individual "transfers" as part of a broader "personnel reshuffling" drew my

attention to configurations, to assemblages of workplace colleagues distributed amongst the various

workplaces and local publics. Focusing on how transferring creates new social environments and

moves teachers from one social environment to another and why that would be so important helped me to understand how "getting in a rut" was related to the other benefits always mentioned by my informants: "human relations/relationships (*ningen kankei*)" and "meeting people (*deai*)." The deeper connection between these two reasons for desiring transfers, and why teachers would risk family separation in order to keep transfers part of their careers, was through Japanese ideas about how groups behave and what an individual should do within one and what it means to be a professional.

The uniformity of opinion between teachers working on Honshū, where transportation is more convenient, and in Nagasaki, where transportation between outer islands and the mainland can be cut off for days due to typhoons, suggests a nationally distributed culture of teacher transferring. I argue that this distribution exists because transferring, public service, and teaching are related to deeper themes about the individual and the group, work, and professionalism.

In this chapter I discuss how teachers develop a "transferee consciousness" during the early parts of their careers, and come to appreciate that transfers help them develop into the kind of professionals they want to be. Men and women teachers alike aimed to become a "pro (*puro*)," a teacher skilled and flexible enough to teach any student well, regardless of that student's needs, someone with broad capability rather than a narrow specialist or, worse, someone who just mails it in, rather than "doing their best." In order to gain such capacity, teachers recognized that they must move to different social environments, working with different students and different colleagues.

The reason Japanese teachers would find it much more natural to enter new social environments in order to change rather than to change themselves individually *in situ* is, I argue, a reflection of the well-described "relational" understanding of the social world prominent in Japanese culture.

6.1   Becoming adapted to a career of transferring

Among my interviewees, it was common that the first transfer from a place to which they had grown attached early in their careers was shocking, even devastating – even if the transfer was not of the "Wide Area" kind that would oblige them to relocate.

Their shock is not based on ignorance of the policy. Each fall the Pref. BOE passes out policies explaining in particular what sort of teacher is marked as a transfer candidate. Confronting the questions on the Request Form and in conversations with their principals each year, particularly when they are in a marked for transfer category, teachers are reminded of their responsibility to serve in other schools and other areas (or, put another way, their opportunity to experience a different work environment). This duty is also impressed on them before they begin working, during the job interviews, when typically someone on the panel asks the applicant something like, "Are you prepared for the fact that you will be transferred, and could be sent anywhere in the prefecture, even somewhere far from here, like Tsushima?" Furthermore, if they had gone to school

in Nagasaki Prefecture, they would have seen teachers from their own schools giving farewell speeches or self-introductions due to transferring. And a considerable number of teachers are the children of teachers themselves, or had teachers in their immediate families, so have been more directly affected by transfers.

Despite their knowledge of the policy, teachers were still "shocked" when it finally happened to them for the first one or two times. Many appear not to have appreciated at the time they were hired how the Wide Area policy might impact them. They had acquiesced to something they had not yet experienced. Their understanding was not yet embodied.

Through repeated experience, though, many teachers began to consider mobility as a potential good. Becoming habituated to it, they came to prefer it, to desire it. Take this passage from an interview with Hatsune, who at the time was in her fourth year at Urabe ES on Kamigotō:

> I think 4 years is just about right. Um . . . Where I am at now, these 4 years have been the longest – if I were here forever, for many reasons, I'd lose interest, lose the feeling of freshness. After I've spent 4 years, I think, "I'd really like to meet the next class of new children." Maybe because the school is a small place I feel that way. If I were here 4 years, I would know not only the kids I have in my homeroom class, but all those kids' brothers and sisters. It would be that kind of atmosphere, living as if a family, getting closer to the parents. But I fear that if it gets to be longer than that – how should I put it? – with an atmosphere where I know these kids, um, know them too well, then on the other hand, I'd have some subconscious bias against them when I met them, like, "These kids, just somehow I can tell I won't be able to lead them by the hand" or "Oh, we won't work well together."   If you change – I think this place is good, but I will go and work at the next places for six years or so at a time, so that's why I am thinking like this. Because there's no necessity for me to transfer anywhere else [outside of my main area] after that.

But that first 3 years at [School #1] I didn't request a transfer, I never thought I'd be transferred. It was so great there that when I was told that I'd been transferred I was so shocked, I cried right in the principal's office. I said, "I don't want to go." As for the other schools, it was, I requested a change and then I got a change, so there wasn't some time where I thought, "But I wanted to stay."

You know, I think 3 years is short, but if I change after about 4 years, I don't have many regrets (FN 031018).

Hatsune, like most of the teachers with whom I spoke with, bounced back quickly from her first disruptive transfer. But bouncing back was harder for Rie and Yukiko.

Rie did not have a problem with transferring per se, but it was transferring into a high profile, very public position in the Pref. BOE and then school administration, a personnel move which she knew would entail the end of her ability to maintain a private life in her Nagasaki City apartment, that forced her to reach down into the depths of her being to find a way to adapt to it.

Rie portrayed herself as what I would call an "unwilling leader," a man or woman who did not seek office and who usually presents the work as an unwelcome and mostly thankless burden they would prefer to have avoided, but for a desire to do the duty that one has been asked to do. The "unwilling leader" is a social type which I have encountered repeatedly in Japan. Even the Japanese anthropologist Mariko Asano Tamanoi (1998: 34-38) proclaims herself one – contrasting her virtuous unsought leadership activity with morally suspect passivity and dependence. During my time in Japan, I spoke with many administrators or would-be administrators who told me they never wanted to be an administrator, but their head teacher or principal tapped them to take the head

teacher exam, and they could not refuse. I have often wondered, Why not? Why do so many Japanese leaders say these things? Is it guilt? Is it humility? Is it good manners? It is so widespread that I think it deserves further analysis. Rie's story is one that makes me temper my skepticism about the "unwilling leader" rhetoric and forces me to consider that it is not just a case of polite talk.

Rie had been working happily as a SHS teacher. She prized above all else her privacy, her ability to keep her work life and private life separate, and had been able to achieve this while living and working in Nagasaki. Her desire was to transfer within commuting distance of her small but beloved apartment until the end of her career. This suggests that she had either not faced the fact that she would be required to work in an outer island, or that she hoped that she would not be asked to make such a transfer until she was ready to retire. Given that SHS teachers' minimum tenure at a school is six or seven years and per policy can stretch to fifteen years, she might have come close.

Rie was therefore shocked and horrified when one March she received, unbidden, a transfer to the Pref. BOE. Being in administration, whether at the BOE or as a head teacher or principal, is about as public a person as one can be, she knew. So this transfer meant the end of her private life, her apartment, and her life in Nagasaki as she had known it – for she would have to live in staff housing as an administrator, and would have to leave Nagasaki to serve in the outer islands and elsewhere in the prefecture per the dictates of the BOE.

This transfer so hit at the foundations of the life that she had been leading and the plans she had been making that she turned to religious ideas to help her understand and overcome the strain. Rie believes in reincarnation, and that each new existence is training for the next one, giving the soul a chance to learn an important lesson and become more mature. She distinguishes younger, more immature souls from older, more mature ones. She feels that her soul is young and immature, and sees her desire for Nagasaki, her apartment, and her privacy as "selfishness" and "immaturity" which resulted in part from her having been doted on in early childhood. "I had to get over my *attachment* to Nagasaki," she said. The word she originally used for "attachment" was *shūchaku,* which also can be translated as "fixation," though when I asked if she meant to use a word with such a negative connotation, she offered as an alternative *aichaku*, which also can be translated as "love" and is akin to patriotism (the different roots being "*shū-,* concentration" and "*ai-,* love"). Had she a mature soul, like her father, she would accept the transfer without complaining – not without reflection, not unwittingly, but consciously – and then set about to do what it takes to make the most of it in the context of her life. But she did not have a mature soul, she said, so coming to accept the transfer was a long, hard struggle. Although I knew and it was plain to see that Rie had applied herself diligently to her job at the BOE and had done great work for the prefecture ever since, she felt it had taken her *five or ten years* to heal from the disruption of that transfer, to finally reconcile herself to the life that she had been asked to lead.

Rie said she was finally able to "give it up" and resign herself to accept what fate had given

her. "I will be a wanderer," she said. Here she used the expression *hiraki naori,* which means "to

assume a defiant attitude." The image she presented was someone throwing herself open to a fate

that cannot be avoided. She said that it represents the sense of calm which comes after admitting

that there is no other way to go but forward, no other solutions but the one in front of you. You are

ready, ready to face whatever outcome awaits you, and so in that sense what the world throws at you

in the end no longer matters. There is a touch of resignation, perhaps a hint of anger.

How did she accomplish this feat? Rie relied on two metaphors to re-imagine her life. The

first method she mentioned, which follows the reincarnation theme, was that she began to imagine

her life as a *bildungsroman,* a story of development, character, growth, soul, in which these things

come to test my character. "To live it, I can't do it," she explained in English, "but if I think of it

that way, then I can." In other words, she felt she needed some sort of mental crutch to help

distance herself from the pain and give her the strength to overcome the difficulty of refashioning

herself into a person who accepts being open to the public and being transferred.

The second method, which arguably also involves Buddhist ideas about the nature of this

worldly existence, was to look at life as if it is a play, and she is an actress who is playing the role of a

person who was promoted to the rank of principal through affirmative action, a "woman *kōchō.*"

Such a woman must do a lot of smiling and greeting of people, so that is what she did. After a

while, she said, by playing this role it became part of her real personality. If you make the effort to smile and be pleasant, even if you are exhausted, tired, grumpy, then, after a while, you find that yes, sometimes, you should do these things, it is good to do them. You come home exhausted but it is part of your personality. If I weren't so immature, Rie said, I would do these things naturally, but instead I have to use all these words – *bildungsroman,* story, play, actress – to get myself into this way of living. Rie's comments were most remarkable.

Most people, like Hatsune, bounce back quickly. A few have a harder time, with Rie being a special case. But not everyone fully adapts to transferring. Yukiko was the one informant who was uneasy about transferring in general, rather than transferring from a specific, beloved school or municipality. She was unique among my interviewees in being unable to name a merit of transferring when asked directly: "The plusses. It's not awful. It's not awful, it's just something you take for granted, so you just accept it, but if you ask me what the plus side of it is, I can't tell you. [5 second gap] What is it, I wonder." Although earlier in the course of the interview she stated that having a lot of different experiences was a plus, she, unlike all the others, did not draw an immediate connection between having a variety of experiences and having to transfer.

Yukiko felt like she was always being wrenched from a place before she had a chance to settle down, because it took her a long time to feel comfortable with a school and school district:

Yukiko: Until you get used to the atmosphere (*kankyō*) it's tough. But depending on a person's personality (*seikaku*), they might be able to get to know lots of people (*takusan no deai*). So there are some people who think it's a terribly wonderful [thing].

BPC: But, is that how you feel?

Yukiko: Um, as for me, I'm not one of those people who's really good at socializing with other people, so. Hmm. But up till now I've been fortunate to have gone to all good places. And I don't have any complaints at my current workplace, either. [.... But if it were a bad place, that would be bad.]

She resumed this point later, while explaining the negative points of transferring:

BPC: .... And the minuses are mostly being the separation from family?

Yukiko: That's part of it, but, um, it's that you are unable to get very familiar with a place (*najimi-kirenai n desu yo*). It's part of my personality, but I can't get fully used to a new place (*atarashii tokoro ni najimi-kiran ken*), so as much as possible, to be left in one place – you're at the same school, there for a long time, but then, it can't be helped, but it's getting to be the time where you have to move, and when you get moved, it's a little hard (*chotto kitsui omoi suru*), it's hard until you become familiar with (a place) – that's the sort of position I have, I don't know whether that's a good or bad thing (FN 031111).

Why did Yukiko and Rie continue to work, given how hard transferring was for them? I see two reasons: their full commitment to their profession and their lack of alternatives for financial support. Recall that Hatsune said she would consider retiring if she were transferred to Tsushima when older. Rie and Hatsune were unmarried when their disruptive transfers occurred, and Yukiko was unmarried at the time of our interview. So the timing of a disruptive transfer is of importance.

109

As discussed in the previous chapter, gender makes a difference in how one responds to it: young unmarried women occasionally quit and move back home; married women might retire; and men and older unmarried women typically soldier on until retirement.

No one else told me they had a problem getting comfortable in a new place to the degree that Yukiko did. Most said it might take a term or maybe a year to get the swing of things, but after that they were able to settle down and begin making contributions. The new school year finds veteran teachers trading information with new arrivals, and the new arrivals exploring their district, touring the sites, learning some of the local dialect, sampling some of the local cuisine, and sharing food and drink with people. One administrator shared with me this secret for getting to know and be comfortable with the people of a school district: "With tea, ten years; with *sake*, one."

Just as teachers can become expert at packing through repeated residential changes, so too can they become expert at learning about a school and its district through repeated workplace changes. Teachers may find their first or second transfers particularly hard to bear, but each transfer that they successfully handle reinforces an optimistic view of their capacity to handle subsequent ones. Such optimism diminishes their worry about the downside. And it also, I feel, prompts them to search within themselves for reasons to account for their ability to successfully live through them.

In this way, teachers I feel develop what I will call a "transfer consciousness." Christena Turner (1995:48), drawing on earlier work on ritual by Victor Turner, explained in her study of the

110

development of a protester consciousness among Japanese workers that "doing something oneself

creates a meaning that is experienced as well as thought through." After having attended several

rallies and actions with other unions and spoken up about one's own union activities, she wrote,

"what had to be made sense of was not just an external situation but one which these workers were

themselves actively creating and responding to" (Turner 1995:48). She argued that reason and

argument and calculation of interest in the abstract were insufficient to explain motivation to

participate in protest. For ideas to be motivational, a "personal sensibility" (*cf.* Strauss' "personal

semantic network," Strauss 1992, 2005), consequentially emotional in nature, had to develop:

> A personal sensibility must develop, such that struggle seems reasonable, feels right, and matters to the individual worker. … . What is necessary is that an individual be personally participating in a socially constructed action while ideas about what those actions mean are presented in a coherent and convincing way. The reasons for this struggle, for instance, must become significant in explaining *one's own* behavior and action, not just the actions of others or of the union. While workers were angry and confused about what to do, the union sent them to explain and justify their cause. It sent them into demonstrations of various kinds. Within a few weeks efforts to understand the struggle of the Unikon union were efforts to understand their own personal experience and action. Their own participation created a personally felt sense of struggle, which shaped their motivation and commitment. Furthermore, this process had to be repeated. In the early stages it might be characterized as transformative. Later it was reinforcing. Throughout the two and a half years it was critical in rehearsing the personal importance of the meaning of their collective action. … . Decisions to take certain actions or stay in such a struggle were not made once and then left alone. They were themselves part of a process of learning that is just as concerned with experience and common sense, or implicit knowledge, as it is with ideas, interests, and explicit knowledge (Turner 1995:64).

The same applies to Nagasaki teachers learning to accept transfers and relocations.

6.2   Accepting transfers as part of one's professional identity

Like Kinney's teachers, all my teachers accepted that being public school teachers obliged

them to accept transfers as part of their professional identity. Several described themselves as a

"pawn of the prefecture (*ken no mono;* 県の者)": as such, it was only natural that they must accept a

transfer to anywhere in the prefecture, that the prefecture could control where they were sent.

Others gave it a noble spin: "We are teachers," one of my informants was told by an older colleague,

"so wherever there are children to teach, there we must go." At the time she was young and single

and had just been transferred to a small school in the Gotō islands. Note that the duty is positioned

here as towards the children, rather than towards the administration. Another way teachers

described their duty was toward their fellow staff – that they had an obligation to take up a post,

because to do otherwise would inconvenience the others who were expecting a new colleague.

Being a public school teacher meant more than accepting transfers. As public servants,

teachers had an obligation to serve the public in the school district where they were assigned – by

meeting the educational needs of the students primarily, but also to serve their parents, guardians,

and the people of the area as a whole. This was not only a spatial commitment but also a temporal

112

one. Being "on call" is one way a professional is distinguished from a lower-status worker

(Zerubavel 1979; *cf.* exempt versus non-exempt employees under the U.S. tax code).

Zerubavel (1979) notes that no one can experience "pure" publicity and public time or

"pure" privacy and private time; they are analytical constructs who define each other through

opposition, and because the "public" pole takes precedence, "private time" is more of a "residual

category" (*cf.* Gal 2005 for a comparable discussion of this point). Zerubavel (1979:41) draws a

distinction between private time and leisure: "leisure is characterized primarily as time which is

optionally used" whereas "private time is characterized … as time during which one is socially

inaccessible, regardless of how it is used." He notes that privacy takes on increased importance

because people face competing demands on their time from their different roles in different social

circles (Zerubavel 1979:41), and that (in "the modern West"): "it has become generally accepted that

every person has a basic right to be socially inaccessible at certain times, for practical, as well as

symbolic, reasons" (Zerubavel 1979:45). He distinguishes "on duty" and "off duty," noting that one

can be physically present but "off duty" and therefore not play your regular "role," instead

"dissociating oneself" from it (Zerubavel 1979:47, 55). But the higher status professions do not

have rigidly separated schedules so much as flexible ones characterized by increasing amounts of

availability; for doctors the beeper enabled them to be ever available, and it, plus working during

private time, demonstrates their higher status (Zerubavel 1979:48, 54). This open-ended

commitment to being available for work has implications for the work-private life balance problem teachers face, because it means that teachers have a hard time maintaining a boundary between work and family, public and private/personal (Lan 2003, Lewis 2007, Nippert-Eng 1996).

A professional identity as a teacher was not some deep thing all teachers brought with them at the time they were hired. I always asked my interviewees why they had become a teacher, and no one told me it was because they had known that teaching was their calling. The most common answer was, "I didn't know about other careers." Having had experience with teachers and liking school, they imagined it was something they could do. Some told me that they had chosen teaching because it was easier to get into the education department than law or engineering. But having made the choice, they – with few exceptions – were committed to doing it well, or as well as they could. Granted, in the white collar professional world seniority is rewarded and career changing punished (*q.v.*). That barrier to leaving makes it easier to choose to accept one's career choice as one's lot in life. But *accepting* one's fate and *embracing* it are different things, so these diligent, dedicated teachers (like Nagayuki with the sardine fishing, whom I will discuss in a later chapter) should be praised.

As professionals, teachers saw transferring as more than a duty, but as a means to becoming the type of professional they want to be. Mostly this was presented to me in a negative fashion – *not* transferring would lead them to getting in a rut – as well as a positive fashion – a desire to learn new things, meet new people and challenges.

6.3   The problem of teaching the "same" students

Like other white collar professionals discussed above, teachers had an idea that a "pro (*puro; プロ*)" was a teacher who could handle any situation. Such professional competence came from years of experience but more importantly from having dealt with a wide variety of students and situations. Even though they were educational specialists, and even though specialization was required of JHS and SHS teachers, because the main part of a teacher's job was interacting with students, the nature of the students has a major impact on their job.

This definition of professionalism is shared by workers in other fields (Lebra 1984:238-239). *E.g.*, a public health facility worker explained to me that her responsibilities are tied to her license, so she does the same sort of work wherever she goes. But the characteristics of the population she is serving, what their needs are, differs from post to post. Is the population mostly elderly? Engaged in manual labor? Working in a certain industry? White-collar professional? It is by learning how to serve different populations, she said, that she has grown professionally (FN 031125).

Although teachers recognized that every child is different, they consider the children of a given school district to be of the same broad type or set of types – from the standpoint of what it takes to teach them and what teachers will learn professionally from trying to do so. Although the characteristics of students in a given place may change, they were not thought to change very

quickly. Hence a teacher could eventually learn all he or she might possibly learn from having to

teach students of that type. Two cases, Ririko and Seiji, illustrate this theme.

6.4   Ririko: different places have different types of parents

Ririko discussed local differences in terms of parents' behavior, and how that influences

children's behavior (FN 031025). When I asked her to compare her first and second schools, she

answered obliquely and haltingly, "Hm. When the area (*chiku*) is different, the place (*basho*) is

different, then, as you would expect – a place where the children are amicable (*odayakana*) or – often

in the center of town (*machi-jū*) – an environment (*kankyō*) – how to put it – an environment that

isn't good for children – the area surrounding the school, right? There are various things." When I

followed up on this, she focused more on the parents. Ririko had mentioned the importance of

knowing a school's "atmosphere" when evaluating a transfer. What did she mean by "atmosphere"?

She answered, "'Are the children well-behaved (*sunao*)?' Well, even if they don't listen to everything

you say, that they are as children should be. A cheerful feeling." "Well-behaved" did not entail

being "quiet," she explained, so much as being "honest" or "straight-forward." She went on:

> Ririko: Of course, it's not the children's fault, but the adults' fault, why the feeling is
> this way, wild, that's what we're talking about. …. You know, children being well-
> behaved? That is the result of parents working together and helping us. Instead of

116

just speaking ill of everything, actually moving their bodies and doing something to help. I think anybody can criticize. But people who get up and move and do something to help. That's what it is.

BPC: If – for example, "a bad place": that'd be "not cheerful"? "unruly"?

Ririko: Right, right. Even friends are bullying each other, and so on, the parents and such are complaining about the teachers all the time, attacking them. [BPC: At the PTA, you mean?] Bringing things up to the BOE, for example. [BPC: Whoa!] It has happened. [BPC: Wow.] Many principals keep coming there, but they get the principals to quit. There are a lot of cases like that, it seems. At places we don't know about.

BPC: That's tough.

Ririko: There are parents who are indifferent and don't look after their children. Neglected, the children don't even come to school. They aren't eating meals regularly – places like that. Poor things. Children like that can't go through day to day at school all well-behaved. [BPC: Right.] Those sorts of places are tough.

So in some places, the parents are critical of teachers and schools without being helpful, and in others, the parents are indifferent. In both cases, the children are troubled rather than well-behaved, and the behavior was presented as characteristic of, if not endemic to, the place.

6.5   Seiji: transferring can reveal the limitations of one's approach

Seiji focused more on the children than on the parents. Like many other teachers of his generation (late 30s/early 40s) whom I interviewed, Seiji did not pass the teacher's exam while in

college and so after graduation worked as a full-time fixed-term substitute teacher (*rinji*) while studying to retake it. Seiji spent a little over half a year doing this at a public ES near his urban mainland home. (As others did, he reckoned fixed-term assignments separately from those where he was a regular full-time employee, so what he called his "third" school was actually his "fourth.")

Seiji's first assignment as a regular full-time public school teacher lasted three years, a typical pattern since the mid-1970s. He therefore knew there was a possibility that he would be transferred after three years, but he "selfishly (*kattei ni*)" hoped that he could stay longer:

> At that time I felt like I'd only just arrived and as a teacher I was still a new person (*shin'nin*), just getting used to being a teacher in those three years, able to coach basketball, and so on. So because of basketball, and those things, the conditions at that school were by and large – How should I put this? For me – it was my first school, you know, so I felt 'attached (*aichaku*),' it was a place I really liked. I wanted to spend more time with the children at that school (FN 031106).

Like Hatsune and Rie, Seiji found transferring a shock, even though he knew it was his fate.

Seiji's disappointment left him when he went to see his new post, which was not only in the same city but also an ES he had attended as a child. Seeing how many young teachers were working there, he felt that he had arrived at a very "powerful place (*pawāfuru na tokoro*)" and, sure enough, it proved to be "a very fun place to work (*totemo tanoshii shokuba deshita ne, totemo*)." By "powerful," he didn't mean physically active per se, but rather that these young teachers had "energy" and threw it into solving tough educational problems. The school had a reputation as a tough place to work: it

was one of the bigger ESs in the city and many children there got into problems (*mondai no ko*). By getting together with those young teachers, working with those who were just a little older than him, trying to work things out, try different things, Seiji found that even as he got angry at problem kids for this or that, he felt like he understood them, "matched" them, got along with them, and that they felt the same way about him. (I kidded him that the reason he got along with those kids was that being from there he obviously had a similar wild streak, and he laughed.) So Seiji came to think that it was good that he had been sent to that school.

Seiji spent five years at this school. He hadn't requested a move prior to that, but when it got to be the fifth year, he thought "This seems rather long, doesn't it!" That came to him in part because he knew the transfer system, he admitted. It was his eighth year since starting as a regular employee, which meant that he would only have at most seven more years in his current city before being sent on a "wide area exchange" transfer to the outer islands or a perhaps far-off mainland county. Because one is rarely transferred to a school for less than two years, if he went somewhere new then he might be able to fit two more schools in before that happened (3+4 or 4+3). So, thinking he would like "to try a new atmosphere (*atarashii kankyō*)," Seiji requested a move.

As requested, he received a transfer to another school within his city. But in the end this posting ended up being for him a "trial" or "ordeal" (*shiren*). Although it was smaller, it also had children who got into problems. Seiji thought he could simply do things the way he had done them

119

at the previous school and that it would work. He explained that when he was a new teacher at the previous school, he had led class very strictly. But as time went on, he grew to wonder if he was getting too angry, so eventually he began to speak more heartfully. He had taken the long view, and bit by bit, he got things to work with them very well, such that by his fifth year there, things had grown better, more relaxed. "Aha! That's the way I should do things!" he remembers thinking. "But it didn't translate at all!" he laughed ruefully. He explained that children are watching the teachers, to see if they are strict or not. If you are gentle – or, don't seem to pay attention – then the students can look down on you, so they don't listen to what you say, and so on. And then if you get mad, you start this vicious cycle. With some children, in one year, you can only get them to change their surface behavior by being strict, not their deep-seated dispositions.

Seiji had a very hard time at this post, he said. But he also concluded that he had learned a lot there, developing his own approach. If he had not been transferred here, said he, perhaps he might have thought that he knew what he was doing and so continued in his ways all the way until he retired (FN 031106). I spoke with many teachers like Seiji, who had not perceived the existence of different local characters until they worked in different school districts. Prior to that, they assumed that in terms of children and their parents or guardians one school was like any other.

For Seiji and for other teachers, they seemed to hold in higher regard the teacher who could teach any kind of student, rather than the expert at teaching a certain type of student. A true

professional was one who had broad experience, rather than narrow experience. To develop that experience, given their perception that students in a given school district would tend to be of the same type over the short- to medium-term, required transferring to very different sorts of school districts – and usually (but not always) that implied transferring some distance away – a "Wide Area" transfer. That is why some teachers and union members decried so-called "contour-line" transfers, where (SHS) teachers are transferred but always to the same sort of school as before, college prep to college prep, lower college prep to lower college prep, vocational to vocational, small school to small school, *etc.* More than one teacher told me how this could lead to a big problem: Some SHS teachers who spend their whole careers in high-achieving academic schools, the pride of the prefecture, get tapped to enter the Pref. BOE. When these teachers, who influence policy for the whole prefecture, look out at the rest of the prefecture, they see teachers in other types of schools doing different things, or not achieving as much. But seeing it through their own experience – thinking like Seiji worried he might have that they knew all there was to know about teaching – what those other teachers are doing seems wrong. Or, even if the new BOE member recognizes that the practices appropriate to that environment might be different from what is appropriate in an upper college-prep environment, how can that BOE member devise policy for those other types of schools or propose solutions to the problems they face? In the context of these kinds of stories, of which I

heard many, teachers often used the proverbial line: "A frog in a well / not knowing the sea (*I no naka no kawazu / Taikai wo shirazu;* 井の中の蛙 / 大海を知らず)."

6.6   The problem of working with the same staff

Teachers also wish to develop by taking on new roles and learning new ideas. Working in the same school with the same colleagues would limit their ability to do so.

With respect to role-based learning, public schools commonly rotate staff through teaching and administrative responsibilities within a school. Teachers may move up with their homerooms, teaching 1st grade one year, 2nd grade the next, and 3rd grade the year after that. One year they might be on the student guidance committee, and the next, serve on the academic affairs committee. Not all roles are open to a teacher: coaching jobs, *e.g.,* do not change as often. But there is a bias towards variety. As staff leave different roles will open up, creating the "room" and the "necessity" for a teacher to step into a role that had theretofore been closed to them. (Transfers help by creating more openings than would exist through retirement alone.) Nevertheless, because there is a finite number of roles at any given school, Japanese teachers eventually will play all the different roles open to them there. After that, there is only repetition. To develop further – by supervising a larger club, or by leading student guidance in an urban school – a teacher must transfer out.

With respect to learning from colleagues, teachers generally believe that their colleagues, especially their *sempai,* are the best source of practical, professional knowledge. The prototypical Japanese model of learning a trade or skill is for a student to find a teacher or *sempai* to model oneself after*,* growing under his or her expert tutelage, ideally alongside other learners. This model is related to general Japanese ideas about appropriate behavior in a group: to know your place, to defer to those with experience, to watch and listen and learn before doing something oneself, to help those who are your juniors, and so on. (Creighton 1996:206-207 says mentors are ideally the same gender as their disciples, but I found many cross-gender mentorships in the 1990s and 2000s.)

Principals and head teachers, at least those viewed as good ones, take an active interest in cultivating their staff. Some hosted get-togethers for their staff, opportunities to work together and grow closer as a team. Administrator housing is generally larger, the better to accommodate guests from the school and the school district.

The organizational structure of schools facilitates the exchange of knowledge amongst colleagues. Much work within a school is done by work groups – standing or *ad hoc.* The use of work groups not only spreads the workload but promotes staff collaboration and the exchange of ideas. Besides the standing committees already mentioned elsewhere, teachers have or had other work-related opportunities to work together, such as when doing night patrol duty of the buildings and grounds (this is no longer done); supervising in the school's dormitory if there is one (as there is

at several SHSs). Although such after hours work put an extra burden on teachers, teachers told me that besides being a time when teachers developed close relationships, such duties were also times when teachers discussed work problems and shared pedagogical insights (e.g., FN 050805).

It is easy for those living in staff housing to spend time with one another. I lived in teacher housing when I worked in Kamigotō. My building was one of three staff apartment buildings next to one another, one for teachers with families, the others for people like me who lived alone. A few times a year we would have cookouts, and interested teachers would contribute money to the kitty, which would be used to buy the food and drink. These were generally well-attended. Also, at my school there was a network of teachers who were very social, playing together in the municipal night softball league and volleyball tournament, but also frequently getting together casually in the evenings to chat, watch TV, even play video games, all the while drinking and eating. One unmarried middle-aged teacher, Ichirō, was the leader of this group and hosted most of the get-togethers. Some evenings stayed quiet, involving two or three teachers. But on other occasions things escalated into a rather raucous party. Someone would suggest calling up another teacher and inviting him or her over, then later another might be called, and so on. New arrivals show up with beer, a bottle of liquor, snacks, or what have you. By the end, there might be a dozen or more male and female staff members in attendance. The conversation did not always or even mostly concern teaching practice. It was often light and humorous. But at times it became quite serious and quite

124

focused on such matters. And growing closer to one another after hours in this way helped one collaborate more during working hours.

At its best, a school staff is exchanging ideas and working together to do their best for the students. But even when this exchange is running well, if the staff never changed, new ideas would have a hard time entering the system. That is how my interviewees saw it.

There are four reasons why a teacher can soon reach a limit as to what they can learn from a given group of colleagues at a given school. First, teachers can only work with what they have. They may be aware of many courses of action, but if the students are not of such a type that a given situation presents itself, then the opportunity to put some plan into action and learn from it will not present itself either. Or they may be aware of a course of action they would like to try, but they lack the resources to put it into action.

Second, knowledge distributed among the staff is quickly disseminated, given the social and spatial organization of the school. The existence of multiple groups (coupled with the after-hours socializing that goes with group activity) means that teachers in all but the larger schools will within four or five years have worked with all their colleagues on some task or another and had a chance to solve problems together. And the fact that Japanese teachers' main desks are in a central "open office" room, rather than distributed across the campus in individual classrooms, means that teachers come together throughout the day, are visible and hence available for consultation and

collaboration, as well as able to hear much of what is said in the office. This facilitates and hastens the dissemination of knowledge throughout the staff.

Third, because all teachers face the same student population (one viewed to be mostly unchanging), all teachers are in a sense facing the same problems and opportunities to learn (at least over time, as teachers cycle between different grades and other work groups) and the space in which they can learn (through practice, through action and reflection, *hansei*) is likewise shared, common, public. If this environment does not change, then what can be learned from practice in it is limited; and if one's colleagues are facing the same problems, then they are not learning much of a different nature, but rather the same sorts of things that one is learning oneself. A teacher is motivated to consider a response to, *i.e.* learn from, all a school's problems, even those which he or she is not obliged to deal with due to working group membership, because practically there is the potential for the action and the response to impact one's own area of the school and culturally there is the idea that all the staff of a school bears a collective responsibility for all that occurs at that school.

Fourth, because teachers face the challenges and problems of this shared environment socially, as members of work groups, solutions emerge, are implemented, and are reviewed and refined socially, which requires consensus and coordination, and given that norms for good group behavior emphasize deference to precedent and to one's elders (*sempai*), as well as a commitment to implement the group decision even if it was not one's favored course of action at the outset, then

126

once the group has found a course of action that it can agree on and appears sufficiently workable, it can be hard to change. Teachers have greater discretion when it comes to style of teaching or the activities and homework used to teach a lesson or a skill, but most of their actions must be coordinated with that of their colleagues (those in the same grade or those teaching the same subject); with curricular goals set by Tōkyō, Nagasaki, or the municipality; and so on.

Social pressures dampening innovation come not just from one's colleagues, but also from the parents, guardians, and alumni too. Schools are a major component of local community life, especially in rural areas – and many activities are open to the public and so are available for public evaluation and comment. Being a target of evaluation in this way can encourage people to act conservatively, to follow a precedent that has been proven acceptable, rather than trying to do something radically different. Such a conservative reaction may exist around the world, but in Japan it is dignified with a proverb, "the nail that sticks up gets hammered down."

Yukiko told me that in ESs a transferee is rarely assigned to teacher 1st grade or 6th grade, because these positions are too pivotal in a child's career (the beginning of their educational career and the year where they prepare for the transition to JHS respectively) so the interaction with the parents is very high and they can be very critical – it is asking quite a lot of a new teacher who doesn't yet know the ways of the school to fill that role when the visibility and repercussions and possibility of displeasing parents is so high (FN 031111).

127

One outer island ES principal of a small outer island school (enrollment, 86) in Nagasaki

Prefecture told a reporter in 1984 that

> [Reporter paraphrasing:] The greatest problem facing extremely small schools … is
> the meagerness of the social conditions (*shakai-sei no toboshii*). With just ten or so kids
> in a grade, everyone knows everyone else's character thoroughly (*seikaku mo
> shiritsukushi*), there's a limit to what they can do for good or bad. There's no problem
> of school violence or delinquency in small island schools. [Quote from Principal:]
> "The question is, when these children enter a group, can they truly establish
> themselves firmly (*kono kodomotachi ga shūdan no naka ni haitta toki, hatashite jiko wo
> shikkari kakuritsu dekiru darō ka, to*)" (Hayashi 1984d).

The principal's concern, which was shared by administrators, rank-and-file staff, and locals, was that

these island students who had grown up in a limited and contained social environment might not be

able to handle themselves in the wider world, among strangers, where competition reigned (because

it was not hemmed in by the leveling of others). Responding to this concern, they devised many

activities such as academic, sports, and cultural activities rewarding persistence and endurance

and/or putting them in the public eye and field trips and exchange programs off-island.

I believe this is the same logic Japanese public school teachers were using when they

reasoned that transferring was necessary in order to get out of ruts. Teachers did as much training

and studying as they could on-site and during off-campus seminars but to really break through to a

new level would require a transfer, where teachers enter a new social environment with new social

challenges and social resources.

6.7 Yukiko: the pressure on teachers to fit in rather than innovate

Just as transfers pull away incumbents to create opportunities for others to take on new roles in a given school, transfers also bring new teachers with different skills and experiences to a school – new colleagues to learn from and people who might nudge the school in a new direction. The Pref. BOE said that the best way to change "stagnant" schools was by sending in new staff, "to set a fresh breeze blowing through them" (Hayashi 1984q). But the conservative pressures just described limit the power of teachers to innovate upon arrival in a new school. Arriving teachers face pressure to conform to precedent, rather than push for change.

Yukiko presented very clearly the tension between the desire to innovate by sharing familiar best practices from past experience at other schools and the desire as an outsider (non-local) to be respectful of local traditions by showing deference to local wishes, especially since non-local Wide Area transferees stay only a short while (FN 031111). Although given her personality she may have been more sensitive to this issue than most, it was a theme I encountered in my other interviews.

During our interview, Yukiko mentioned several times the importance of exercising restraint when offering one's opinion about school practices. Those who do not do this risk being seen as pushy or arrogant or selfish. The first time the theme emerged was when she talked about a rumor she had heard that they might eliminate the requirement for teachers from the mainland to

serve in the outer islands against their will, because the number of island posts was going down and

the number of people wishing to make the outer islands their main work area was rising. I asked if

she thought that would be good if it turned out to be true.

> Yukiko: I wonder. There's one side of it which is that it's good to be able to go to a
> lot of different places, but then there's the opposite, that it makes people lonely to
> part from their hometowns (*jimoto kara*). Then, right?, for a person from outside to
> mess up (*hikkakimawasu*) my own hometown – if I'm in Tabira Town, say, and a
> person from Gotō comes and starts putting into the workplace their Gotō way of
> doing things (*Gotō no yarikata de*), I think I might dislike that. Because I'm a bit
> selfish (*wagamama*).

> BPC: What's an example of "a Gotō way of doing things"?

> Yukiko: Not a way of doing things in Gotō, but just the way of doing things in
> whatever place. For example, our principal, Mr. Tadashi, makes his hometown
> tremendously important. He himself is from Kamigotō, a teacher from Arikawa, so
> he loves his hometown tremendously. Coming here to his hometown (*jimoto*),
> working as a teacher in the area (*chiiki*) where this school is makes him happy, I
> think. But with that, if a teacher from Nagasaki or Sasebo or wherever came and
> started doing things like they did over there (*mukō no yarikata*), he doesn't like that
> much, it seems (*chotto iya mitai*). He'd say the teacher was messing things up
> (*hikkakimawasu*).

Yukiko went on to give me an example of how one of her colleagues who was from the

mainland had championed a change that rubbed Tadashi the wrong way: addressing teachers as –*san*

rather than –*sensei* (a policy which deconstructed teachers' authority, making them more accessible).

> … they don't accept that way of talking here in Gotō. 'Everything's getting messed
> up, you're messing everything up, you're only here four years and you just mess

130

everything up by doing things the way you like to and then up and go back' – so it seemed Tadashi felt he'd like Wide Area Personnel Transfers to stop. Me too, right? If I were in *my* hometown, and some person from some other place (*tochi*) started doing things the way they do them in that person's birthplace, probably I'd be a little ticked off too, I think. [BPC: You think so?] Yeah, I think that's what I'd think. We have this way of doing things here. We've been doing things this way since way back (*mukashi kara zutto*), people think, so they don't like it to be changed.

But, now, I think if I go to another place (*tochi*), they'll accept my way of doing things. 'Cause I'm self-centered, right (*jibun chūshin de ne*)? [BPC: Everyone's like that, I think.] I think there's a lot of times I thought, "In Hirado it was done this way, so why isn't like that here?"

Later in the conversation, we were talking about how it would be if there was no change at a

school. This provoked her to describe how beneficial transferring was because teachers could get

new ideas and avoid falling into a rut:

If it stayed the same all the way, how'd that be, I wonder. I bet that it'd get so that you couldn't deal with new things. Because, now, all these various teachers coming from all these various schools are put together – "Ah, when I was at this school over here I did this sort of thing, you know," "We had this method at the place I came from" – and since a variety of stimuli (*geki*) to the children through a variety of methods – that's a good point, isn't it. You've got change. So, if there never was any change, then – "We did this last year, so let's do it again this year" – doing things exactly as they'd been done the year before, year after year, even in the case of one Athletic Meet, it'd be just like it was the same as last year's, so with respect to that point, you know, when the members change, getting a variety of different breezes (*kaze*), right? Learning the ways of doing things in a variety of places and pulling together all the best ones, you can really improve things. [BPC: Makes sense.] But, you know, with that too, it depends on the person concerned. (laughter) I don't want a mean person to come, or anything like that.

I immediately called her on the contradiction, whereupon she leaped for a golden mean: In one's first year at a place one should be quiet, but then over time one could offer more suggestions:

BPC: That's true. But, as you said before, a person like the principal, in his or her hometown – 'We do things this way, let's think about it this way,' and so on. But now, you've said that due to transfers (*tenkin*) many possibilities arise.

Yukiko: Yes, yes. For that, balance (*baransu*) is really it, isn't it. Changing too much is bad. Changing what's been handed down from the past in this or that place is bad, but, I think adopting new things is also good. It's that balance, you know? You can't have all this new stuff coming all the time, or else people will say, "Stop," "Don't butt in," "Shut up." Just the right degree [lit., 'breeze'], a proper degree. That's what I think. They say *onkochishin* (温故知新) [= learning from history; literally, 'warm up the old and learn a new method'], don't they?   But striking a good balance sure is important. When I transferred, when I left [School #9], what my *sempai,* a teacher, said was, "It's important to say that 'At [School #9] we did this, at [School #9] we did that,' but saying it too much is absolutely out, people will get irritated at that, so saying it too much is no good, OK? But if there's something that you can say, 'The way of doing things at [School #9] was truly good,' then introduce (*toriirete*) that to your new school. But it's best if you don't say 'At my previous school we did it this way, at my previous school we did it that way' too much, because people will get irritated."

BPC: Balance seems tough, doesn't it. To what extent should you put in new ideas?

Yukiko: Right, that's why in the first year pretty much people just stay quiet. "What's this school like?" [BPC: Ah, they're just waiting a bit.] Hanging back. Then, starting in the second year, people start giving their own opinions more and more. Usually that's what teachers (*sensei*) do.

BPC: That's what it looks like. Anybody, in their first year, is a little careful. If someone starts throwing all this stuff out in their first year, people will say he or she's annoying.

Yukiko: Right, that's what they think.

BPC: "Why is he/she just acting like they can do whatever they want?"

Yukiko: "Shut up!" they'll think.

I tried to venture the idea that a truly special character might be able to pull that off without irritating people. Perhaps because my Japanese was off, she picked up on the idea that it was a rare person who did it at all, and gave an example of one who tried, but gave offense in the process:

> There are people who don't worry (about what others may or may not say). Yōhei-*sensei* was like that, from his first year changing the school atmosphere one part after another. From the women teachers, like, "Why? Why?" I was always saying that too. No, it was my second year. I was a year earlier. "Why are you acting like you own the place [literally, 'making such a big face'] right from your first year?"

My wife hypothesized later that it was the mismatch between Yōhei being *new* to the school but also being *older*. I had seen this ambivalent treatment of transferees when I was working at the SHS. The youngest new arrivals were more deferential than their years would call for, all else being equal; the oldest were often less so, but still carried themselves with a bit of restraint. The same could be said of administrators, even for local-born ones, as Yukiko said:

> Yeah, your first year, you gotta keep quiet. Even that principal was quiet in his first year. [BPC: Oh?] He was quiet. "Oh," he'd say, or like that. We came together, so it'll be his third year coming up. Starting last year he really started speaking up.

Nine months later, I was walking with Tadashi and he echoed Yukiko's thoughts precisely:

"In your first year, you just observe, carefully (*kansatsu, jitto*). In your second year, you talk, and can

compare the old to the new teachers." A new place is unfamiliar and so discomforting at first, but

eventually you get used to it, because you just have to (FN 040811; *cf.* Roberts 1996:231-232).

Returning to the topic with Yukiko later in the interview, she accepted my suggestion that no

longer being the new kid on the block helped a teacher feel more secure, too:

> BPC: *Sensei,* when you first arrive, you've got uneasiness or feel restraint, but how
> many years does it take before you've gotten used to a place, before you can give
> your own opinions – "show my own skills" as it were? Does it take just one year?
> Do you think you can do that from your second year on? Or does it take longer?

> Yukiko: Yes, really, when can you do that? For me, even now – [BPC: It's your third
> year now?] – Right, it's my third year, but I can't just throw them out there all that
> much. You know? How to put it? You look at the eyes of the people around you
> (*mawari no me*), they're looking at you like, "It's just your first year yet, you (*anta*),"
> you go and worry about other people's eyes. But when it gets to be your second
> year, you know a bit more about things at that school, so it gets a little easier to give
> your opinions.

> BPC: Particularly because new people come?

> Yukiko: Yeah, right. Because now you are in the position where you have to teach
> them, so it gets where you are giving your opinions and so on much more. "At this
> school we do these sorts of things, so" – you talk to them, and they listen to you.
> You play the *sempai* role, right? (*Senpai men shite ne.*)

134

Yukiko's remarks point to how the staggering of transfers combines with the conservative

norms for group action to curb transferring's transformative power. Even in the outer islands,

where turnover is the heaviest, the entire staff does not change at once. (The early versions of the

Wide Area policy explicitly stated that no more than 15% of a school's staff could change per year.)

The Pref. BOE staggers transfers so that there is continuity, minimization of the loss of local

knowledge / maximization of local knowledge transfer, and smaller disruption to the community

and the school. Staggering is especially important in the administration, the principal and head

teacher. I have never heard of both administrators being transferred in the same year "on purpose."

During my fieldwork, however, a municipal election led to a change in the administration, and the

new chief administrator brought in a principal from a local school as his new superintendent. This

set in motion a chain of transfers which left one school in the region with a new principal and a head

teacher who had been at the school less than half a year. According to the staff there, the

administrators were more interested in respecting that school's way of doing things, to keep things

on an even keel as much as possible for the sake of the students. The last thing any administrator

wants is for some disruption to occur which might be perceived by the parents and guardians as

affecting the students' studies – worst of all, their preparation for entrance exams. So, even though

they had the power and the opportunity to revolutionize, they only changed the style.

(This is different from the private sector, where there is more room for change. That greater room for change creates the possibility for mischief, which is one reason why Rochelle Koop (personal communication), a Chicago-based business consultant who works with Japanese and American multinational companies, criticizes Japanese style personnel reshuffling. In the cases with which she is familiar, what has happened is that a new manager arrives, starts a whole mess of new initiatives, then leaves before they are finished; his or her successor comes in, ends all the prior initiatives, and issues a whole mess of different ones – a horrible waste of time and effort for those who work under these managers, and for the company as a whole.)

The unions, too, emphasized the importance of deferring to the desires and needs of the local community, desires seen as being tied to the preservation of local traditions. This fits with their championing of "teachers rooted in local areas" (*q.v.*). As one of their criticisms of compulsory Wide Area transfers, the SHS unions criticized those teachers who, forcibly sent to the outer islands, went not with a desire to learn and to work alongside the locals as the voluntary dispatches had, but with a critical eye and consequently, in "an excess of 'rationalism (*gōri-shugi*),'"a desire to make over the island SHSs into images of the top academic SHSs on the mainland, such that the whole prefecture becomes bureaucratic, formal, and standardized (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1979:12-13). As some islanders stressed then, and in the outer island remote area schools studies of the 1960s, and in the newspaper series on outer island teachers in 1984, and during my

136

fieldwork in the 2000s, the islands are never going to be the mainland, so one should not throw away the islands' advantages in a futile attempt to make them so. "Kids from outer islands are raised up well and are good kids," the principal of a small outer island ES mentioned above told the reporter in 1984. "It is not that that solid base should be taken away, but that some other things should also be taught to the children" (Hayashi 1984d). Finding that balance, as Yukiko said, is hard.

This conservatism in the education system even dampens innovation when it is sent from above. Aspinall (2001:104) notes that it took the Nakasone-inspired educational reforms ten to twenty years to take root, and that such slow change is more typical of educational change in general than the rapid upheavals of the Meiji and Occupation eras, given the often-competing interests of different parties and factions in government, different bureaucracies, the unions, the institutions which train teachers, the textbook and private test-preparation industries, and parents' groups.

The preceding discussion shows that even *with* transfers sending old colleagues out and new colleagues in, schools are conservative environments. Interpersonal dynamics and the social and public nature of most actions promote conservatism. If good outcomes were achieved in the past, then there is no need to innovate unless a key person leaves, making it impossible to do what was done in the past. That is why teachers consider schools to be places where one can learn a certain kind of lesson or develop in certain kind of ways, rather than as places where one can develop in any

direction. That is why most teachers did not want to stay put. Most said they felt ready to move on

after a number of years. How many? Teachers, particularly those who had transferred a few times,

were well able to explain to me why the standard (minimum) terms in use by the Pref. BOE were in

fact "normal" or optimal for them personally (irrespective of the fact that the standard tenures were

different in secondary and compulsory education), barring some family exigency.

6.8   Summary

All of the fifty teachers with whom I spoke, except Yukiko but including Saori, thought

transferring's merits outweighed its demerits. So although the late March announcement that they

must separate from all their current relationships retains its power to shock and sadden, the two-

week transfer season is a time both bitter and sweet, a time of tearful goodbyes and furious activity,

but also of trepidation and excitement about what is to come.

Teachers told me that transferring helps them give their best to students, get out of ruts,

meet new people and new challenges, and grow and develop as professionals. A professional, as

they saw it, had a multi-faceted competence, a breadth of experience. Such competence came from

taking on different roles, from teaching different types of students, and from working with different

colleagues. Without change in the workplace, opportunities for them to do something new and

different eventually dry up, and teachers will slip into ruts, doing what they have always done rather than stretching, growing, and developing.

The discussion of the conservatism of groups and the restraint one should have when entering one reveals another facet of teachers' desire for transfers. During my interviews, teachers identified two ways in which being "stuck" in the same social environment can be a problem: the first was that opportunities for learning would dry up, but the second was that social stagnation exacerbates interpersonal problems, creating an unhealthy, unproductive atmosphere. Given the high degree to which public school teachers must work with the public and each other, and given teachers' highly-visible and central role in local society, especially rural society, interpersonal friction will be hard to escape and will cast a large shadow over their days. In the next chapter I discuss how frequent transferring alleviates teachers' problems in this area.

7. Transfers Alleviate Social Conflicts and Limits to Growth

The job of a teacher is a very social one. Within the school, teachers must work with their colleagues closely, often on standing committees, to accomplish various administrative and school-wide goals. Outside of school, teachers are expected to meet with parents and guardians during PTA meetings and at school events, which are frequent, but also, ideally, to be a community resource for education in the broadest sense. Schools and school teachers are often the center of continuing education activities, particularly in rural areas, and anything to do with children, such as child safety, delinquency, and health, are matters which could involve teachers. Schools play a leading role in civic life because the school year is longer, academic performance is so determinative of a child's future, and schools face little institutional competition (from churches or temples, for instance) as the site outside the family where young Japanese are to learn their values. This makes school teachers, particularly public school teachers, highly visible and held to a high standard.

Given the centrality of social interaction with colleagues and the public to the teacher's job, having smooth social relations with both is a major goal of teachers. When relationships do not go

smoothly, therefore, teachers face a major problem. Teachers I interviewed prized transfers because

they allowed teachers to escape these unpleasant situations and "reset" or "refresh" themselves, and

therefore helping teachers endure them in a mature and seemly fashion.

7.1   Transferring makes it easier to maturely handle interpersonal conflict

The clearest statement of this problem was the case of outright enmity and conflict between

specific people. Often my informants made this point by referring to "*iya na hito*," literally, "bad

people, unpleasant people." Having to face these bad people day after day, either at work or on the

street or both, struck most of my interviewees as most unpleasant, most unwelcome, and one of the

main reasons they wanted to keep the system of transfers.

A young administrator, Yūsuke, made this point by contrasting public school teachers,

whose transfers send them to different buildings, with public servants at the town hall, whose

transfers might at best send them to different floors or wings within the same building:

> At the town hall and places like that, I think it would be hard (*tsurai*). It is a tough
> thing (*taihen*), working there until you retire, if there are people you don't like, to have
> to see those same faces the whole time, right? A person could hardly stand it!
> (laughs) One shouldn't say that sort of thing, but it's true! (laughs) For one thing,
> the change of workplace, it's just from one division to another – "OK, here we go!",
> but it's all within the same building, right? So you see all those same faces gathered

together every day. I think it'd be unbearable. A very narrow world, you know? If it were me, I don't think I could work there (FN 040119).

Yūsuke's point was that the teacher, but not the town hall employee, could escape. Tadashi, a principal, said the same thing (FN 040811), as did a clerk, who added, "You drag those bad relations around with you, don't you?" (FN 031219). Rie, a principal, said something similar about private schools, where transferring is either absent or minimal: When I asked if she had ever considered working in one, she instantly replied, "Never." Her reason? Because if one gets in a bad relationship or situation – and human relationships are so important for teachers – then one is stuck in it, the situation will never change. "Because of transfers, teachers can have *hope*," she explained. Otherwise they would have to resign themselves to working in a bad situation (FN 040602).

Yūsuke made a related point, that the teacher, but not the professor, was vulnerable to poor relationships. In a university, he said, faculty work alongside their students in their own offices or laboratories and don't really see their colleagues. In such an "environment (*kankyō*)" transfers are unnecessary; rather, staying is good, because it helps faculty members focus on their research. But schools are different. ES and JHS teachers' job is not to focus on just one group of students but "to look after all the children of the prefecture, all the localities in it (*kennai no kodomo wo minagara, chiiki wo minagara*)" (FN 040119). Teachers cannot limit their interactions with colleagues, students, or the public, so they cannot minimize interactions that are with bad people or that could potentially sour.

142

Teachers are professionally obliged to be open to the wider public, whom they serve. They may find themselves getting into conflicts or problematic situations more often than the average person because they have professional concerns and goals which sometimes conflict with the public's wishes. Teachers and parents have been complaining about the misalignment of their goals for decades (*e.g., Nagasaki-ken-ritsu Kyōiku Kenkyūsho* 1964:29, 1965:112; Nakano 2005:123). Teachers become upset that parents will not implement the teachers' orders, and parents become upset that teachers will not help their children individually as much as (if not more than) every other child is receiving help. Some teachers, even local born ones, invite criticism by displaying an autocratic manner. For example, an islander I knew went on a gateball-and-public bath trip with a neighborhood group, and when he returned he remarked that several people had problems with the retired teacher who went on the trip. The reason, he theorized, was that because teachers spend their whole career telling others what to do, they are often very poor listeners.

In Japan the virtues of patience, endurance (*gaman*), restraint (*enryō*), harmony (*wa*), and putting the group before the self so that the group's goals can be achieved are culturally prized. Direct conflict is to be avoided. Some teachers are very sensitive about this, particularly in their relationships with other committee members. For example: Once when I was working as a SHS teacher, I chanced across a fellow teacher in the school's garden. He seemed to be a bit down about something, so I asked him if everything was alright. He said that he had been at a curriculum

meeting and had a difference of opinion with someone else there. He had given his opinion, but when it wasn't accepted, he pushed for it again. Apparently he felt that he had gone too far. "I was immature," he said dejectedly. He would have been one of the youngest there, as well as one of the newest to the school, so it is probable that he tangled with a *sempai,* which is a challenge to propriety that one should avoid.

But the prized social virtues of patience and restraint are not always easy to put into practice. Not everyone can be the Buddha! Holding one's tongue in order to practice these virtues in the face of great difference of opinion or outright antagonism can lead to a poisonous, fractious, stressful atmosphere. Given that "permanent employees" are unlikely to quit and hard to fire and the public is unlikely to move, and given that entering into direct conflict in an attempt to resolve the situation could be considered immature, the only way an employee can hope to escape an unwelcome person or social situation is through personnel reshuffling. Because of compulsory transferring, teachers know they will not be stuck with someone unpleasant forever. Hence, transferring helps Japanese teachers behave virtuously.

(For Rochelle Koop, *q.v.*, this was another reason that personnel reshuffling is bad for Japanese industry: Instead of problem personnel being dealt with once and for all, they are passed off to the next place, allowed to remain in the system. I would argue that a personnel policy that depended on the direct confrontation and swift resolution of social problems would be a hard sell,

given how virtuous endurance and patience are in social relations. It is also worth noting that

Kinney's teachers suggested that it was transferring, not staying put, which helped them face

problems. By transferring, they were forced to keep their technique fresh, rather than resting on

their laurels just because their approaches were good enough for a given type of student.)

7.2   Escaping inhospitable social environments

Another type of social problem teachers face is not fitting in, or being excluded. Hatsune

describes two different schools in which she worked. I had asked if she did a lot more socializing

(*tsukiai*) or had more parties (*enkai*) at one school or the other. She said that her first school, which

was on the small side with about 150 students, "had a lot of that sort of thing":

> At [School #1], just among us teachers, for example if there was a "research class,"
> then we'd go out afterwards to say "good job (*otsukare sama*)" and have a party, or
> after a major event, definitely. Moreover, at [School #1] the relations (*tsukiai*) with
> the people in the region (*chiiki no kata*) were very close (*missetsu*), so there was a
> tremendous amount of drinking parties with the [students'] guardians (FN 031018).

She was young, she said, so she often went out to the second parties and had a lot of fun.

By contrast, at her fifth school, which was about the same size as her first school, she did not engage

in as much socializing, partly because of her age, but mostly because she did not like the atmosphere:

145

Well, now, for one thing, how old was I at the time, maybe 30 years old or so? There was a fairly large number of young people, people in their 20s, there. Umm, there weren't only people in their 20s, but somehow that atmosphere, how can I put this, it wasn't the kind of atmosphere I care for. Within this group of close friends there was a good atmosphere, an atmosphere of people helping each other, but somehow those people who were different from them, for example, having different hobbies – At the center of the place were these men who were for the most part sports-types [*i.e.*, jocks: *supottsu kankei*], and then there was this expert at music, a really excellent teacher, who came as a new teacher, but in his first year, they so coolly and perfectly shut him out of that group of friends [*i.e.*, without being blatant about it but leaving no chance that he could get in]: That was the sort of atmosphere that place had. [BPC: Like a clique?] Yes, it was a little bit like that. Not with the women, but with the men. People say X City's atmosphere is a bit like that, the X City BOE. It's like that to a degree. Teachers who are good at sports, that type, become BOE members. And one other thing is, the fathers of the male teachers in X City were teachers too and now they are in the BOE or are principals in other schools. It's that type of place, and so a teacher who likes music, if they don't get a big name for themselves, they can't enter [the BOE], it sort of has that atmosphere. So I didn't really like it (FN 031018).

The contrast was not just between the staff, but also extended to the parents. Later in the interview

I asked Hatsune if she had a favorite school of all the ones at which she'd worked:

Hmm, School #1 was good. The atmosphere at the workplace was good, and the guardians, the children's families, they were really good. . . . . Partly because I was young, probably, but with the guardians, too, there was this atmosphere in which they took great care of me, they gave me a lot of help. Always they'd be bringing me out for a drink, or if we ran into each other for just a minute they'd give me some sweets or something. Even though it was in X City, even though it was in the middle of X City, . . . it's a relatively quiet country (*inaka*) place, and people, if they had their own fields (*hatake*), or dairy farms, they would bring the vegetables they'd grown and so on, make some soup to give out – [BPC: Warm-hearted, aren't they.] Yes, it was a warm atmosphere. Whenever there was some kind of children's event,

146

a fairly large number of people would get together and come and help out. It was a really great atmosphere (FN 031018).

When I asked if there were any with a "bad" atmosphere, she again selected her fifth school, although she was uncomfortable using any categorically negative language:

Hatsune: Hmm, well, I wouldn't say it was bad (*warui*), but along those lines, at School #5 there were a lot of complicated household environments (*katei kankyō*), so parents there didn't get together. The atmosphere among parents wasn't good . . . um, it wasn't that it was not good, but there was this feeling that it was hard to get people together. [I asked why.] At School #5, some families were in commerce, running stores and shops and people connected to that, and then there were some in the fishing industry, and, um, the mothers, there were a lot of fatherless (*lit.*, "mother-child-only") households. For some reason. It's not that fatherless households are bad, but there are a lot of *de-iri* – [BPC: "*De-iri*"?] "People coming and going" at the family. People'd say, "They divorced and went back home to her parent's," "They became a single-mother household and went back to their parents' home," a lot of families like that. For some reason in every class there were cases like that. And divorce is one thing, but people came escaping the city – really, this time of the year, October, even though it wasn't transfer season (*tenkin jiki*), all of a sudden they'd come. That happened a lot. When that happened, everyone would be nervous: "What happened this time?" And then, sometimes, right?, "I think you might get a call from the father, but please do *not* under any circumstances tell him that we're here," "Don't tell him – He might come to pick up the children but you must not under any circumstances give the children to him," that sort of thing.

BPC: That seems scary. Did anyone ever call?

Hatsune: We were unlucky there. … Yes, there were relatively a lot of such fatherless households.

BPC: That is a tough position for the teachers to be in, isn't it.

147

Hatsune: The children don't ever quite relax. When that happens, the mothers go out to work, and the children, being lonely, their spirits (*kokoro*) get troubled [wild, unruly; *arai*], and if their hearts are troubled, it shows itself in their behavior, doesn't it? Snatching other people's things out of their hands, hitting, fighting. It'd gradually improve if the parents gave them love, but the parents are frantic too, working hard at their jobs, so they don't take much care of their children. Parents don't really want to let other people see that side of things, so even if other parents express concern, they'll shut them out: "We're fine." With that sort of stuff happening, the result is it's hard to get them together, there isn't much socializing (*tsukiai*). [BPC: Walls.] Yes, they put up walls. Things like that were common, there at School #5 (FN 031018).

Some schools just have bad social environments – one does not fit in, like the male music teacher among the jocks, or one cannot establish good relationships with the locals, because they do not have the time or the inclination to have positive meetings with the teachers. Where teachers interact heavily with each other or the local public for work, social friction can cause much grief.

7.3   Unable to escape a reputation or adopt a new identity

Teachers I interviewed reported difficulty in escaping reputations for having done something wrong or having upset someone. If one cannot move on from some mistake, poor performance, or embarrassing episode, because it is never forgotten, then one cannot grow professionally, in addition to feeling poor about oneself. Among my interviewees, Ririko made this point the clearest when I asked her the good points of Wide Area:

148

The good point is – Everybody fails at things (*shippai shimasu*), right? Now and then, you can't do something well, or you think, "I can't get that"? When you transfer, you can begin anew. [….] If you stay there the whole time, everybody knows – right? – what you failed at before (*mae no shippai*). [BPC: By and by.] That's what I think. Even if you are doing your best at present, you can't erase (*kesenai*) what happened before. So I think it is good to go to a place where you can start over again (*yarinaoshi*) with a new feeling (*atarashii kimochi de*) (FN 031025).

Teachers want to be allowed to learn from their mistakes, but they sometimes feel they are the subject of gossip and that they can never live down some past misdeed. The low residential turnover within Japanese communities exacerbates these problems.

The inability to live down one's past is related to a general problem, being unable to adopt a new identity. Yukiko describes the problem of not being taken seriously as a teacher by some of the older women teachers in her hometown, who still treat her like the little girl they knew her as, Yukiko-*chan*, rather than the professional woman she has become, Yukiko-*sensei*.

Yukiko: You know, your hometown (*jimoto*) is kinda undesirable (*iya da*). It's difficult. In my case, it's that there are a ton of people I've known since when I was small. All of 'em teachers now. For instance, even though I've become a teacher, I'll still get called 'Yukiko-chan'. These women (*obachan*) who are older than me and have known me my whole life.

BPC: "Hey! I'm a teacher, you know!"

Yukiko: Right. That'd be nice if that's how it happened, but it probably won't.

149

Not until she left her hometown was she accorded her due.

(Yukiko was never going to like not being called *sensei,* but her subsequent remarks remind

us that other considerations come into play at different times in one's life:

> 'Cuz of that sort of stuff, I'd thought my hometown is *out*, but – perhaps this is due
> to the influence of our principal, but the feeling of loving your hometown (*ai suru*),
> I've really learned that from our principal. So recently I've started to think wouldn't
> it be nice to return home. Up until now, North Matsu was like my third choice. It
> was like I had to write it, like it was some obligation, I felt. I really, really didn't want
> to go back. But this year, I'll write North Matsu as my first choice, for the upcoming
> transfer (FN 031111).

At another point during the interview, Yukiko mentioned her concern about her parents and a desire

to be within reach in case anything should happen to them. This would be another reason one

might be able to put up with the negatives of staying put, at least in terms of one's residence.)

The head teacher at Rie's school also felt that it could be hard to be seen differently by a

group of parents one has known before. Another principal had wanted him, but Rie had used her

influence to gain him for her school. Discussing the outcome afterwards, he told Rie he was glad he

did not go to the other school because it had been his first teaching post, and were he to have been

sent there, some of the students' parents would be his former students. He thought that would be

awkward, to have been a neophyte teacher, and then to come back as a neophyte head teacher:

maybe he would not be able to command their respect, or feel worthy of commanding it.

Sensitivity to this problem is semi-institutionalized in personnel practice, if not policy. For example, when individuals are promoted to a new rank they are usually transferred to a different division or work group too. The concern is that it would be hard for all concerned when a member changes from a peer to a boss. This concern also motivated a tradition in the national bureaucracies that when a member of a cohort reached the highest rank, the others in the cohort would take early retirement, so that the promoted one would not find the presumed familiarity between age-mates and cohort-mates, like *dōkyūsei,* a barrier to giving orders and otherwise being an effective leader. A retirement, like a transfer, eliminates the need to negotiate awkward changes in one's relationships. I saw teachers use this in their non-work relationships too: an upcoming transfer would be given as the reason for ending one's participation in a hobby circle, and because it was unavoidable and not initiated by the person concerned, it did not imply anything about the person's commitment or character or the circle's worthiness. As a result, members and ex-members could meet each other in the street without embarrassment.

7.4   Life as a "public person"

Because they serve and work for the public, teachers are held to a higher standard than the average citizen. The laws governing public servants reflect it. Citizens accept it. (Few citizens are

151

left who view public servants as people too elite to be criticized.) And many teachers internalize it as they progress in their careers. Some err on the side of caution – and some administrators reprimand on the side of the caution!

Particularly those who are promoted to administration or to a BOE believe they should act in a way that is above reproach. One evening I was dining with Jūzō, a JHS principal (FN 040930). He was born and raised on Kamigotō, but had gone to college in Tōkyō, and he and his wife take frequent trips there, as they love city life. Over the course of the evening he told me that he loved going to play pachinko (a cross between a pinball machine and a slot machine) with his friends, but since being promoted to administration he had to give it up. I thought he might have given it up for good, but when I asked what he would do after retirement, he laughed and answered with great zest, "Then I will go straight back to the pachinko parlor!" Now although pachinko is a form of gambling, I am not aware of administrators being forbidden to play it. That was just something he felt he ought not to do. Other principals told me similar things: they have things they would like to do, stories they would like to tell, and so on, but as a principal, they have a responsibility, at least while in office, not to act as a private citizen. While explaining this, Jūzō reached for an English translation of *kōmuin,* what I have been translating as "public servant," and in the process came up with a very helpful "mistranslation": *public person.* Because he is a "public person," Jūzō explained, he is not free to act as a "private person."

152

Rank-and-file employees have a greater opportunity than administrators to separate their

public and private lives, particularly if, like Rie did, they work in a large school like a SHS and in an

urban area. Yet even some rank-and-file told me they wanted a greater separation of the two. One

former teacher had retired from teaching to focus on raising her young family. Her husband worked

in the private sector and they had bought a house in the suburbs of Nagasaki. She said that for a

few years, her neighbors did not know that she had been a teacher, but once they found out, they

asked her to serve on various community groups, to help with activities directed toward children,

and so on. Just as a doctor might have to entertain medical questions, a computer expert might find

herself asked to set up her friend's computer, or someone good at English or piano be asked to give

lessons, teachers can find themselves tapped to work on all sort of projects for individual neighbors

or the community as a whole. As this woman's story shows, this is true even when one lives outside

the school district where one works, even after one has retired from teaching, and even for someone

who is not local-born.

(Aside from transferring, a teacher could maintain some separation between their public and

private lives by socializing outside the school district. I knew a group of women teachers from a

certain school whose regular bar was not in the town where they worked, because their male

colleagues' regular bars were in that town, and if the women went to the same place, they might not

be able to speak as freely. The same urge leads teachers – and others – living on islands to go to the

mainland for a date, or a night on the town, or to visit a medical specialist, or for some other activity they did not want others on the island to know about. One teacher took this concern for anonymity in an interesting direction: he had an alias he used when he went to the brothels! In the next chapter I will discuss how remaining aloof from the school district in these ways puts teachers into a bind, given that they are expected by some to be involved in the life of the district.)

7.5   *Botchan*

Where there are fewer people, all residents are better known and more often seen than in the cities. That means their actions are riper for discussion and commentary. The effect is amplified for teachers because schools are central to local communities, both socially and symbolically. This poses a "double whammy" for the non-local transferee to a rural area. People may know much more about them than vice-versa. For example, A JHS math teacher from the mainland told me that as a teacher, she was known to many people, but she did not in turn know them as well – 'Whose grandmother was that?' *etc.* I was familiar with that as one of the few foreigners on the island, but when I was in Japan the first time I hadn't imagined that transferee teachers who were fully Japanese might feel particularly visible or exposed.

This problem of "sticky" (Mock 1999:157) social relations is more common in rural communities, not because rural people are more conservative, but because there are so few people and so much less population turnover that one cannot be anonymous, so one's deeds will be seen and discussed, and you will hear about it, from people who mean something to you. (It makes a difference who witnesses your behavior as to whether you will feel shame, which explains the boorish behavior of some tourists.) It is hard to leave one's door in Kamigotō and not see one or more people one knows. For those from Kamigotō, like my wife, the question is not "Will I or won't I see someone I know?" but "Which people whom I know will I see?" Having grown up in this type of environment, my wife was rather blasé about running into friends and acquaintances by chance while out running errands, but to me, a person who grew up in a city of about 86,000, such chance encounters provoked surprise and delight, and were events I found worth talking about later.

The head of the PTA of one of Kamigotō's schools explained how the dense social web affected her interactions with teachers. Although it was good to have local teachers, there was an advantage to dealing with outsiders, she said. With an outsider, one can speak more directly, stating one's desires, even pushing for an answer. But with a local teacher, communication becomes very complicated, because one ought to bear in mind all the relationships between the teacher and others on the island. The teacher you wish to influence might be the child of someone you went to school with, for instance, or the cousin of someone whom your husband works with. In such cases, she

might mention something once, but if nothing came of it, she would feel that she couldn't bring it up again, so would have to let the mater drop.

In such an environment, it is prudent to act with restraint. The question often isn't "Do I have a connection to this person?" but "What connection do I have to this person?" I witnessed this too often to count, but a few examples will illustrate the point. (1) Once I grew irked at the driver in front of me and was about to honk my horn, when my wife stopped me and said that the driver's mother had given our daughter a present a month before. So I let the matter drop. (2) One day a new child arrived on the island and began attending a school I had visited. One of his parents was from Kamigotō, and the other was from somewhere in the U.S.A. I soon discovered that he and I could be linked via kinship – he was the child of a child of a sibling of a parent-in-law's sibling's spouse, or something like that. (3) After having dinner with a teacher turned municipal BOE member, we went to a nearby snack bar for some drinks and karaoke. I had been there once before, so I knew a little bit about the woman who ran the place, the Mama. But he had not, so as soon as we entered, he asked me all that I knew about her, beginning with her age, so that when she came by to wait on us, they were able to quickly establish that her sibling had been his *dōkyūsei,* or something of the kind, and carry on in an appropriate fashion.

Because one as a newcomer may not know all the connections that exist, one may not know how information travels from one person to another. When I first came to Kamigotō I was amazed

when students would ask me if I had been in such-and-such a place doing such-and-such a thing the day before. How did they know? Because I did not speak Japanese at the time, I jokingly wondered if my whereabouts were being broadcast over my town's public address system. Over time, however, I began to realize that if my behavior was so publicly known, then I had better be on my best behavior, or else that would become part of my reputation.

A literary example of this visibility problem comes from Natsume Sōseki's *Botchan* (1904), in which the self-centered title character leaves his beloved Tōkyō as a young adult to accept a position as a JHS teacher in remote Shikoku. He sees himself as a Tōkyō man, forthright, straightforward, pure of heart, and modern, in contrast with the people around him, who at best are bumpkins, at worst, gossipy, sly, and duplicitous. In Chapter 3 (Sōseki 1968:39-50), Botchan catalogues the various torments he experiences at school and in his lodging house. He is irked at having to remain at school even after he has finished his lessons for the day, but he goes along with his colleagues' behavior because he has only just begun. Most vexing and even demoralizing to him is how his students "were spies watching every move and act I made" (Sōseki 1968:50) and using their knowledge to tease him. One such incident follows his ordering four bowls of soba noodles with tempura while at a restaurant also popular with the students. Arriving in the classroom the following morning, he finds some students had written "Professor Tempura" on the blackboard. "I demanded if it were not right for one to eat *tempura*. Then one of the boys replied that it was all

right to eat *tempura,* yet four bowls were too much. I told them that it was not their business at all

whether I took four or five bowls with my own money" (Sōseki 1968:47). When the teasing

continued beyond the first period, he grew angry – righteously so, to his mind:

> Joke when indulged in to excess is no longer joke, but mischief. …. It may be that
> the country people, not knowing how far to go and where to stop, think it is all right
> to push it as far as they possibly can. Their castle town is so small an affair that an
> hour's sight seeing will bring you to an end of everything it contains, and as they had
> no other accomplishment to pride themselves upon they treated the *tempura* business
> as if it were such a great event as the Russo-Japanese War. Poor, poor souls! As
> they are brought up from infancy in such a way, it goes without saying that they will
> grow up to be precocious and crooked like a dwarfed maple tree trained up in a
> flower pot. I would laugh with them if it were done in a spirit of juvenile innocence.
> But …. the act was certainly that of a matured man of poisonous spirit (Sōseki
> 1968:47).

A few days later, he stops in a different town a half-hour's distance on foot from the school

to have some dumplings from a well-regarded dumpling shop.

> This time meeting no students, I thought nobody had seen me there. Going to
> school next morning, I went into the classroom and was saluted by the letters, 'Two
> plates of dumpling – seven sen." on the blackboard. It is true that I had taken two
> plates and paid seven sen. What a nuisance! (Sōseki 1968:48-49).

He fumes to himself after relating another such incident, "How annoying it is to have to live

in a small town and be an object of criticism!" As the teasing continued, however, Botchan tells us,

> Dejection came upon me. Let the boys do and say as they will, I am not a man who
> will give up on account of their interference the plan he has set his heart on. But my

heart began to fail me when I thought why I had come down to such a small miserable town where the tip of your nose finds limitation whenever you move about (Sōseki 1968:50).

These remarks point to the pressures described by Ririko above, where one realizes that one's past failures, missteps, and even quirks are not going unnoticed, but are being discussed far and wide.

Those born and raised in urban neighborhoods, like *Botchan,* might not have had such an experience.

Botchan is a term of address for a little (spoiled or sheltered) boy, so Sōseki asks us to see Botchan as immature and childish rather than suffering from any moral deficiency: self-centered, perhaps, but not selfish. As the book reveals, although his abrupt, plain-speaking style strikes others as rude (and the reader as funny), Botchan is not a misanthrope. He has a sense of justice. His moral code seems to be live and let live, don't take advantage of other people, and take full responsibility for your actions. Botchan strives to be self-sufficient, to not be dependent on others – except, in a way almost unseen to him, on his family's servant, Kiyo. Botchan feels that he should be able to live as he pleases. How he spends his time when he does not have to be with others is his own business. That such an outlook might apply to Tōkyō but not the smaller settlements where at the time the majority of the Japanese population lived did not limit its truth in Botchan's mind.

7.6   Hiroko: "hemmed in" by her rural neighbors

Hiroko's comments illustrate many of the themes we have been discussing (FN 050824).

Hiroko is a school nurse in her mid-30s. She married a teacher from Kamigotō, and because he was

the successor, she changed her main work area from her hometown on another island to his. They

have two young children.

A running theme in our interview was that it took her over a year to get used to a new post.

The hardest one was her first one, Tsuwazaki ES, one of the most remote schools in the prefecture.

Needless to say, she had never been there before, and indeed had never heard of it. It was an

"unknown world (*michi no sekai*)," she said. What shocked her even more was that she had been

expecting her first assignment would be to a school near her hometown. That first year, she said,

she didn't think she would ever get used to it. She was thinking, "It is so hard (*Tsurakute*). This life

is hard. More than the job, the life. No one is there, I don't know anyone, I don't know the place."

During her first year, Hiroko lived in the teacher housing in Tsuwazaki. It was the principal,

the head teacher, and Tsuwazaki teachers at the time. It was old. "I did not want to live within the

school district," she said. "But I was told, 'Live there!' For one year. So I put up with it (*gaman*

shita)." I asked her why she did not want to live within the school district.

Hiroko: I feel hemmed in [confined, cramped; *kyūkutsu*], or something. I feel like I'm always – like I'm always working.

BPC: Like you don't have any private space.

Hiroko: Yeah, that's how I feel.

BPC: Isn't that the road a teacher must walk? Although you didn't know it before you started down it.

Hiroko: [Laughs] That's hard (*Tsurai*) (FN 050824).

In her second year, she moved to a private apartment (*hito no apāto*) in one of Kamigotō's

central settlements. Soon after, she got married.

The theme of feeling "hemmed in" or "confined" also ran through the interview. Here she

is describing the difference between her life in Sasebo and her life in Kamigotō, to which she had

recently returned. I asked Hiroko if she liked her new school.

Hiroko: Oh, the school is nice, and –. When I went to Sasebo, there was no one there, right? No one to help watch my kids, but part of that, in a sense, you could say that it was easy (*raku*). Relationships were thin (*Tsukiai ga ihaku*): "I wonder what the people next door do?" But I had no idea. Just saying greetings. There weren't the various local activities for kids my children's age to do. There was absolutely nothing. So, it was easy (*raku*). Then, I came here, and there are so many different things, and it makes you tired (*kitsui*). I don't think I'm used to it yet.

BPC: I'll bet other teachers feel that way, teachers from the mainland.

Hiroko: I think so. You know, in many ways, you have many acquaintances (*shiriai*), and so you feel hemmed in (*kyūkutsu*), right? Like every little thing you do is being watched all the time.

BPC: On one day that might be fine, but the next day, you think, 'Oh, I want to get out of here.'

Hiroko: Yeah, right, right.

BPC: Do you want your neighbors to know you're a teacher?

Hiroko: I want them *not* to know it. But everyone knows it, right? Everyone knows everything. …. So, until I get used to it, I'll probably feel hemmed in (FN 050824).

Hiroko appreciated the freedom and access to all the conveniences which came with living in a city, even though it deprived her of the support of her parents-in-law with respect to childcare and other things, and even though she was not living in her own home at the time, but in a rented apartment instead. She seemed to prefer this to living on the island. Interestingly, however, unlike Yukiko, Hiroko did not think she would feel "hemmed in" in her own island hometown.

Well, it has local character (*chiikisei*), doesn't it. It's different. No matter how much you say 'The country is the country,' and if you ask me why I don't know the answer, but there you can say, 'People are people (*hito wa hito*).' Here [in Kamigotō], somehow, half of it, – there's a good meaning to it too, but – is that it's a meddlesome place (*osekkai na tokoro*). There's a good meaning to this too, though. All these people in the locality (*chiiki*) know all the children's names, right? The local grandpas and grandmas commonly greet my sons by their names, and so on. When they say, "Ah, today you're going with your mother, right?", partly I think that's nice, but partly I feel, "Why do they know that?"(FN 050824).

162

She conceded, however, that she only lived in her hometown through SHS and hadn't been back for longer than a holiday. "So maybe I just didn't know" that such things went on there, too.

She eventually got used to all of her schools, and, with the exception of Tsuwazaki, when it came time for her to transfer, she left reluctantly, with some regret, wishing she might have stayed a bit longer. And when I asked her to identify the positive and negative aspects of transferring, she identified many more negatives than positives. So I asked her if staying put wouldn't be better.

> BPC: How about if I wanted to live in Sasebo, and I loved a certain school there and never wanted to move from it: Would it be okay if I worked there 15, 20 years straight? Maybe I went once to the outer islands or Nomozaki and then came back and stayed there the rest of my career?
>
> Hiroko: Ah, staying in one place wouldn't be good, would it.
>
> BPC: Why not? […]
>
> Hiroko: I think you'd get to feel hemmed in (*kyūkutsu*). If you think about this kind of teacher, their whole career, my impression is that they probably wouldn't change.
>
> BPC: With people changing jobs, or retiring, there isn't a lot of change, is there.
>
> Hiroko: If there was *ever* any *trouble* (*ikkai toraburu ga attara*) ... if you think about that, then, you know …. (FN 050824).

I asked Hiroko if she thought the number of fights would increase if there were no transfers, and she said she thought there might. Wouldn't people explode if they were stuck with some bad

163

people?! I asked, and she said, "Or completely ignore them. Either way, that's not good." A little

later, she expanded on this virtue of transferring:

> Hiroko: My friend who is doing nursing told me this once: say, observing a child's
> class, you do a lot of things, right? "Since it's decided that I will be here for my
> entire career, I had better do it well," she said she thought. But there's also the
> aspect of feeling hemmed in (*kyūkutsu*). But I've been told, "It's great that you get
> to transfer, isn't it!" So I thought, there's also the aspect of, it's fine if you can
> (just) get along well during that time. Nonchalance (*kigarusa*), you could say.

> BPC: So what did you think?

> Hiroko: "Oh, yeah," I thought. "There's also a kind of nonchalance, isn't there!
> There's also that easiness of, you transfer, and then it's okay if you can do it well
> for that period of time only (*sono kikan dake umaku yatte ikeba ii n da*)." But, coming
> back home, I thought, "Ah, from here on out I'll be here," and I thought of being
> hemmed in (*kyūkutsu*), there's also that aspect.

> BPC: With no end.

> Hiroko: All the way to the end, so, here, because it's full of people who know
> everyone, in order to not cause any *trouble* (*toraburu mo okosenai*), even if I have
> something I want to say, I think I'd better keep quiet a bit (*damatte iyō ka na*),
> there's that, you know. So, if I knew that after so many years I'd be leaving, I'd go
> ahead and say something, I could say, "You know, this here is weird," there's also
> that aspect, but because I know I'll be here all the way to the end, I think there's a
> part of me that's resigned to just keep my mouth shut (laughs) (FN 050824).

Hiroko here touches on the themes from the last chapter, of self-restraint upon a new setting, a

desire to meet new people, and a desire to gain a new perspective by dealing with different people.

164

7.7   Movement is healthy, and other metaphoric understandings

In recognizing and describing the virtues of the change and mobility which transferring brings them, and why transferring is appealing, it is natural that teachers would rely on deeply significant metaphors and proverbs (*cf.* Strauss 2005:236-237). I will mention a few here.

When Wide Area transfers were first implemented, some publicly worried that teachers sent somewhere against their will might become apathetic. But when Hatsune said she felt ready to leave after about four years, she said so not so she can "mail it in," but out of a sense of professional responsibility and self-awareness, to keep herself at her most productive. According to my informants, transferring makes them more productive over the course of their careers than they would be if they stayed put, because it prevents them from getting complacent, getting into ruts, and losing motivation. Several teachers told me how in their last year in the islands they had made a big point of being active in the community. One family stayed in the outer islands over *o-bon* rather than returning home as would be expected in order to experience the difference and to enable their children to participate in the town dragon-boat (*pēron*) races held at the time (FN 031128).

Behind this urge to "seize the day" and "make the most of an experience" one can find a Japanese proverb, "*ichi go, ichi e,*" which means something like "once in a lifetime" but is of Buddhist origin and has a weightier connotation than the English phrase, which has found its way into sales

talk. "Once in a lifetime" directs people to treat their encounters (or time together) as something never to be repeated, and therefore something to be treasured, something to make the most of. This ethos is associated with the tea ceremony. I have encountered it often. Once, when my wife and I were touring some temples in Oita Prefecture, we chanced across a middle-aged woman waiting outside one of the main sanctuaries. She told us that she was having a special ceremony performed for her late father and invited us to join her. Having commissioned such a private ceremony had, we knew, cost her several hundred dollars, and afraid to impinge on her largesse or be a distraction in any way, we hesitated. But she nobly said, "once in a lifetime," thereby dismissing our concerns and bidding us to share this experience with her. At the end of the ceremony, we thanked her, spoke a few words, and parted, indeed, probably for the last time, at least in this life.

Another set of metaphors were used to describe transferring as healthy. Interpersonal conflicts or tension sometimes are sometimes attributable to a problem individual, a *iya na hito,* someone who is all-around no good. But comments like Ririko's suggest that such problems are just a regular feature of social life – they inevitably develop when people spend enough time together, as sooner or later someone will make some mistake, and then that mistake is never forgotten. I was struck by the image of stagnation being unhealthy, toxic; that relationships or rather overall social environments, instead of growing ever stronger, were more likely to decay.

This outlook struck me as reminiscent of Buddhist and Shinto religious ideas. When I told Rie that school employees said they liked transferring because they can get away from *iya na hito,* she replied, "Ah yes, you can refresh" (FN 040602). Here "refresh" seemed to mean something like "clear oneself of negative feelings towards others." That one should periodically "refresh oneself," "reset," and "make a fresh start" fit with Shinto ideas about the value of purifying and cleaning, too.

Metaphors which describe transfers as flowing air and flowing water hit the idea that stillness leads to decay and movement is life. A public servant in a Nagasaki Prefectural government office explained the benefits of transferring with a proverb that he said came from China: "Water that moves does not go bad" (*Nagareru mizu wa kusarazu*) (FN 030312). Administrators and teachers used the phrase "setting a new breeze through the school" to discuss the effect transfers could have (*e.g.,* Hayashi 1984q), which reminded me of how some transferees asked neighbors or kin to "air out" their house while they were away, so that it would not grow stale and moldy inside.

These images of the smooth-flowing movement of the elements contrasted with the frantic, random-appearing flitting about of moths in flight, which could be described as *bata-bata,* a phrase several teachers used to characterize transfer time in late March and early April, when teachers are dashing about doing errands, packing, visiting people, attending farewell banquets, visiting their new schools, finding new housing, and so on. This type of movement is not healthy, and should be followed by a state of repose, calm, and settling in (*ochitsuku*).

7.8   Summary

What teachers value in transfers, it seems to me, is flexibility and freedom. In particular,

they value the freedom to pursue their own goals unencumbered by others' actions and

expectations. Unlike other transferees and transients (*cf.* the groups discussed by Mock 1999), as

teachers they feel group life is to some extent an unavoidable part of their job. They do not wish to

be subsumed into a group, but rather to use groups and other relationships to help them grown

individually. Yet, because of the nature of group life in Japan, it is hard to go in halfway, and once

in a group, there are protocols for how one should act, protocols favoring deference, patience, and

endurance, rather than conflict or self-actualization.

What transferring does is help teachers go in all the way, but for a finite, and therefore more

bearable, period of time. They do not have to decisively fix all the social problems which develop

between themselves and others. After they are transferred out, they can choose which relationships

to retain and which to leave behind. This is helpful not just to those who embrace the idea of public

service, but also to those more private people who find the public role burdensome, yet are unable

to escape it on account of their professional responsibilities.

Even though the policy of compulsory transferring was not created for these reasons, given

that the policy exists, teachers have it in their cultural repertoire. (*Cf.* how Travellers use mobility as

an economic practice but also to deal with social conflict, Gmelch 1985.) As they come to

appreciate its benefits, many teachers come to feel they cannot do without transferring.

8. Sacrificing (For) Family: Filial Piety, Children's Needs, and Life Plans

Transferring solves the problems teachers have with stasis and this gives teachers who are dissatisfied with something in their present work situation hope that something better lies around the corner. Despite seeing these benefits, teachers do worry about the possibility of an untimely, distant transfer. Most of their concerns about having to relocate, particularly if they were married, revolve around their family. Concepts about the Japanese stem family, values of filial piety, and concern about children's entrance exams and peer friendship formation make relocations difficult for teachers and their families. I found that satisfying the needs of more vulnerable family members – children and parents – takes precedence over rigid adherence to "traditional" concepts of gender as they relate to family. Teachers met these difficult transfers with a great deal of flexibility, such as having the husband take on some "core" homemaking tasks or availing themselves of support from either the maternal or paternal side of the family.

Each teacher obliged to relocate had to decide whether, in the face of all his or her personal and professional goals and responsibilities, it would be best to be accompanied by his or her whole

family, part of the family, or none of the family – or to quit. Examining how teachers decided this matter in different situations reveals contemporary Japanese thinking about the family, gender roles, filial piety, and child development. One finds concerns common to capitalist economies, such as the desire to help children succeed in their education so they can secure a bright future, given a local twist, as in the emphasis on entrance exams. One finds a great deal of continuity with Japan's past, such as the use of stem family concepts to structure obligations for elder care and residential choice and the concern with age grade relationships, specifically children having a stable peer group. In order to fulfill these obligations to family in a way that seems appropriate, Japanese teachers are led to do such things as buy homes years before they can live in them; separate from their spouse and children for four, six, even eight years.

8.1   The stem family

To understand the concerns and hopes Japanese teachers have regarding their family requires an understanding of Japanese kinship ideas and structures. The foundational unit of Japanese kinship is the "stem family (*ie;* 家)," a cognatic descent group in which the head of household and spouse in each generation are responsible for securing a successor couple to come after it. Currently living members of the stem family are responsible for the maintenance (if not

increase) of the family's assets (land, buildings, businesses) for the use of current and future

generations; for the physical and ritual care of each other (including finding jobs and/or spouses for

any non-successor children who will "leave" the stem family); and for the physical and ritual care of

the stem family's dead (*hotoke-sama*) – the preceding household heads and spouses (ancestors; *go-

senzo*) and any dependents of the stem family who had died as members – by making prayers and

offerings (such as burnt incense or food) to the dead and by tending to the stem family's gravesite,

altars (*butsudan*), and tablets (*ihai*), if any (newly-formed stem families will not have any dead to

venerate; Christian families typically do not have home-based altars) (Brown 1968).

Up until the end of the war, the household head was legally responsible for all its members

and could make decisions about the dependents' education, training, marriage, dowry, and so on.

Successorship and inheritance passed from man to man and was determined by the principle of male

primogeniture (except in the case of a family with no sons, in which case a male heir could be

adopted; this heir would take the stem family name and might marry a daughter, if there was one).

These laws, part of the Meiji Civil Code of 1898, reflected the practices then common in the

politically dominant samurai class.

After the end of the war, the authority of the household head over other members of the

family was weakened and siblings were given equal claims on the family assets – and equal obligation

to take over the family responsibilities. Each family had to sort out the matters of succession, the

172

inheritance of stem family property, the veneration of the stem family ancestors, the care of aging

parents and other dependents, and the continuation of the stem family through the generations.

Despite these legal changes, the preference for succession by the eldest son remained strong.

Part of the reason the legal changes did not unseat this preference in the early postwar years was that

some parents had already invested assets in their children differentially, training the eldest son to be

the successor and helping the others to find other work and/or secure a marriage. Parents expecting

to need care in their old age and ancestorhood would continue to use a proven strategy to secure

that care. Hence I knew a parent of three who during the first two postwar decades continued

investing disproportionately in the eldest son.

Over time, though, even as eldest son succession remained preferred, the implications of

being a successor changed, due to economic and demographic changes which diluted the social and

economic benefits of successorship and heightened the importance of daughters to stem families.

Economically, fewer Japanese work on family farms or in other home-based businesses, and

even when a home-based, family-operated farm or business is productive, salaries tend to form a

major component of the family income, and training necessary for salaried work takes place in

schools and companies, not in the family home. As a result, the stem family became less a group

engaged in a common home-based productive economic enterprise and more a group in which men

and women pool their resources and efforts to raise children and care for parents and ancestors.

173

That is to say, the homemaking and care-giving functions became more central. These are duties generally performed by women. And as others have found, Japanese women generally desire to care for their own parents, either instead of, or in addition to, their husband's parents.

Demographically, Japan experienced a rapid fertility transition in the postwar period. The first transition – from a condition of high fertility, high morality to one of high fertility, low mortality – led to many new stem families coming into being. Women in these new stem families would not expect to face the responsibility of caring for elderly parents or ancestors. Having no dead of their own to exclusively care for, their ritual actions could be directed to the dead of either spouse's natal home, as the formation of branch families often depended on proximity. And their focus could be directed more to their children, rather than split between two generations. This was the situation for the first postwar generations. Immediately after the baby boom came the second transition – from a condition of high fertility, low mortality to one of low fertility, low mortality. Japan's birth rate plummeted to below the population replacement level, where it remains today. With smaller families, each child can receive more of a parent's (and grandparent's) attention and the possibility of each child being a parent's only source of care has increased. The possibility of there being only daughters in a family has also increased.

As a result of postwar legal, economic, and demographic changes, the stem family now is less a means to an economic livelihood or social preeminence and more a means to obtaining and

providing physical, emotional, and spiritual care. What each child feels he or she owes his or her

parents and ancestors – and vice versa; how those debts come to be felt; and whether these debt-

inducing logics are passed on to the next generation is a complex affair, and some putative

successors, especially rural-born eldest sons, see successorship as more burden than opportunity

(Hashimoto 1996; Knight 1995; Traphagan 2003, 2000a). But regardless, the stem family remains

the principal idiom through which intergenerational debts are conceived of and the principal social

entity through which they are paid.

8.2   Caring for elderly parents

Japanese teachers discussed their obligations to aging parents with reference to the idea of

the stem family successor. In their discussions, they often presented the "successor" category as

fixed: a couple's successor was either its eldest son, only child, or eldest of only daughters.

Up through the Showa Era, care of aging parents was handled at home by the stem family –

in particular, the wife of the household successor. At the time there was frequently no alternative to

family-based care. As late as the 1980s, there were hardly more than a few dozen old folks' homes

(*rōjin hōmu*) and retirement communities in the entire country (Kinoshita and Kiefer 1992). Family-

based care was promoted and encouraged by the government, which would have been unable to

meet every family's demand for such services. With so few using public facilities, those who did became stigmatized: if a given family wasn't practicing family-based care, then it must be dysfunctional, in the midst of some trouble, or lacking filial piety (Bethel 1992). But in the 1990s, as more elder care institutions were built, increasing numbers of people began to use them and the stigma diminished. It became increasingly possible for parents to have a choice to enter a public facility or receive the services of a trained "home helper" in order to avoid "burdening" their children with care responsibilities (Jenike 2003, 1997).

Home-based care almost inevitably meant care in the parents' home, the stem family home. Under Japanese kinship ideas, maintaining a tie to the stem family's land is symbolically and religiously important. Because many other Japanese people feel this way, it is common for families in older neighborhoods to have been socially intertwined for several generations, a depth which can reinforce the significance of maintaining those ties. When I did research among Japanese natural disaster refugees living in Tōkyō, several older ones told me that they wished to return to their rural homes, even though disaster might recur, because they did not want to die anywhere but at home. As a practical matter, adult children may be loth to pull their parents from a comfortable and familiar social, physical, and cultural environment, lest it cause their parents' health to decline or make them too dependent on the adult children.

Teaching is compatible with being a successor and with caring for elderly parents. Children in one of these categories that mark them as the would-be successor – or others who foresaw that they would need to care for aging parents – often chose or were encouraged to choose to become a teacher, because teachers would not be transferred outside the prefecture and might even spend most of their tenure in their hometown (this being the point of the "main work area" for compulsory education staff), while at the same time – in Nagasaki Prefecture generally and its rural areas most especially – being one of the better and more secure jobs to be had, at least by the 1980s – as is common in relatively depressed areas (*cf.* Howell 1997). Some children who had become teachers found that they were better positioned to look after the parents, ancestors, and stem family assets than the rest of their siblings – even if one of them would be a more logical "successor." Other adult children who had been working outside the prefecture answered the call to come home when a parent fell ill (or passed away), and, needing to care for the elderly parents and carry on the stem family line, took up teaching as a good-paying job that kept them close.

Because of the Wide Area policy and the inability of teachers to predict precisely where they will work when, however, teachers can find themselves transferred away from parents who need them, even when they have planned ahead and are living with or near the parents, like Sakamoto Yukihiro and Furuga Masamori. This can lead to *tanshin fu'nin.* Or it can lead to tragic and comic outcomes such as the following: A senior high school teacher I met lived in Kamigotō with his wife,

who was also a teacher, and their ES-age children. He was the successor and had built a new home

on the mainland like the two-household homes described by Naomi Brown (2003, esp. 2003:64), in

which his parents would live downstairs and he and his wife and children upstairs. His parents

moved right in, but he and his wife had never once lived in the house, and have stayed there only a

manner of days during breaks in school, ever since it was built – *ten years ago*.

Not all teachers use the principle of male primogeniture to determine who is responsible for

caring for elderly parents. For example, take the case of Hatsune, a public ES teacher who was born

in Shimabara. She has one sibling, an older brother. She met her husband, also a public ES teacher,

when both were working in a Shimabara school. He was born in Nagasaki and has one sibling, a

younger sister. When they married, Hatsune took her husband's last name, which signifies

"marrying out" of her natal family.

Under the principle of male primogeniture, Hatsune's husband would be the successor to his

family, and Hatsune's brother would be the successor to hers. Hatsune and her husband would

have the responsibility for looking after her husband's parents and dead and producing a successor

to the stem family line. They would inherit his stem family home. But even if they chose not to live

in it, it would be expected that Hatsune switch her main work area to Nagasaki City, because that is

where her stem family resides. We might think Hatsune lucky for being able to switch her main

work area, because Nagasaki City, the capital of the prefecture, is a very convenient place to live and home to Nagasaki University as well as the prefecture's top senior high schools.

But things are not so cut and dry. As for Hatsune's husband's family, his mother had died before he entered college. His mother had been sickly throughout her poor life, so his younger sister had taken over more and more of the day-to-day homemaking responsibilities, helping her father. This younger sister and her husband now lives in Nagasaki City. Their father still lives there, too, along with his second wife, whom he married while Hatsune's husband was in college. As might be expected, even though the second wife is by all accounts a fine person, the grown children feel some reserve towards her: neither calls her "mother," for instance. As for Hatsune's family, at the time of our interview, Hatsune's older brother was working in Ōsaka, and it was not clear that he intended to return. Having a good job there made the prospect of him doing so seem remote.

Marriage and divorce are the only times when a teacher in the compulsory education system can change their main work area, and then only to be in alignment with his or her spouse's (or natal home), assuming it was different. So Hatsune and her husband were obliged to decide then and there whether to choose Nagasaki or Shimabara. Hatsune preferred Shimabara. Luckily, he liked the idea. If he hadn't, she said, she would have pushed him on the matter. They talked about their decision with her husband's father, not so much to get his permission, she insisted, but nevertheless

she was glad that he had said that if that was what the two of them wanted to do (as "the people

concerned (*honnin*)"), then that was okay.

Having saved money and completed their outer island transfers, they were ready to build a

house. They had considered building in a central part of the prefecture like Isahaya, as many

transferees do, because that way even if they were transferred to someplace a bit removed from

Shimabara they would "still be able to sleep there." But they ultimately built in Shimabara, because

they expected the Pref. BOE to ignore the location of their house and assign them most often to

places close to their main work area. Hatsune shared a story to show that their fears were grounded:

> There's another person I know who built a house in Ōmura, for the sake of her
> mother. She's not married, but she built her house in Ōmura, and requested a
> transfer to a place near Ōmura – really, she put in her request that she's building a
> house, but that transfer was totally different, and what's worse, she was transferred
> to this place totally removed from there, far away in Shimabara. It was near Arie
> somewhere. So in the end, even though she has this new house, she lets her mother
> live in the new house, and she herself lives in a boarding house, an apartment
> residence, because they said you can't change your workplace (FN 031018).

This recalls the senior high school teacher's case, given above. Several other teachers I spoke with

had bought a house in which they had been unable to live for several years. Either parents moved

in, as in the cases above, or the houses were left vacant, because renting one's house when one does

not know when one will return is difficult.

Hatsune's case illustrates a trend described earlier: Women are eager to care for their own parents, either instead of or in addition to their husband's parents, regardless of the fact that they left their stem family by taking their husband's name (Harris, Long, and Fujii 1998; Jenike 2003; Long, Campbell, and Nishimura 2009). Indeed, here we see a husband, and even the husband's parents, supporting these choices. Male primogeniture, though acknowledged, is not determinative in decision-making about elder care (although we would have to see what her brother does should her parents fall ill). (Is it determinative in decisions about ritual care? It will be interesting to see what happens in Hatsune's family in the future. If her parents pass away, will he and his wife take over the ritual responsibilities associated with the head of the stem family, or will Hatsune and her husband do so? Or will both siblings' families memorialize their parents (*cf.* Smith 1974)? And what will happen after her husband's father passes away?)

Hatsune's case also shows that co-residence by a successor couple has become less important for the stem family. With the focus on care and no need to submit to parental authority, co-residence becomes necessary only when the parent's health has deteriorated substantially, and perhaps not even then; being able to arrive quickly if needed in an emergency is by some considered sufficient (*cf.* Traphagan and Knight 2003). The older generation seems reluctant to trouble their children and children's spouses (I will discuss concern with "making trouble" later). For example, Seiji's older brother, the successor to Seiji's stem family, invited their father to come live with him in

181

the new home he built near the old family house (their mother had passed away before). But the

father told him he was "still fine." He wished to spare, minimize, or delay "making trouble (*meiwaku*

wo kakeru)" for his children and particularly his children's spouses. As he told me this, Seiji

explained for my benefit that the co-residence of successor and parents is no longer something

people have to do like "in the past (*mukashi*)" (FN 031106).

8.3   Being cared for by elderly parents

Transfers relate to the older generation of the family not only as a duty to be met, but as a

resource to be used. Many teachers with whom I spoke had lived at their natal stem family home

for several years when young, unmarried, and first starting out, not to prepare for the role of

successor, but just to save money and receive the care of their young, healthy parents, who wished

to keep their children close by out of affection and also wished to remove some of their burdens so

that they could devote more time if needed to getting their career off to a good start. For example,

Rie told me about how this worked in reverse: when she graduated from college and went to work at

her first school, her father's employer arranged a transfer for him to the municipality where Rie's

school was, with the kind thinking that this might be the parents' last chance to enjoy living with

their daughter before she married and left the home to live with her husband (FN 040602).

Once married, when faced with an untimely relocation, employees might leave one or more of their children in the care of their parents as they go alone or with a spouse and/or other children to the new post. Typically this involves the wife and children being left in the care of the husband's parents, as in the case of Saori, which I discuss later. But in the public school system both women and men are subject to the same transfer policy, so sometimes one finds the typical case turned on its head. For example, Narumi is a JHS teacher from Kamigotō, and her husband, from Shikoku, came to Kamigotō to work in her family's business. They have six wonderful children, and Narumi explained, "The reason that I was able to raise six children is thanks to their grandmother, my mother. Even now she is helping me." That help began immediately. Narumi's first school was in Shimogotō. After her first year she married her husband and soon gave birth to their first child. But she had not yet finished the three year stint typical of new hires, and child care leave was shorter then, so for about six months she left her husband and child in the care of her mother. Narumi came back each weekend, and by pooling her break time for breastfeeding she was also able to go home one evening in the middle of the week and start work just a bit late the following morning. Because she received such help, Narumi never wanted to leave that village while her children were young. Her husband, who was taking part in the interview, called his mother-in-law "the secret of our success (*seikō no hiketsu*)" and "the force behind the scenes (*en no shita no chikara-mochi;* can also mean "unsung hero")." Narumi added, "Here, for example, when they have trouble, they run to

183

their grandma's house. It's nice that they have a place like that [to go to]. When we get mad at them, or something" (FN 041016).

Employees also might be able to reside with one set of parents while alone at a post with their spouse stays behind, perhaps in the care of the other set of parents. For example, Junpei is from Nagasaki and he and his wife and children live there with his parents. When he was transferred to Kamigotō, he left his wife and children in his parent's care and came as a *tanshin fu'nin*. But because his wife is from Kamigotō, her parents were here. So he moved in with them. Half in jest, he complains that he never thought at his age he would have a curfew, but he does [He gets home about twice a month.] (FN 041016). Another example is Ririko, an ES teacher whose husband is from Nagasaki. The couple and their children live there with his parents. When Ririko was transferred to Kamigotō, she left the whole family in the care of his co-resident parents. But she is from Kamigotō, and her parents still live there, so she was able to move back into her old bedroom and get looked after by her mother. Ririko raced back to the mainland whenever she could, so as not to overburden her in-laws. Ririko contrasted all the work she did on those trips with how easy she had it at home in her own mother's care (FN 031025). I will discuss this case later in my discussion of the gendered meaning of *tanshin fu'nin* returns.

These examples show that transfers can create opportunities for married adults to strengthen ties between both their natal family and their stem family, if the two are different (*cf.* Clark 1999).

184

8.4   Caring for young children

Transferees had various concerns and ideas about their children, what was good for their development and what would help them later in life, and sometimes these concerns and ideas suggested which family members, if any, would accompany the relocating transferee – and even whether the employed parent should continue to work in the face of an unbidden transfer.

The most pivotal factor was a child's health and well-being. If a child had some medical condition that would be improved or kept under control by either moving or staying, then that is what a teacher would make happen if at all possible, regardless of what had to happen to other family members along the way.

After health, no one factor held sway. Instead, parents considered a child's temperament, current social environment, and proximity to certain pivotal events such as an entrance exam or a school championship when trying to decide whether social separation or geographic movement will be especially good or especially bad for a child. Nevertheless, although each child is different due to their temperament, interests, and aptitudes, there were some generalities related to age.

Young children should be kept with their primary caregiver – who is typically the mother (*cf.* FN 031125), although sometimes children are more attached to their fathers (Hayashi 1984j). With a stable coresident relationship with their principal caregiver(s), young children are thought to

benefit from experiencing lots of different environments, thereby learning how to bounce back from the disruptions which life inevitably will throw at them. Many also thought young children would benefit by learning about the natural world through living in a rural area.

Older children, on the other hand, are thought to benefit from having social stability in the peer group. Without a stable and supportive peer group, a child risks being teased or bullied, and any social disruption could impact their ability to perform well on the important entrance exams for senior high school and, especially, college. Although nature was still considered good, the older student would benefit from exposure to wider, more diverse and complex social settings (*i.e.,* urban environments) and a wider range of academic, career, and/or leisure options – including exposure to museums, performances, and other "high culture" products.

Generally, then, child development maps onto movements from periphery to center, rural to urban, nature to "culture," flux to stability, family to peer group. Some cases illustrate these themes.

8.4.1 *Learning in nature or society*

Teachers told me that they thought it was a good thing for their young children to grow up amidst nature, where they could walk to school safely without a lot of traffic, playing outdoors, breathing fresh air, enjoying the sea and the mountains, swimming, perhaps learning to fish. Many

mainland teachers told me they hoped to receive their outer island transfer early in their careers, while their children were still young (if not before childbirth altogether), because then it would be good to bring them with.

Seiji, an Urabe ES teacher from Nagasaki, thought of the outer islands as Nagasaki Prefecture's "special characteristic (*tokuchō*)" and so working there was something he wanted to try, rather than avoid. He wanted to go there "while the children were young (*chīsai uchi ni*)" because there is a lot of "nature (*shizen*)" so the children could run around and play there, "to be able to see (*miru*) and feel (*kanjiru*)," where "the air is fresh (*kirei da*)" and there is not a lot of traffic. Although cities have parks and other facilities for that sort of thing, he said, the experience one has there is short, and one has fewer chances for that sort of experience. Living amidst nature, he concluded, is "an excellent education for the heart (*kokoro no kyōiku mo monosugoku ii*)" (FN 031106).

The view of rural areas as healthy natural playgrounds good for the whole family is rather recent (Moon 2001), present but not widespread among Nagasaki's (urban-born) teachers in the mid-1980s. Previously, as discussed above, the relative inconvenience of life in the country in terms of medical facilities, basic utilities and goods and services, and cultural amenities had made outer island postings so unattractive to mainland teachers that they faced chronic staffing problems.

Another aspect of rural areas' perceived health when compared to urban areas is in human relationships, exemplified in the behavior of the children, who are thought to be more natural, and

hence more naturally good and teachable, than urban children, who frequently get into trouble, with sometimes violent and destructive behavior. Teachers of all stripes described island children as *sunao* (素直)*,* which means something like "well-behaved" or "teachable." This quality was thought to be fostered by the geography (simple, natural), the culture (fishers, farmers), and the society (small-scale, face-to-face relations, with few or no strangers).

This theme – "sick city, healthy country" – had run through the 1984 *Nagasaki Shinbun* series on Outer Island Teachers. Teachers in those articles extolled rural life as good for the heart, good for human relationships, and therapeutic for those troubled by hectic, strife-ridden urban life. Many mainland teachers referred to their outer island tenures as stints which refreshed them as educators, getting them back to the "heart" of teaching: face-to-face, personal interaction in small classes with eager, innocent children and committed parents. They described outer island working conditions as "perfect," "wonderful," "ideal," "the heart of education in Nagasaki Prefecture," and "the foundation of education." Smaller classes meant they could see the eyes of the students as they teach and therefore give personalized instruction (Takahashi 1984a, Yokose 1984d); they could learn the names not only of all their own students, but of all the students in the school *and* their families (*Ritō Kyōshi Shuzai Han* 1984g); they could leave behind the exhausting work of dealing with disciplinary problems and involve themselves in community activities, which helped them better teach their students and serve the public (Takahashi 1984d, *Ritō Kyōshi Shuzai Han* 1984j); they met

188

more mothers at the PTA meetings, even though outer island mothers were more likely than urban

mothers to be working (*Ritō Kyōshi Shuzai Han* 1984g). The theme was epitomized in the story of a

child who had been refusing to go to his junior high school in Nagasaki: brought by his mother to

her natal home in the outer islands, the persistent attentions of the outer island teachers and

students and the focus on activities in nature coaxed him back into society. Healed, child and

mother were reunited with their father on the mainland and the boy resumed his education there

(Yokose 1984a, 1984b, 1984f; *cf.* Rohlen 1983:203).

Although many teachers thought a young child would benefit from living in a rural area, they

did not go so far as to seek out the smallest, most remote rural areas. They generally listed the

largest, most convenient islands as their top choices on their Request Forms. And if transferred to

islands large enough to have a center and a periphery, many chose to live in the central area, even if

it meant commuting, if such an option was viable (which is why Mr. Osaki, the softball coach

mentioned earlier, was considered remarkable).

When transferred to Kamigotō, Seiji and his wife chose to live in the central area, because it

gave their children access to the biggest schools on the island, the largest hospitals, dentist's offices,

larger grocery stores, a variety of shops and restaurants, and better access to transportation (bus,

taxi, ports). What made their choice noteworthy was that, because it was Seiji who had been

transferred to a centrally located school and his wife to a peripheral one, it obliged Seiji's wife to

drive for 40 minutes to her school each day and Seiji to be responsible for getting his son in case of

a problem at the daycare or the sitter's (FN 031106). Most of the teachers with whom I spoke, Seiji

included, would have preferred an arrangement where the children were closer to the mother's

school, all else being equal. For one reason, as I discuss in the next chapter, it would be more

socially acceptable for the mother to regularly leave work early to tend to the children. But in Seiji's

family's case they preferred a central residence even more. Their concepts of gender and work were

not rigidly "traditional," but comfortably accepted a larger family contribution by the father.

In bigger schools, there are more possibilities for a child's club activities, including the larger

team sports. The daughters of Narumi, a JHS science teacher from Kamigotō, all played basketball

for their small junior high school. Being a small island school, the teams had few members, so

everyone got to play often. However, by the time Narumi's youngest daughter joined, there were

only just enough members to play a game: no substitutes on the bench in case someone was tired,

sick, or fouled out. This made it hard to compete against teams from big schools. (Also, *cf.* the

story of Mr. Abiru driving students to practice and to games in his van, *q.v.*)

Larger numbers of students make for a greater variety of personality types, which can make

cities better environments for some children. Considering what a mainland move might mean for

her children, Tae, a native Kamigotō teacher who had yet to be sent to the mainland, said that while

her outgoing and physically active daughter has done very well in Kamigotō, where there is room for

190

her to show her leadership skills and a suitable environment for her athleticism, their more contemplative son seems to stand out a bit, to be a bit left out. He might prefer the city, Tae thought, because in such a large population he would be more likely to find playmates with similar interests and temperament, whereas her daughter might face greater peer competition there.

One concern teachers and parents had expressed about the "well-behaved" outer island students up through 1984 was that coming from very rural areas where everyone knew each other well and perhaps was even related, they had not learned how to comport themselves in the competitive hustle-and-bustle of modern, urban Japan, and so they might get taken advantage of or allow themselves to be pushed aside in the scramble for success. Various teachers in the 1984 series discussed the strategies they employed to teach the outer island students perseverance and the courage to hold to their purpose in the face of strangers (*e.g.* Hayashi 1984d; *Ritō Kyōshi Shuzai Han* 1984d, 1984f; Takahashi 1984c). But this was not considered a problem for the children of transferees who had grown up on the mainland; they were thought to carry their tougher, more urban personalities with them (Takahashi 1984d). And during the time of my fieldwork, teachers did not express concern about this issue with me, presumably because the "cultural divide" between outer islands and the mainland had been growing steadily more blurry, with satellite television, cell phones, and the internet common and travel between outer island and mainland more ordinary.

Although island-born teachers transferred to the mainland cities frequently mentioned the higher amount of disciplinary problems there, they did not discuss their children having faced any special problems in adjusting from idyllic rural to cut-throat urban life. Instead, they talked about how "fun" it was for the family to drive around and visit interesting places. This suggested to me that, generally, while rural areas may be particularly good for the young, more important was keeping the family together when the kids were young.

If a teacher was transferred to the mainland, particularly to a city, when the children were older, the children would have the advantage of a richer academic environment: cities have the top public academic SHSs, as well as more entrance exam preparation schools, museums, libraries, and other educational opportunities. Right after Seiji finished telling me of how beneficial it was for children to experience nature in the islands, I asked him, "What about senior high school?" He nodded, "Yes, our society still stresses one's academic background (*gakureki shakai*), so there is much uneasiness (*fuan*) related to living in rural areas among teachers, because they know well that it matters what school you go to, as far as how well you can study in SHS and what college and so on you'll get into later. That's why, for the sake of their future, it would be better to be in the city then" (FN 031106).

8.4.2 *Social continuity: parents and peers*

Transfers do not always occur neatly at the end of a child's time in elementary, junior, or senior high school. So transfers which oblige the teacher to relocate force the teacher to consider the effects of disrupting the child's relationships – both to the family (if the teacher chooses to go alone) and to the child's friends and peers (if the teacher chooses to bring the child along). As mentioned above, for younger children the bond with the primary caregiver(s) is considered most important, but other considerations enter into the decision as the child grows older. Changing schools is seen to be a difficult and potentially traumatic experience, because of teachers concerns or hopes regarding their child having a hometown, having good classmates, not being bullied, and doing well on their entrance exams and/or in their future career.

For most of my informants, *hometown (furusato;* 古里*)* meant something more than the place one was born or grew up, which would be unambiguous, objective bits of information, like birth date or blood type. One's hometown was a place one felt at ease, a place where one was recognized as belonging, a place one knew well and felt close to. Because of this added layer of meaning, some informants felt that the place(s) where they were born or grew up or spent most of their life or went to JHS did not feel like their hometown. They either felt a stronger attachment to some other place, or they had no such attachment – i.e., they felt they didn't have a "hometown." Informants who

had moved around a lot as children (because of their parents' transfers) were more likely to give such qualified answers.

Parents who have themselves had strong ties to their hometown want to give their children the same grounding, the same ties to a place. Sometimes the desire is for parent and child to both be tied to the same hometown, as might be expected given Japanese kinship ideas.

For example, one SHS teacher, Tsuneyuki, an eldest son and successor, wished for his children to feel that his island hometown was also theirs. But none of his children were born or raised there. So that the ties could develop despite the family living on the mainland, his children spent their vacations on the island, playing with the children from their father's neighborhood. The family bought land and began building a house there, but Tsuneyuki's request to transfer was turned down. After several years they grew desperate, because they wanted their oldest son to graduate from the same ES as these neighborhood friends, then move up to JHS and SHS with them, so as to solidify his attachment to the island. So, after five years, even as they hoped for the teacher's transfer, the rest of the family began preparing to move into the newly completed island house and leave the father behind as a sort of backwards *tanshin fu'nin*. Just in time, he received his transfer.

Shigeru, a JHS teacher I knew, was not so lucky. He, too, was an eldest son who loved the island where he was born and wanted his family to live there. He told me of the dream he cherished of a home of his own near his parents' home, with a dog, and his four children growing up to be the

194

classmates of Shigeru's classmates, and his children attending the schools where either he or his wife, also a teacher, worked. Having successfully completed his required Wide Area transfers, he had been counting on a transfer back to his "main work area." So he was shocked and dismayed when instead he received a thoroughly unexpected transfer to the Pref. BOE – his supervisor said, "I must have praised you too much" (*cf.* Skinner 1983 for another case of proficiency's downside). His position required long hours of intense effort and more than once every week the work would be continued outside the office over dinner and drinks. He and his wife built their island home and the wife went to live there, with the children, leaving him alone. They were apart for nearly two years.

Rōsuke was another island-born teacher who was thinking about how his children would attend school in his hometown. His natal home was in a more peripheral part of the town, served by its own little ES. But Rōsuke decided to rent an apartment in the more central part of the town, served by the largest ES. In part he was thinking that this would give his children more alternatives for club activities and that the larger ES typically attracted highly qualified teachers. But he was also thinking that both ESs would feed into the same JHS, and then onto SHS, and if his children were going to attend those schools, then it would be better to get to know a greater number of those future classmates right from the outset. For this strategy to bear fruit, Rōsuke, who was subject to transfer, had to be prepared to leave his children in the island town – either in the care of his wife, parents, or some other kin or neighbor.

195

These stories show the importance of classmates (*dōkyūsei;* 同級生) – specifically classmates in your same grade, especially the same homeroom. Prototypically, your classmates are your best chums, the friends you keep for life, a resource to which you can always turn. Asking favors of long-lost *dōkyūsei* was done with what seemed to me astonishing ease. For instance, when I returned to Japan to begin fieldwork, my wife called up two of her *dōkyūsei* to see if I could interview them. I was mortified by her conversation with one of them, which went something like, "Hi, it's me, how have you been? Yes, I'm back in Japan with my husband now. He is doing a research project on teachers and would like to talk to you. That'd be okay, right?" Although they had neither spoken with nor seen each other in seven years, it was a matter of course that I could interview them whenever I wished. That such indulgence could be so abruptly asked for was as surprising to me as that it was given, but I came to appreciate it as a signal of a close relationship, like teasing.

Social ordering by age in Japan means that relationships between *dōkyūsei,* unlike those between *sempai* and *kōhai,* are predicated on equality (but also potentially fierce rivalry) and characterized by familiarity, features which are expressed linguistically in the terms of address and style of speech used between them. Regardless of whether the relationships are in fact more intimate, it is almost inappropriate to address one's *dōkyūsei* as anything other than an intimate (setting aside the actual content of the exchange). One can, if one chooses, talk more freely and plainly with one's *dōkyūsei* than with someone older or younger.

The *dōkyūsei* relationship is significant even before a child enters school. When we met a couple who also had an infant or toddler, we were invariably asked how old our daughter was. This was of immediate importance because Japanese parents take the perspective of their children when speaking in their presence, referring to themselves as "Mommy" or "Daddy" for instance, as a way of modeling for the child how to speak and behave. Therefore it is important for parents to know the correct term of address – is the baby to your left an "older sister" to your child or a "younger sister"? After gathering this important information, the other parent would typically respond by saying something like, "Ah, they are *dōkyūsei*" or "Ah, one year ahead." Parents can then begin imagining that their children will be classmates or will be in a *sempai-kōhai* relationship. One mother might then speak "for" or "as if" her child, saying, "Please look after me (*Yoroshiku ne*)" to the other infant, who is also in diapers but happens to be a few months older.

The expression "*tsukue wo narabeta naka*," which literally means someone whom one lined up one's desk next to (to study), is a way to refer to one's *dōkyūsei* and it carries the meaning of a close relationship. That closeness arises in part because of how much time Japanese spend in school in their homerooms: they do not spend as much time with anyone else. The homeroom system means that elementary, junior high, and senior high students stay together in a small group (no more than 40) throughout the school day, day in, day out, for no less than a year, and frequently three years. In rural areas like Nagasaki's outer islands, it is common for a single ES to feed into a single JHS –

197

sometimes the two schools are even conjoined. Hence in some places one could have the same classmates for nine years in a row. This gives classmates a great deal of shared history upon which to build their relationships.

Given how important this social group is in Japanese society, and particularly in rural areas, it makes sense that the island natives Tsuneyuki, Shigeru, and Rōsuke would all be concerned with having the children establish relationships with their classmates by junior high school if not before. Relationships become weightier for children in JHS and SHS, and they have entrance exams to worry about, so changing schools and relationships becomes less desirable and harder. The case of Tadashi shows this.

Tadashi was another island native teacher who loved his hometown, which was in Kamigotō. His wife was from there too, and they owned a home there in which they planned to spend their retirement. After many years in the islands, he, his wife, and their young children went to the mainland for his Wide Area moves. When he was transferred back eight years later, his first post was not in his hometown, but on Wakamatsu Island. He ended up staying in Wakamatsu six years. When it came time for his daughter to apply to SHS, she wanted to apply to Gotō SHS, where all her Wakamatsu friends were going, rather than Kamigotō SHS, where students from Tadashi's hometown went. And, later, when it came time for her coming of age ceremony – a ceremony celebrating a cohort having reached 20 years of age, the age of maturity, held for all the

young adults in the given municipality – she chose to attend the one in Wakamatsu, where her close friends were, rather than the one in Tadashi's hometown. Tadashi explained to me that it wasn't *his* coming of age ceremony, after all, so it was appropriate for her to go to the one she wanted to. But he confessed feeling a bit of regret that it hadn't worked out differently, and she didn't share his attachment to his hometown (FN 040120).

Some children who changed schools failed to develop close relationships with their classmates, just as some felt as if they lacked a hometown. But changing schools does not doom a child to a life without close classmates, as the following incident shows.

A woman from Kamigotō told me that she and some female classmates were assembling an address list of all their classmates so they could start up an alumni group. Almost everyone in their graduating class had gone to ES and JHS together (if not SHS as well), and these people were put on the list without question. But there were three some-time classmates whose status was questionable. Case 1 was the child of a transferring teacher and had been a classmate for five of the nine years. Case 2, also the child of a transferring teacher, had been a classmate for only one of the nine. Case 3 was born on the island and had been a classmate for more than five years but ultimately had not graduated from SHS with them. In the end, they left Case 1 off the list, included Case 2, and left off Case 3. Why? The woman explained that Case 2 was a girl, so the list-makers knew her well; Case 1 was a boy, so they hadn't gotten close. But she expected one of their male classmates who had been

Case 1's friend would add him to the list later, an action which upset nobody. As for Case 3, he had made no friends while at their school, so it was considered best for all concerned not to invite him.

This reveals that it is possible to say that, yes, objectively, they had been classmates of Case 3 at a certain period of time, but no, subjectively, they did not then and are not now in a typically close-feeling *dōkyūsei* relationship (*cf.* the difference between *birthplace* and *hometown*). Not all classmates become close friends, regardless of the structure of their relationship, the length of time they spend together, or the fact that they were raised in the same neighborhood. Personalities matter. These are simple points but they hint at the concerns parents who transfer face.

In Japan, classmates are the prototypical friends and relationships with them are supposed to last a lifetime. They spend a great deal of time together. They study and learn together – for group-based learning is an important part of Japanese educational practice. For all these reasons, to be the odd one out among one's peers can be a brutal experience with far-reaching effects. The experience of, or mere fear of, being "bullied (*ijime;* いじめ)" by one's classmates through physical and mental harassment or shunning leads some children to refuse to go to school, while others go so far as to commit suicide. These effects may be extreme, but teachers and parents alike believe that a student who is concerned about peer relationships, let alone the target of bullying, will not do well on the entrance exams for SHS and college, and thereby risks being damned to a hard life on a lower rung of the economic ladder. This is why teachers, parents, and society in general want to help children

enter and be a part of a supportive peer group, and why bullying and school refusal are rightly presented as major social problems in the Japanese mass media (Cave 2001, Rohlen 1983).

As parents, public school teachers are concerned about the risks of switching schools to their own children, from bullying and a lack of friends to disruption of routine and a lack of study focus. The decision to move or not move a JHS or SHS child is a high stakes one, which is why many parents will decide it is better for their children to have continuity in their peer relationships, regardless of the personal sacrifice.

Recall the case of Ririko, who was transferred from Nagasaki City to the outer islands. When Ririko received her transfer, two of her three children were approaching exam time. She knew that if the children went with her, they could all stay at her natal island home and be well looked after by Ririko and Ririko's mother. But Ririko calculated that when her second year on the island arrived, both her oldest child and her middle child would be studying for their entrance exams (college and SHS, respectively). She and her husband decided that moving them would be too disruptive and that they needed a stable environment to succeed. So Ririko left all three of her children in the care of her husband and her husband's mother, and took up her post as a *tanshin fu'nin*. Ririko said it was a tough time for her, because during those four years on the island all she could do for her children was say, "Do your best!" over the phone (FN 031025).

If continuity was the goal and separation from parents not thought to be an issue, older children could board. Boarding was a not uncommon option for students from outer islands. Many outer islands lack a senior high school (and some lack a junior high school), and even where there was a school, it was not always possible to commute to the school daily from all the feeder settlements. Also, the island school might not have the sort of program a student was looking for. Two of my friends from Narao Town in Kamigotō, both born in the 1960s, boarded off-island: one at a private SHS in Nagasaki City; another at Gotō SHS, then and now the top public SHS in the Gotō islands. One friend's son boarded at a certain mainland SHS which had one of the premier soccer programs in the country; his junior high aged younger brother aspired to join him there.

As for teachers whose children boarded, I knew of two cases. The first was an island-born teacher. Her eldest daughter had been accepted by an elite private SHS on the mainland. As above, her younger siblings aspired to join her. She presented the idea of attending a boarding school as originating with the children themselves. The second was a teacher from Nagasaki City. He had brought his son to the islands when he was transferred there, and the son had done well in baseball. His father was transferred back to the mainland at the end of his son's second year in high school. Rather than switch schools for the final year, the boy stayed and became a captain on the baseball team and graduated with the friends he had made. He did not board in the dorms, but in the home of one of his classmates with whom he had grown especially close.

8.5   Summary

Public school teachers faced with an untimely transfer, or contemplating a career of transfers, must consider how their residential decisions – where to live, with whom, when – will allow them to meet the obligations they feel toward their children, parents, and ancestors. They make their residential decisions in a social and cultural context in which the idea of the stem family and the practice of ancestor veneration at the stem family grave puts a premium on continuous ties between families and land, home-based care has long been the norm, peer group relationships with classmates are of tremendous symbolic and social importance, and performance on exams in the 12th and 9th grades have an outsize effect on a child's economic future.

What this investigation reveals is that teachers in their quest to do what is best for their children and aging parents are driven to flexible arrangements which would be surprising if one held a rigid understanding of Japanese kinship: for example, children can be left in the care of one's stem family, but also one's spouse's natal family. Teachers may draw up life plans revolving around their allegiances to stem families and hometowns, but Wide Area transfers encourage them to use their kindred and even wider personal network.

9. The Decision-Making Process: Frontstage and Backstage

On a set day in mid-to-late March in schools and other educational institutions all around Nagasaki Prefecture, teaching and support staff are notified of the outcome of the transfer decisions for the upcoming year.   First, principals (or the head of the institution where they currently work; hereafter, I will use "principals" to cover both situations) call in those who had requested and/or received a transfer one by one and let them know their results privately – this is called the "internal notification (*naiji;* 内示)." Many principals prefer to tell older teachers first, but teacher availability can scramble the order. After all the people directly concerned have been informed privately, the whole staff is assembled and the transfers are announced (*happyō*).

Because teachers and staff are ultimately uncertain about whether and whither they will be transferred, the prevailing atmosphere on the day of the announcement is nervousness and unease (*doki-doki, fuan, shimpai*), rather than, say, happy anticipation. This is true even for those who feel sure they know what will happen. For example, one October a veteran coolly told me that it was "certain (*kakujitsu*)" she would receive a transfer from the outer island back to her home on the

mainland (FN 031025). As it turned out, that is exactly what happened. But according to one of her colleagues, come the day of the announcement, this teacher spent the whole day on edge. She was so restless, said her colleague, she exclaimed at one point, "I can't get any work done!" (FN 040319).

This teacher had spent the past four years living apart from her husband and children, so she had a lot riding on the outcome of the decision. Would she be reunited with her family? Or had something unexpected happened which would force her to stay on the island another year, or go to a new school far from home? (These family-related worries would be above and beyond the work-related anxieties of any transferee: Did her new principal have a reputation as a tyrant? Or the parents as antagonistic or uncooperative? The students as unruly? The colleagues as cliquish?)

Although this teacher's situation was poignant, all teachers who have goals and responsibilities related to their families, such as were described in the previous chapter, find the day of the internal announcement to be a fraught period. Although the Wide Area policy guidelines structure the decision-making to a great extent, the Pref. BOE has discretion even within those guidelines about when to transfer a teacher and where to send him or her. Indeed, the policy ultimately gives the Pref. BOE the authority to transfer a teacher whenever they can argue it fulfills the educational needs of the prefecture. Because the decisions of the Pref. BOE are irrevocable, at least in the near term, it is all the more important for teachers interested in obtaining a workable outcome – by which I mean outcomes which allow them to meet both their work and family

responsibilities, without to quit (or having to have their spouse quit, if married) – to do all they can do before the decisions are made. But because the Pref. BOE makes its decisions behind closed doors, teachers have a great deal of unease, uncertainty, and suspicion regarding the process by which the decisions that have such a major impact on their lives are made. They do not put much trust in the formal, official method of communicating their desires, the Request Form. Many feel having good relationships with principals and others in the municipal and prefectural BOEs is more helpful. But many also try to "crack the code," to find an argument that will appeal to the Pref. BOE and help them get an outcome that they and their families can make do with.

9.1   Personnel decisions: the annual calendar

I will begin the discussion by outlining the annual calendar of events related to the decision-making process. (Note that my survey of BOEs across Japan found that the calendar of events is fairly standard.) Broadly, the process is as follows. First, the Pref. BOE determines how many new appointments are needed for each level and license, based on enrollment projections and retirements. This is done during the first term of the new school year. Second, the Pref. BOE determines who will fill those slots, based on written examinations, practical tests, and interviews. This begins in the summer, when the schools are in recess, and decisions are made in the fall.

Finally, using the policy guidelines the Pref. BOE determines where to place its staff – both new appointments and continuing employees. Let us examine this process in more detail.

In late September or early October, all current employees receive a Request Form and a set of detailed instructions about the form and the process. The instructions make clear what sort of employee is especially marked for a transfer, but all employees must complete the form. Staff put on the forms their requests for the following year: whether to stay or leave, and where they would like to go, and so on. Completed forms are collected roughly two weeks later. Each employee then meets with his or her principal to discuss his or her requests and explain any special circumstances. The principal may agree to help by submitting special petitions on his or her staff, if required. Once all these meetings are completed, the principals turn the forms in to the personnel reshuffling group at the Pref. BOE, along with their evaluations of the staff members and other comments regarding staffing at the school (these comments are called *gushin;* 具申).

By August, the Pref. BOE has already determined how many teachers are marked for transfer within and between areas. In November or December, a panel at the Pref. BOE reviews all requests for special circumstances. By early December, all the principals meet to discuss plans for their school and outgoing staff. The Personnel Group begins marking out those who by regulation must be moved and should be moved and considering where this or that individual can go (Hayashi 1984i). They also decide the transfers and assignments of the principals and other bosses.

Sometime in January or February the principals are notified of their transfers and all the principals have a last meeting at the Pref. BOE regarding their desires for subordinates at their upcoming post. Sometime after this meeting, principals will have a strong idea about who will be staying and who will be going among their current (and future) staff, if not precisely where. But the decisions are not finalized by the Pref. BOE until March, so there could be some surprises. On the second-to-last Friday in March (around the 18th or 19th) is the internal announcement (*naiji*) of the transfers. That weekend, next year's postings for all public school staff in the prefecture are published in the *Nagasaki Shinbun* and as a supplement to the local editions of the major national newspapers. The following week brings the end-of-the-term ceremonies, including the farewell ceremony to those leaving the school due to retirement or transfer. Employees should report to their posts on April 1, the beginning of the new school year. Principals will give teachers their assignments for the year: classes, grade, HR leadership, club leadership, and other academic administration working group leadership or membership prior to the arrival of students.

Compulsory education schools have an extra wrinkle. Although judicial rulings made them advisory, recommendations (*naishin;* 内申) are still sent by municipal superintendents to the Pref. BOE. This takes place after the principals within the municipality have finished meeting with their staff and sent off everything to the Pref. BOE. And that is another difference: ES and JHS principals do not forward their Request Forms and comments *directly* to the Pref. BOE, but instead

deal with the municipal BOE and the Education Office for their district (there are six:: Tsushima,

Iki, Gotō, Sasebo, Nagasaki, and Shimabara) (Hayashi 1984i, 1984n). After transfers between these

districts are handled, the assignments of staff within these districts are sorted out. Because of this

extra layer of bureaucracy, my ES and JHS informants felt that although they might be able to guess

the *district* to which they would be sent, they could not – unlike SHS teachers – guess the *school*.

9.2   Cynicism regarding the Request Form

Filling out a Request Form is the major institutionalized way for teachers to communicate

their preferences to the decision makers. Teachers marked for transfer pay great attention to how

they complete their forms. Even so, teachers – even those who have received favorable transfers in

the past – show a great deal of cynicism about the exercise.

Many teachers felt that completing the form was just a pro forma exercise to give the Pref.

BOE "cover" to do what it wanted to do, to enable them to say "we took your requests into

consideration" and, even better if possible, "we gave you your request – at least, one of them." This

opinion dates to the creation of the Wide Area policy. Here is one case from the SHS Union:

> Mr. C (age 45) had already had experience working in an outer island but was
> pressured strongly by his principal to fill out every blank of the *Ikō Chōsa*. "They
> wouldn't, would they?" he thought. But sure enough, on the day of the internal

(informal) announcement, the principal came in all smiles, saying, "You got your number one choice!" Number one, that is, among the outer island listings. He could not say a word. So off he went to the outer islands a second time, to a place where there isn't even a pharmacy for miles, even though C had written of his medical condition (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1979:6-8).

Transfers were to be based on teacher's request and understanding, said the unions, and this form was just a fake substitute for that legal requirement, window dressing to make Wide Area transfers look like something other than what they are: autocratically decided compulsory transfers.

Union officers worried about just such outcomes had in 1976 advised their members not to fill out the forms at all, or leave them blank, or write down "I wish to have my requests honored" and put either "remain where I am," or the desired destination, or "follow my request" in all the sections of the form. But the Pref. BOE, with the support of many principals, did not allow forms to be submitted in this way, as described in Part II.

By 2000, the threatening language of the instructions had been removed. But teachers still were obliged to "request" destinations that they did not wish to move to at all, just for the sake of completing their forms "correctly." My informant Masako, who had completed her required outer island service, told me her principal told her not to put down her actual top choice in Area A, Ōmura City, but instead Nagasaki City, because Nagasaki was her main work area. That March she learned she had been transferred to Nagasaki City: her "top choice."

Lest such a thing happen to her, Ririko pointedly writes down only acceptable places:

But you don't go where you request. Not even once have I ever gone where I asked. It's just something you write down. Just a formality (*keishiki*). But if you write down a strange place (*hen na tokoro*), it would be bad if they gave it to you, so, as a precaution, you write down [places that would be acceptable] (FN 031025).

In determining what places would be acceptable, Ririko first considers the length of the commute, and then the atmosphere of the area (*chiiki*), using information she picks up "through rumors or conversation with acquaintances." But as the quote above suggests, she doesn't hold out much hope that she will get a desired transfer. She repeated the claim that a teacher never gets his or her request more than ten times during the course of the interview. When I asked, "Among your friends or acquaintances, is there anyone who has gotten all their requests?" Ririko replied, "All the way down to the school, it couldn't be. When it was time to come to an island, getting Fukue for example, or Kamigotō, that has happened. But there are also people who without requesting it were given Tsushima. That's like being sent to Fukuoka Prefecture!"

Ririko's own experience contained both good and bad outcomes. When she had to go from her main area, Nagasaki City (Area A) to a county school (Area B) she was fairly worried that she would have to relocate, because not only could she be sent to any county in the prefecture, but even if it were close, she does not have a driver's license, so only if the school could be reached by public transportation could she remain in her home. Luckily for her, that is just what she got. But although this was a good outcome, she saw this less as the fulfillment of her request – which would

211

have been to stay in Nagasaki City for the time being – than as a workable outcome, given that she

had to move. Her next transfer was not according to her wishes either, as it forced her to relocate

and live apart from her husband and children. Ririko sees such misfortune as inherent in the system.

The policy and the principals' advice influence not just what teachers write, but what they

don't write on these forms. Junnōsuke is a teacher I worked with in Kamigotō who was transferred

to a school full of low-achieving, disciplinary problem-prone students. He was miserable, as were

some others who had arrived there with him his first year. Some of these did what Ririko might

have done: even though it was probably futile, they requested a transfer out. But Junnōsuke did not,

because he knew it was futile and thought doing so might create an impression which could come

back to haunt him. (Incidentally, none of them were transferred after that first year.) These stories

show that a teacher's official request is not always his or her "true" request.

Even a SHS principal who had worked in the Pref. BOE told me that people in the Pref.

BOE barely look at the form, because the Pref. BOE has other ways of finding out the information

it needs to make its decisions. An employee's explanations, if any, might be read, but that's about it.

Having a form is just for conforming to social expectations (*tatemae*) (FN 040602). (*Tatemae* relates

to the frontstage of social life, the arena of social performance where conforming to conventions is

important, while *honne* is one's true feelings and opinions, related to the backstage area where one is

not concerned with creating and maintaining impressions; *cf.* Goffman 1959.)

9.3   The importance of principals and other administrators

To get a good outcome requires both a strong reason or warrant and a strong advocate. More important than the Request Form, teachers feel, is their relationships with their principal and other key figures in the Pref. BOE, the municipal BOEs, the education system at large, the unions, and even political figures and the politically connected or socially prominent public.

The most important relationship is with the principal. It is the principal who conveys the staff's requests to the Pref. BOE, both what is on the Request Forms and any other information the principal deems appropriate. Teachers' appreciation of the principal's significance was revealed through their stories of how a principal had helped or (more often) hurt their cause.

First of all, teachers do not know whether their principals in fact are trying to advocate for them or, out of maliciousness, incompetence, or organizational weakness are not doing so. For example, almost half of the respondents to a 1980s union survey asking whether their principals had passed on their request for consideration of special circumstances answered that they did not even know that much (Hayashi 1984n). Take the following case: Setsuko, had a sick child who was receiving specialized care at a mainland hospital. She was an outer island teacher living apart from her husband, who worked on the island. Having completed her required terms in Areas A and B, she was marked for a return to her main work area, the outer island. But she wanted to remain on

213

the mainland so her son could continue his care at that hospital. She asked her principal if he would

complete the necessary form endorsing her request for consideration of special circumstances. He

told her that form would not be necessary, because he would see to it that she could remain on the

mainland. But six months later, when he made the internal announcement to her, he told her with

pride and self-satisfaction, "You've got your transfer back home to the island!" Setsuko was

stunned, shocked. She attributed it to the principal's incompetence – that he had just forgotten.

Others might interpret that outcome as sinister, perhaps a hint to Setsuko that she should consider

early retirement, or perhaps a punishment for being out of favor (*cf.* the case of Mr. C, above).

Regardless, nothing could be done about it, so she went to the post alone, as a *tanshin fu'nin*.

Working at a school with a weak, ineffectual, or barely competent administrator, let alone

one with whom one had bad relations, was considered disastrous. Consider Ririko's remarks:

> BPC: When elementary school teachers and junior high school teachers write the
> forms and submit them to the principal, then from the principal, what happens next?
>
> Ririko: I don't really know. They say, "Please." I think probably that the principal
> will talk and whatever with the Board of Education. As to what happens there, there
> are people whom, on the inside, the principal dislikes, so they are given some
> faraway place, right? When the guy was there he fought or argued or something with
> the principal, so you can bet – "Oho! That guy!" – and the guy is given some tiny
> island.
>
> BPC: Among principals, are there good principals and bad principals, strong ones, or
> really weak ones, like that?

Ririko: Oh yes. There are ones who totally give their all, but have no power in personnel matters (*jinji no chikara ga nai kata*), and also people who are terribly overbearing (*iatsuteki na kata*) but who have terrible strength in those matters.

When I asked if teachers had a sense of who had such power and who didn't, Ririko replied, "Yes. If you look at the results of next year's transfers, you'll see." The nature of the strength, she surmised, was not based on being respected as a good teacher – some of the best teachers do not go into administration, whereas some of the worst do. Rather, it was based on having "lots of contacts with the people related to personnel matters, perhaps" (FN 031025). In general, those who have worked at the Pref. BOE have greater standing and better connections within the principals assembly (*kōchōkai*) than those who have not. In the SHS system, the principals at the most prestigious schools have greater clout – although the causality is backward: because they had greater prestige, they were picked to lead those prestigious schools. Teachers felt that working at a school with a powerful, well-connected administrator gives one access to a very powerful principal, one who can really help (or hurt) your chances of getting a desired transfer.

A few principals and administrators were willing to speak with me about the decision-making process as they saw it. One of these is Rie, a SHS principal who spoke with great candor. Rie said the most important job of a principal is to get good teachers transferred into the school, because teachers are the "interface" where the students (and community) meet the school (and educational system) – teachers make the atmosphere of the school. Another of a principal's main

215

jobs, she felt, was to help those of her teachers who are transferring out of her school go to the best

possible destination – one appropriate to their abilities.

In a competitive environment, where all the principals are trying to do what's best for their

own school and staff, and some staff and posts are considered stronger than others, desirable results

do not just happen automatically on the basis of, say, "merit," objectively measured. The system

"pretends to be fair" and based on merit, she said, but the true basis of the decision-making is the

connections people have, the relationships between principals, and the behind-the-scenes

information that gets traded. That is not to say that principals act in bad faith – after all, she pointed

out, the Pref. BOE has many ways to independently find out if a teacher is good or bad. Rather, the

point is that principals can and should try to influence the outcome by guiding the BOE's decisions.

Here Rie gives an example of how this is done for some rank-and-file teachers:

> Let's say I have two teachers who will be transferred. I am putting together
> information on them. I have to think, how do I phrase my evaluation of these
> teachers? Maybe both of them think they are very good and want to be transferred
> to one of the top SHSs. But maybe they aren't that good. Maybe one doesn't have
> the necessary skills and abilities. "Therefore I think you should send him to this sort
> of school," perhaps a medium-sized school, an environment better suited for his
> development. Now if it is a teacher no one wants, then, you know, you better soften
> it, talk about that person's strengths, to try to shape it so that the teacher can go
> somewhere (FN 040602).

Rie gave a detailed example of how she used her power and influence at the BOE to get a highly desired transfer outcome. The relationship between principals and their head teachers is very important, she explained, and so she was proud to have engineered the transfer a very talented head teacher into her school, a rural SHS overshadowed by two other SHSs in the region which serve higher achieving students. "I needed him," she said. "And I got him!" They complement each other well, she said, he filling in some of her shortcomings, so that by working together they can accomplish their goals for the school. They are able to communicate well, exchange ideas, and encourage each other.

I asked how she came to set her sights on this head teacher. First of all, she said, she knew him personally, albeit not well, because they had worked at the same large SHS for a number of years. But more importantly, he had a reputation for having done a good job in administrative roles prior to becoming a head teacher, namely the manager of academic affairs (*kyōmu shunin*) and the head of student guidance (*seito shidō*): the "rumor" was that he was motivated (*yarigai ga aru*). And most important of all, another principal, someone she really respected and who was very influential, liked him and wanted him to be the head teacher at his school. That made her think, "If this man likes him and wants him, then he is worth taking!"

She campaigned to get him by playing the part of an "affirmative action 'woman *kōchō*.'" It's in the papers, as a major focus – "the number of women principals is rising, this year we have the

second-ever woman principal, now this year there are three, *etc.*" She told the Pref. BOE that if that

is the case, they are putting her forward as a symbol of the prefecture's development, then they can't

let her fail! What message would that send? 'Why did you send me to [this low-ranked SHS]? I

need to have a good head teacher to succeed there, so you have to give me this one.' And in the end

she got him! Afterwards, she apologized to the principal who had wanted him for his own, saying,

"Sorry! (*Gomen ne!*) I needed him!" (FN 040602)

"After working with me here, I should be able to get him a transfer to one of the top five

[SHSs] in Nagasaki," she said. By helping him get such a transfer, she said, it will benefit her, too.

She believes that we are all connected in life, so helping others is a moral act that will have positive

repercussions. (I confess I was expecting her to say that it will benefit her by giving her a reputation

for being able to do right by her staff, so that future staff will be eager to work with her. The ability

to reward followers is critical to becoming a patron to others; *cf.* Lebra 1984:242-247 on how

women's difficulty in winning promotions hindered their ability to attract a network of followers and

build social power within an organization.)

Principals are not the only ones with goals. Head teachers and municipal superintendents

have staffing goals as well, as the following two examples show. (1) A SHS head teacher once told

me that he was going to "get rid of" one teacher who had a bad reputation, and sure enough the

following year that teacher was transferred to another school. For this to have occurred, the head

teacher must have lobbied successfully with his principal and may also have used his influence at the

Pref. BOE and with other principals. (2) I once was having dinner with a teacher-teacher couple

(both JHS) and they said that one town in Kamigotō always seemed to get great teachers for its ESs

and JHSs (we joked that the other town where the three of us had worked clearly had bad luck).

The husband was sure this was due to the "pull" of that town's superintendent being an acclaimed

educator who regularly published insightful essays in the prefectural newspaper (FN 050915).

Principals are not only pivotal in the transfer decision-making process. They also can look

after their staff in other ways, such as by helping teachers prepare for an outcome. A few

compulsory education teachers told me that principals tipped them off about impending transfers

ahead of the internal announcements – not to the precise destination, but to the fact that it was

likely they would be transferring. This was done mostly in a case where a teacher would be expected

to have to change residences, to give them a little extra time to start packing and making other

preparations. According to the teachers who mentioned this, they had such a strong expectation

that this would take place that when it *didn't,* and they found themselves transferred to a distant

place without prior warning, they felt slightly betrayed or undercut by their principals.

Because of the importance of a teacher's relationship to a principal in the transfer process,

the transfer of a principal is a major event. Those most concerned are the people expecting to be

transferred in the upcoming year. What information, good and bad, will the new principal here?

Will the teachers have or be able to gain sufficient respect from their new principal to motivate him to help them with any out-of-the-ordinary transfer requests they had? If the head teacher remains behind, because there is the sense that the head teacher will be a trusted source for the principal, teachers have more confidence that if they had done things worthy of respect, the principal would have ample opportunity to hear of them before the transfer decisions were made. That is why in a case where a school lost both administrators within the same school year the teachers grew on edge.

That connections, networks, and relationships are important in personnel decisions should not be surprising to anyone who has ever worked in a medium-to-large sized organization. One principal thought them so important that he advised a young substitute teacher who had failed the teachers exam to pass on an opportunity to be hired if it meant giving up her connections. She had been considering going to Tōkyō or Yokohama, where teaching jobs are more plentiful than in Nagasaki, because the population in those areas was growing, rather than shrinking; teaching was less attractive in those areas than in the provinces because there were other good jobs to be had; and top programs attracted good teachers and students away from the public school system. Although she might be hired right away, said this principal, she would know no one, and have no connections, no one to look out for her. It would be better for her to stay here in Nagasaki and keep applying, he said, even if it took two or three years (when a great number of retirements were expected), because once launched, her career would be more assured here.

9.4   Cynicism and the use of paradigmatic thinking at the Pref. BOE

As the final decision-maker, the actions of the Pref. BOE administrators are most important.

What I wish to highlight in this section is that their decision-making process is a human one, rather

than a mechanical one. As such, it is guided by feelings and swayed by paradigmatic thinking about

what outcomes would be ideal and just. My data for this section comes from archival sources.

First, let us look at how the Pref. BOE decides which teachers' claim of "special

circumstances" have merit and how they are to be handled. An article from 1984 shows that

administrators view these petitions with as much cynicism as teachers do the Request Form process:

"Around this time of year, the number of teachers with filial piety or illnesses really jumps up," he

said. "With so many teachers full of filial piety it is amazing that education in this prefecture has not

been utterly thrown to the ground!" (Hayashi 1984n). By filial piety he refers to teachers claiming

they cannot be transferred because they have a duty to look after their parents or in-laws.

The work of matching personnel to posts is done by a different set of people, the members

of the Personnel Groups (*jinji han*). During my fieldwork there were about four people in the SHS

group, and eight each in the ES and JHS group, but the latter are supplemented by staff from the six

regional Education Offices. An article paints the scene for the groups working on ES and JHS

assignments around the end of February 1983:

For ten days they have been holed up in here like this, the same work being continued, and the mark of fatigue is strongly written upon their foreheads. …. [T]he fourth round of activities related to personnel transfers is the final settling of accounts. The educational capacity, household circumstances, and so on of each teaching and support staff member on the list have been so pounded into the heads of the persons in charge of personnel transfers that they need only to hear the name to recall all that information.

…. Inside the building the six Education Offices of the prefecture are divided up separately. In the Tsushima Education Office there are four people altogether: the head of the office, the head of the advising section, and the superintendents in charge. In a large Education Office like Nagasaki's, they have three rooms all to themselves, and in the corner cardboard boxes jammed full of papers are piled high.

"At School X, holes for six people opened up. If we get five people from within the ABC Education Office district, then we'd like one new graduate. If possible, someone who could do music or English ..." "Teacher Y wonders if there are any openings at a school closer to center of town so that Teacher Y could commute to the hospital." In the midst of this kind of give-and-take, [one person exclaimed, "He said he doesn't under any circumstances want A-*sensei*. If he doesn't take him, it'll be a disaster."] "That's trouble. There were teachers like that sort of case before, but there are also examples where we changed the school and they became such excellent teachers they were unrecognizable." This teacher ended up being stuffed in over the objections.

…. The work of adjusting is a battle of physical strength and endurance. If you move one person, then you will have to move a whole series of people. Sometimes the work has gone on until dawn. …. There are even some people who just sleep inside the office. …. The bittersweet drama of the teaching and support staff begins from here (Hayashi 1984i).

This excerpt shows the Personnel Groups trying to weigh in the balance all that they have heard and read about these teachers and about the needs at the various schools. We get a sense of the process as a very human one, with all that that entails.

222

When the people at the Pref. BOE have to make the tough decisions, such as whether this

teacher or that teacher should get a certain position, and the answer is not found in the policy

guidelines, is it all based on connections? Rie's discussion shows that the decision-makers are

sensitive to the broader symbolism of their actions. This points us to the importance of logics,

values, culture. In the following passage, Imamura Taketoshi, a former member of the Kagoshima

Pref. BOE, where a Wide Area type policy is also in place, discusses how administrators use

paradigmatic or prototypical thinking about justice and the lifecourse to help them decide:

> An alum from the Prefectural BOE said this to me: 'It's not written anywhere, but
> Prefectural SHSs are undeniably ranked in the shape of a pyramid. If you move up
> from below, that's a promotion (*eiten*); if you move down from above, that's a
> demotion (*sasen*); if you move sideways, that's a sideways slide (*yoko suberi*). All
> humans desire advancement (*eitatsu*), so to as many people as possible we give the
> feeling of promotion. That's the philosophy of personnel transfers. At the same
> time, all people, when they get close to retirement, want to return to their
> hometown, so we transfer them close to there. That's what we do now – all the rest
> is just pretty words, don't you think?'" (Imamura 1994:7).

This logic seemed to be accepted in Nagasaki, too. In Nagasaki, I knew of a situation where two

teachers wanted to get back to their hometown, but there was only one opening. The position was

given to the older veteran.

9.5   Teacher assessment of personnel reshuffling outcomes

Some teachers who receive a bad outcome – or outsiders who witness one – explain it as the impossibility of everyone getting their way, or to the person not having a good relationship with a decision maker, or not having a strong enough advocate. But the high stakes nature of the transfer decision motivates many to search for some deeper reason or more proximate, personal cause – a common reaction among employees in the public and private sector (Skinner 1983, Janelli 1993).

In some cases, there is a reason, and it is made explicit. Ms. Ōtsubo had already worked five years in the tiny branch school of an outer island, so was shocked when she was transferred not back to the mainland but to yet another outer island post. "'*Sensei*, you are a veteran of multiple-grade classes. Don't you feel sorry for the children of the branch school?' said the Board of Education, and so they played on her sympathy (*nakiotosareta;* more literally, 'persuaded with tears')" (Hayashi 1984c). The administration played to her sense of professional duty, asking her to take up her post for the sake of the children, while showing respect for the work she had done at the other small school (in another case of the danger of being good at an undesirable task).

In other cases, the reason seems self-evident. On one occasion I was talking with Norimasa, who is not a teacher but whose wife is, about a mutual acquaintance. This acquaintance had been transferred from one of the top JHSs on Fukue Island to one of the smallest and farthest flung JHSs

in Gotō. Norimasa said that he must have screwed up, because it wouldn't make sense to go from a prestigious place and to such a remote school otherwise. Going at a young age to such a prestigious place meant that he was on track for a high-power career. So he must have fallen off that path (*ochita*). Norimasa then gave me a character profile of this teacher, sharing some interesting gossip which supported the view that the move was likely deserved.

In other cases, no obvious reason presents itself, and people are left to wonder. Junnōsuke, the teacher who was transferred to the inner city school of "problem" students, left Kamigotō in the same year as another SHS teacher of the same academic subject. This *sempai* went to a mid-level academic school with a solid reputation and pleasant work environment. Junnōsuke envied his *sempai*'s good fortune. Knowing that his *sempai* was in the union, Junnōsuke wondered if things would have worked out differently for him if he too had been in it.

I was surprised by Junnōsuke's reasoning, because it is more commonly asserted that union membership hurts a person's transfer prospects. But his stretch serves to make the point that because these decisions are made by humans, in secret, with broad policy cover to make decisions flexibly, teachers are left to imagine a number of reasons why they (or someone) might have been the victim (or the victor) in a contest to receive a desired transfer. Some interpretations suggest the matter is within their control: by working harder, or developing better connections, or joining (or leaving) the union. Some suggest that die has already been cast: they graduated from the wrong

school, or were posted to a school with a poor reputation or a weak principal, *etc.* Junnōsuke was obviously searching for a reason why he rather than another had experienced the misfortune which would allow him to gain better control over the outcome.

9.6   Summary

Teachers concede that the Pref. BOE administrators are faced with an almost impossible task – their decisions will inevitably displease someone. Teachers acknowledge this by saying, "It can't be helped," and to their credit, they do not take out any of their frustrations with their transfers on the schools or the students. They generally embrace a professional identity of themselves as public servants who have a collective duty to teach any child anywhere in the prefecture. But their fatalistic acquiescence is also conditioned by their weak position: teachers cannot challenge a transfer without accepting it; the supply of would-be teachers well exceeds the number of open positions; and teaching is one of the better jobs to be had in the prefecture.

Despite their weak position, the personal stakes of the transfer decision-making process are very high, and this spurs teachers to try to "crack the code" and obtain workable outcomes from the process. Because the decisions are made distantly, in secret and far away in time (half a year) from when teachers are asked for their input, teachers worry that their desires are easily ignored in the

grand scheme of things. They do not put much trust in the Request Form by itself. Decisions are

not made by a machinelike application of the guidelines, such as the "algorithm" used the U.S.

National Medical Residency Match Program for M.D.s, but rather by people at the Pref. BOE.

Many teachers therefore feel having good relationships with principals and others in the decision-

making chain is important. Although teachers view the decision-making process as a black box, they

vigilantly search for arguments or logics which can explain the outcomes they or their fellows

receive, to help them strategize for obtaining their own workable outcomes. In the next chapters I

will show that teachers find arguments employing traditional gender ideas about work and family to

be more likely to succeed, and consider the repercussions of this on the work climate.

10. *Tanshin Fu'nin,* **Gender, and the Relationship between Spouses**

Even though the work policies are gender-blind and there is a great deal of equality between male and female teachers, the public school work environment still favors the "traditional" gender roles, making it easier for women to prioritize family concerns (and harder for men to do so) and easier for men to prioritize their careers (and harder for women to do so). Not all men and women teachers are satisfied with this "traditional" understanding of gender and work. Some women would prefer to have more challenges and rewards at work, and some men would prefer to have more time to spend at home, with their families.

I will approach a study of the concepts of gender and work among Nagasaki's public school teachers by focusing on the phenomenon of *tanshin fu'nin,* in which a spouse takes up his or her post alone, leaving family behind. In each of the first three years of Nagasaki's Wide Area transfer policy, Nagasaki Prefecture had the highest rate of *tanshin fu'nin* transfers of any prefecture in Japan – about 80 cases at the SHS level and 400 or more at the ES/JHS level (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1998:91), with one author putting the figure at near 1,000 in the first year (Yokose 1984c).

That is far more than in Kagoshima, which has a similar geography and policy (Oku 1979a). The

number of families separated by transfers slowly fell over the years, reaching 472 in FY 1983

(Hayashi 1984k), but it was still over a hundred at the end of the 1980s (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō*

Kyōshokuin Kumiai 1998:143-144); and although I do not have statistics for the whole prefecture

thereafter, during my fieldwork there were at least a dozen cases in Kamigotō alone.

My argument will be that the high stakes of the transfer decision, coupled with the fact that

the Pref. BOE makes its transfer decisions behind closed doors, favor teachers strategizing along

"traditional" gender lines, and such strategizing contributes to sustaining the "traditionally"

gendered work climate. But the responses of teachers to the prospect and the reality of *tanshin fu'nin*

arrangements shows that their concepts of gender and work draw on traditional gender logics but

are more flexible than them. That is, teachers do not put adherence to gender roles ahead of finding

workable solutions, situations that allow both spouses to continue working.

10.1   *Tanshin fu'nin* as an uncommonly common social problem

Going to one's post alone, leaving behind family, is called *tanshin fu'nin* (単身赴任). *Tanshin*

fu'nin is the most emblematic of transfer-related phenomena. It epitomizes the sacrifice that

employees subject to transfers, and their families, have to make for the sake of work.

Japanese people understand *tanshin fu'nin* as a problem. It is discussed in the popular media and has been studied by Japanese social scientists (*e.g., Hyōgo-ken Katei Mondai Kenkyūsho* 1986; Iwao, Saitō, and Fukutomi 1991; *Rōdō Daijin Kanbō Seisaku Chōsa Bu* and *Tenkin to Rōdōsha Seikatsu ni Kan Suru Chōsa Kenkyūkai* 1991). Japanese people who could not understand my general interest in "transfers (*tenkin*)" presumed that I was interested specifically in the problem of *tanshin fu'nin*.

Many Japanese people with whom I spoke believed or were prepared to believe that *tanshin fu'nin* occurs more often in Japan than in other countries. The idea that Japan was exceptional in this regard was widespread enough to be reflected in a paperback bilingual Japanese-English book for cross-cultural communication that one teacher brought to our interview. The book's format was to present frequently asked questions that English-speakers and Japanese-speakers might have of each other, with English and Japanese translations on facing pages. One of the questions is about the relatively high prevalence of *tanshin fu'nin* in Japan:

Why do Japanese employees often leave their families behind when they transfer to other towns?

> This type of transfer, known as *tanshinfunin* [*sic*], has become increasingly common in recent times for the following reasons:
> Families must consider their children's education. For families who want to send their children to prestigious schools, making a job-motivated move can put the children at a disadvantage. This is particularly the case when the child attends a school with a good academic reputation in one of the major cities.
> Transport is another reason for the increase in *tanshinfunin*. Japan is a relatively small country with a comprehensive network of air and rail links, and

230

unless you are living somewhere very remote it takes only a short time to travel from one place to another. It is possible therefore to spend the weekend with your family and travel back to the work place early on Monday morning (*Discussing Japan,* p. 179).

How satisfactory are these explanations? Taking the second explanation first, Japan is smaller than, say, the United States, so a transfer "across the country" has a different meaning. It is logical that if transportation allows for frequent reunions, and parting thereby becomes less painful, then parting becomes a more viable option than it would otherwise. But this alone cannot be enough a reason. It sidesteps the issues: Why are so many being transferred in the first place? Why do jobs such a short distance away require relocation anyway? (Long working hours and after hours requirements, employer and peer expectations.) Why doesn't the family just move with the employee who is transferred? (Advantages of stability for children and aging parents, the cost of moving and the fact that transfers don't always entail large pay raises.)

The first explanation has more promise. In the last chapter, we discussed just such family concerns (and children's education is a common concern of transferees, Ntseane 2004:69). *Tanshin fu'nin* is a solution which allows parents to continue working and meet their family's needs as they perceive them to require such stability. But I believe something more is needed to explain why *tanshin fu'nin* is such a common phenomenon, both in Japan and in Nagasaki. That something more is an examination of the nature of the relationship between spouses. Is there something about the relationship between the spouses which makes their separation particularly tolerable?

231

I will explore four possible factors: (1) It is more tolerable because the relationship between spouses is not as important as the relationship between the generations within the stem family. (2) It is more tolerable because the spouses are interdependent due to a "traditional" gender division of labor which extends to a highly gendered division of social lives – emotionally, the relationship between spouses is secondary if present at all. (3) It is more tolerable because love is expressed through deeds rather than words and co-residence. (4) It is more tolerable because advances in transportation and communication technology make it easy for spouses to maintain their connection with their families to a sufficient degree. Although I have dismissed this fourth one as a sole cause, I will consider it as one factor among others.

To begin I will discuss the "traditional" gender roles with respect to family and work and how they shape the relationship between spouses. This builds on the discussion from Chapter 1.

10.2 The "traditional" division of labor in postwar Japan

Anthropologists have long recognized that gender, age, and "blood" ties are variables commonly used to organize the activity of families, households, and other social groups. The way tasks are allocated (Du 2000) varies by society, class, and domain of activity, and which allocations are most common or favored changes historically, as groups transfer norms from one domain to

another, impose their norms on other groups, and emulate the practices of others (*cf.* Schneider and

Schneider 1996). And we see this in Japan.

Although the stem family has long been a central feature of Japanese kinship, what is

understood as the "traditional" gender allocation of labor, with men as the primary breadwinners

and women as the primary homemakers, is relatively recent as a mass phenomenon in Japan. The

idea that only a man could be the legal head of a household, inherit property, and enjoy other

prerogatives and the preference for male primogeniture succession were prominent in the politically

dominant warrior class through the 13th – 19th centuries. But merchant, farmer, and artisan class

households, where women were more involved in productive labor, had a greater diversity of ideas

about gender and work. It was not until the Meiji era that the samurai gender ideas began diffusing

throughout Japanese society, beginning with their enshrinement in the Meiji Civil Code of 1898.

And it was really not until the heyday of the postwar recovery that men's position as primary

breadwinner was secured, particularly in the "new middle class" of salarymen and their full-time

housewives (Vogel 1971, Imamura 1987).

By the postwar period, Japanese society displays strong activity differentiation and

specialization by gender, age, and generation (Traphagan 2004, 2000b). Being strongly differentiated

and specialized, the genders are strongly interdependent.

Women are primarily responsible for and better skilled in homemaking tasks – provisioning, cooking, cleaning, clothing, and physically and emotionally tending to others; overseeing children's education and development; and managing the household budget – even if they are not the full-time "housewives" featured in the early postwar studies of Japan's "new" middle class. Japanese men are notorious for the miniscule amount of help around the house they do, compared to men in other industrialized countries. Men do not generally learn these skills, which are passed from woman to woman, and this makes men largely dependent on women.

Women, in turn, are largely dependent on men for their earning power. During most of the postwar era, women have been largely restricted from secure, well-paying, full-time salaried jobs. Their restriction is based on the assumption that women cannot meet a male-derived standard for professional devotion because of their priority on caring for the home and are therefore not worth the heavy commitment to and investment in full-time, "regular" white-collar employees.

The standard by which full-time, "regular" white-collar employees are judged is demanding. Ideally, they should be single-mindedly devoted to the organization: willing as needed to work overtime, take business trips, and work wherever assigned – i.e., accept transfers (Lam 1993:220, Lebra 1984:238-252).

This level of devotion can be rationalized as the outcome of trying to run an organization effectively while honoring the organization's commitment to "permanent" or "lifetime"

234

employment (Cole 1971, Dore 1989 [1973], Rohlen 1974). Once an organization hires a regular

employee is hired – typically after college graduation – they are largely stuck with each other. It is

difficult to fire a regular employee, and regular employees are discouraged from jumping ship by the

widespread use of seniority-based pay systems and the emphasis of organization-specific knowledge

and relationships over portable, trade-specific skills. Hence management has a long time horizon

over which to evaluate and develop an employee and also a desire to keep the employee productive

over their careers. Because they are "permanent," regular employees should be flexible, learn and

adapt quickly, and be able to dive into new things. If they are not, the employer might be saddled

with an obsolete human resource. Regular employees are therefore transferred throughout an

organization, giving many managers the chance to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in

different contexts and functional areas, so that the employees can be deployed optimally. In the

process of these transfers, the employees will develop cross-functional knowledge and build the

contacts which will help them accomplish their work and advance their careers.

   But this concept of work, requiring such a level of devotion, can be recognized as gendered

(Lewis 2007). It is rather incompatible with a gender division of labor in which men and women

have the skills and desire to flexibly share in both family and homemaking activities and well-paid

employment. It is instead compatible with an arrangement where the employee is content to be a

full-time breadwinner and someone else – such as a wife, a mother, or company staff (Becker 2005,

Lebra 1984:, Lo 1990) – takes care of family and home. Major employers (including the

government) pay their core employees a dependents' allowance for a spouse that works up to part-

time and earns under a certain threshold; if both spouses work, this allowance will not be received.

Likewise, each household will receive a dependents' allowance for children – a household does not

get two just because two spouses area working (*cf.* the U.S. tax code, where heads of household

claim deductions). So households have an incentive to adopt the single breadwinner model. In

practice the single breadwinner would be the man, leaving his wife more time to care for him, their

children, and their parents (Atsumi 1988).

Hence, for practical reasons and as a result of gender discrimination, most white-collar

women are employed as irregulars and clerical support staff, "office ladies" (Lo 1990, Ogasawara

1998) whose positions have less prestige, pay, and job security. Some of these positions are term-

limited, so employers have the discretion to cut them in hard times. As peripheral employees

women are either not transferred or transferred only within some limited geographic range and in

many cases (Ogasawara 1998) – but not all, depending on the industry (Kondo 1990) – can leave at

the end of their workday, rather than work overtime, in keeping with the expectation that they

would be focused more on marriage and family than employment. Sometimes it was a matter of

policy that women quit upon marriage or the birth of their first child, but even when it wasn't, it was

expected and considered acceptable, and so superiors would think nothing of asking a female employee whom they knew to be getting married when she planned to quit.

Most women who worked as regular, full-time employees did so in the public sector: education but also the police, postal, and government service. As regular employees, these women had to confront the male-derived standard: working overtime, traveling on business trips, and accepting transfers as needed. Given how this cut into their family time, if they wished to advance, they had to either be that rare "superwoman," handling both career and family; enlist the help of some substitute caregiver like their mother to be the "wife" of the family (Lebra 1984:247-250); or minimize their non-work concerns by remaining unmarried or childless. Women often face pressure from both inside and outside their workplace to retire and devote themselves to their family.

10.3   Relations between the spouses in an interdependent marriage

The strong gender differentiation makes the genders dependent on each other to accomplish their social, economic, and symbolically prized goals. Taking a functional perspective for a moment, we see that marriage in such a society is a way to join the two necessary and complementary skill sets required to make a viable economic, social welfare, and religious unit. The parties in marriage should take into consideration the ability of the spouses to work and provide for one another and

237

fulfill their obligations to their stem families. Marriage is too important a thing to be based on such

a chancy thing as young people's attraction. This is why Japanese have relied on go-betweens to find

suitable spouses and hired private investigators to vet potential spouses. In arranged marriages,

which have a long history in Japan, such feelings as love, affection, or respect usually only have a

chance to develop after the marriage occurs, and whether they ever do is almost beside the point.

People are motivated to get married even in their absence because marriage is symbolically, socially,

and economically important.

In a family in which the wife does all or almost all of the homemaking – which is a majority

of Japanese families – the husband is an extra someone the wife must feed, clothe, tend, and clean

up after – and one with an irregular schedule which the wife cannot control. If the husband is a

regular white-collar employee he may be frequently away on business trips, putting in overtime, or

meeting with work colleagues or clients afterhours. The wife will not be able to rely consistently on

the husband's presence, let alone assistance. For when times are especially busy, she may have a

group of friends or an informal mutual support group to turn to, although kin are ideal helpers.

Some full-time homemaker wives, whose husbands are far more burden to a woman than

help, were reported by Iwao (1993) to have said that husbands are "best when healthy and out of the

house (*genki de rusu ga ii;* 元気で留守がいい)": *i.e.,* at work and out of the wives' way. Similarly, they

complained about how husbands can be a bother after they retire, like wet fallen leaves (*nure-ochiba;*

濡れ落ち葉), always clinging to one and getting in one's way. This may have been innocent carping, but some women found the demands by their husbands intolerable and divorced them as soon as the women had a claim to their husband's pension, their children were married, and the parents passed away. (*Cf.* a man divorcing his wife for a younger woman.) When the dependency or function of a relationship is gone, it can dissolve if feelings of love or duty are not present.

To wives with this sentiment, a husband "out of the house" as a *tanshin fu'nin* would be welcome. And if the wives had built up a support network and were able to meet the rest of the family's needs in a given place, they would find his *tanshin fu'nin* much preferable to relocation.

The separation of spouses is even easier to the extent that the spouses run in different social circles. In Japan, differentiation between the genders extends to socializing, with women more likely to socialize with other women, and men with men. Single-gender groups or circles are common, and in mixed groups, it is not uncommon for men to sit in one part of the room (such as the head of the table) and women at the other part (lower down the table, nearer the children). This starts in school: recall the *dōkyūsei*-list makers, and how the boys and girls ran in different circles. Boys and girls might sit in different parts of the classroom, too, *e.g.,* boys on the left and girls on the right. They may use different parts of the gym and they may sit in different favorite seats in their regular restaurants and coffee shops. They are likely to draw their relationships from different places: because women are the primary homemakers, if mothers, they might make relationships with other

239

mothers, who will be local to the extent that the schools are local. Men are more likely to have work relationships, and particularly in the white collar world, one's coworkers are likely distributed over a wide range, unless the family lives in company housing and/or in a rural area. When a wedding invitation comes, it is common for only those people close to the principals to be invited; if the relationship is between families, one guest (such as the household head) might represent the stem family, rather than each individual family member being invited. Inviting guests to bring a guest of their own, whether it be friend, date, or spouse, is not done, at least not to any Japanese wedding I have ever attended or read about.

For all these reasons, spouses may have little opportunity outside the home to socialize with one another. In such families, the absence of one spouse due to *tanshin fu'nin* would not drastically alter the social life of the other spouse. And so it may be more tolerable than in families where the spouses spend time socializing together.

I did not have a chance to talk to every *tanshin fu'nin* teacher in Kamigotō during my field work, let alone their absent spouses. Undoubtedly some of them were in such relationships. But surely not each case of *tanshin fu'nin* can be attributed to weak and indifferent spousal relations? What of the change in concepts of marriage and the relationship between the spouses discussed in Chapter 1? Would such marriages be resistant to residential separation?

10.4   Marriage not as a job, but as a partnership between companions

Iwao's informants (*q.v.*) had been dissatisfied with always having to indulge (Doi 1981) and

serve all the other members of the family, never being indulged themselves. But they could not be

economically self-sufficient until they had a claim on their husbands' pensions, which came generally

after these women had discharged their duties to the younger and older generations. By contrast,

younger Japanese women avoid these problems by avoiding marriage, or at least the wrong sort of

marriage. Knight (1995) and Traphagan (2000a, 2003) discuss the plight of successors to rural

households, whom marriage-minded women avoid like the plague, because they fear to marry such

men would doom them to a future of subservience to a critical, demanding mother-in-law.

Some Japanese women rather notoriously took their critique of the Japanese man and the

"traditional" gender roles and relationships between the spouses to the point of seeking

relationships and affairs with Western men, imagined to be supportive and romantic (Kelsky 2001).

Especially talented women rejected marriage to ordinary Japanese men, considering them too

demanding, more like children than supportive partners. They held out for the exceptional Japanese

man or the romanticized Western "gentleman" who would treat her with proper respect and love.

The notion of romantic, companionate marriage which began to spread during the 1970s

represents a change – however small – from the "traditional" marriage consisting of separate but

interdependent (and unequally articulated) male and female domains (Imamura 1996:3). This ideal

has been promoted through new wedding practices and a shift from arranged marriages to "love

matches" (Edwards 1989; *cf.* Yan 2003 for a similar trajectory in China). Even when would-be

spouses find each other through professional matchmakers, the paradigmatic marriage is still one

where love exists between the spouses. But for many reasons, some of them structural (Atsumi

1975), particularly the white collar Japanese men were not seen to curtail their work much, nor to

take on more of the onerous homemaking work. According to Imamura (1996:3), Japanese men

wished to spend more time with their families, but not to help with housework, but rather to join

them in fun pursuits. The wives still had the chief responsibility for the home and the family's well-

being, and the husbands the paycheck.

Yet others (Salamon 1986 [1975], Lebra 1984) noted that even a piggish-seeming "petty

tyrants (*teishu kanpaku;* 亭主関白)" might surreptitiously be assisting his wife with some of her

chores or privately giving her freer reign to spend the day and arrange the budget to her liking. And

whether in response to female demands or as a result of their own ideas about marital relationships,

Japanese men in the 1990s and beyond seem increasingly willing to acknowledge and support the

wishes of their wives in ways which cannot be hidden. For example, Traphagan (2000a, 2003)

illustrates the concessions successor men (and these men's parents) made to their wives, such as

maintaining separate residences from the parents so the wives would have freedom to run their

household as they felt best, rather than per the dictates of the mother-in-law, who in a "traditional"

family would have the authority to declare that the bride follow the "ways of the house."

The examples Traphagan and Salamon present are of men supporting their wives' domestic

authority, but Lebra (1984:248) notably presents a case of a husband who took on homemaking

duties to allow his wife to pursue her career. This husband bested his wife at housework, and did

not feel his manhood was threatened by doing so, but did assert that if he were found out his work

colleagues might think him less committed to the organization. But Lebra suggests that at the time

this level of support was to be found only in exceptional cases: "By comparison, the husbands of

nonelite professionals tend to be more resistant to domestic participation" (Lebra 1984:248).

During my fieldwork, in 2005, I met a school employee who openly boasted that he was a

better cook and better at ironing than his wife. His wife was not an elite professional – she was a

full-time homemaker. This suggests that either the stakes of admitting to being helpful at home

have fallen, or the stakes are not that high outside of a certain urban milieu, or both. But it should

be noted that although he openly boasted of his skill, he did confess that he was so involved because

he was "particular" (*kodawari*) about things. That is, he felt his performance of these tasks warranted

an explanation – something a woman's performance did not. (And it also might be noted that he

didn't say, "Because I love her," which might have induced retching from the office – such

statements are exceedingly rare, even if the feelings are privately held.)

10.5   Love, respect, and duty in the family: the nature of the marital bond

The new ideal marriage is that the spouses are partners, companions.   Love is emphasized more than duty (Edwards 1989). But what is the relationship between love and duty in the Japanese family? Understanding this will provide further insight into the *tanshin fu'nin* decision.

First, for some, it is important for spouses to be available to talk through problems and to listen to each other – to be emotional "companions" (Imamura 1996:3). Hiroko makes this point by discussing the impact her professor's comments about *tanshin fu'nin* being strange had on her:

> Hiroko: When I first started thinking about it, there was this college professor who said that taking up posts alone (*tanshin fu'nin*) is really weird (*okashii*). …. As for why, he said the family ends up scattered all over the place, and it's lonely. If they get lonely, they will turn to other people to rely on. Then, those people may grow to like each other, and the family gets scattered. Like, isn't it perfectly natural that that would happen? Then, at that time, I thought, 'Hey! That's right.' There's no doubt, a family makes a connection as a family, but if they live apart, then naturally they'll grow lonely, and then, to the people who are nearby who are kind to them, you know, – [BPC: They'll treasure them.] – yeah, they can rely on them, and so on. By taking up one's post alone and things like that, – If there are kids or something, raising them by oneself is tough (*taihen*), isn't it?

> BPC: That is tough.

> Hiroko: One of my friends, her husband took up his post alone, and for example when she is at a loss about what to do with her children and she wants to talk with him about it, she can't do that right away, can she? Then, when they next meet, you know – just keeping on with what she's doing, repressing it, "OK, don't bother," you know, that's what's going to happen.

BPC: Maybe it doesn't seem worth bringing up.

Hiroko: Yeah, when things are really falling apart and you can't talk about it, I think that is absolutely no good. If you are together, raising the children, – this is just common sense, but – yes, one or the other will have the main responsibility, but the idea of living apart I think is really weird (*okashii*).

BPC: …. I mean, people are going to have affairs!

Hiroko: Right, that's what that teacher said, it's only natural that people will have affairs. But those feelings, you can really understand them, can't you.

BPC: After all, what are they going to do, they can't go home every day.

Hiroko: They get lonely, and when they want to talk about something, they have the urge to talk, but over there the spouses are busy, or something. Right? That's no good, I think (FN 050824).

For Hiroko, emotional connections were important, and they depended on physical proximity.

Although Hiroko herself had not experienced *tanshin fu'nin*, she accepted that physical separation

could lead to emotional separation and affairs, so transfers which led to *tanshin fu'nin* were bad. For

my part, during my fieldwork I heard of two public servants who had had extramarital affairs while

they were *tanshin fu'nin*. One of the cases involved a male public servant, the other a female public

servant. Neither case had been discovered by the spouse and neither had led to divorce.

Hiroko's comments suggest that when marriages are based on love and companionship,

separating due to transfer as *tanshin fu'nin* will have higher emotional costs. Maintaining such a

marital bond requires a great degree of co-presence; occasional meetings might be insufficient. As I will discuss in the next chapter, improvements to the transportation infrastructure and other changes have made it increasingly possible and common for teachers to commute to work rather than live in the school districts where they work. But just as men like Sakamoto in the 1980s caught grief for being one of the rare to commute home, thereby poisoning the *esprit-de-corps* and seeming to show a poor level of commitment to their jobs, now, men catch grief for the same sin (poor commitment) when they seek to spend time with their families for such "transgressive" acts as taking the childcare leave to which they are entitled but which is usually taken only by women, as primary homemakers.

So, companion marriages may make separation harder because they require a great deal of co-presence to maintain. But there is another way to understand the relationship between spouses, and even companion marriages, and that is through the concept of duty.

First let us return to the case of duty without love. Iwao's female divorcee informants felt they had a duty to their children and the parents, but not to their spouses once they had retired. They seemed to view being a full-time homemaker as just like a salaried job: once the pension was there, they, like the husband, could retire, so did. They demonstrated the commitment to discharge their duty well even in the absence of love. Love is not required to perform one's duties to others. All that is needed is commitment to the group, which may come from dependence on the group as the only vehicle whereby one's individual needs can be met: the interdependency discussed above.

246

Given that the family is a collective enterprise, the needs of the collective should outweigh the needs of the individual, and so the individual should sacrifice for the greater good. Japanese people learn how to act in groups at home, school, and the workplace. (Japanese schools are perhaps the key site where young Japanese children learn how to make and behave in groups, including to seek and preserve the possibility of consensus and avoid direct conflict, and Japanese teachers the key architects of the children's educational experiences there: Ben-Ari 1997; Benjamin 1997; Cave 2007; Fukuzawa 1996 [1994]; Peak 1991; Rohlen 1983; Rohlen and LeTendre 1996a, 1996b; Tobin 1999; Tobin, Hsueh, Karasawa 2009; Tobin, Wu, and Davidson 1989.)

Being in a group involves compromise: if the group is to achieve a collective goal, then all its members' efforts should be bent towards the goal, which means that sometimes some member's individual wishes will be overridden. Singleton (1967:112, 1967:107) describes how some union member teachers would throw themselves into implementing decisions they found too strident. With my own data, I would illustrate this with this example: Nagayuki was a hard-working school custodian who to me epitomized the "Yamato spirit." Manly in bearing and generous, he fiercely loved his hometown and served it well. And he had definite opinions about the teachers working there. For example, he did not respect weak teachers who hid behind the union or a cause like "peace education" to shirk work. They gave "peace education" a bad name with such self-indulgence. For there to be true peace, he opined, we must first be hardest on ourselves. Along

247

these same lines, Nagayuki once told me, speaking of the war, that he thought there was something noble and fair about self-sacrifice in the name of a cause, even if the cause was not of your choosing. (His ideas echoed a remark made by a JHS teacher and kendo instructor twenty years earlier: "It is through training, not victory, that one's heart develops"; *Ritō Kyōshi Shuzai Han* 1984h.) Nagayuki thought that that spirit of sacrifice and of working together was something he feared the younger generation was not learning.

Here is how Nagayuki showed his spirit of sacrifice: One night, Nagayuki told a small group of us he had spent the day fishing with his friends for sardines – and he had caught about a hundred of them. "But you don't even like fishing!" exclaimed a school clerk, who knew him well. "No, I don't," admitted Nagayuki. "But if that's what it's decided we were going to do, I was going to do it well!" We laughed at this joke, in part because it was so apropos of his character. Having decided to be part of the group that day, Nagayuki thought it wouldn't do for him to be a selfish spoilsport just because the group had chosen to do something he wouldn't have chosen to do on his own. Not only should he accept the decision, but he should do his best at it, trying to help it be the best decision, rather than join in lamely or half-heartedly. That would serve his larger desire, to be a good friend and to have companionship. Nagayuki clearly had just the sort of attitude that the Pref. BOE was looking for in its staff: even when there are hardships, one can still give it one's all.

Family members' duties are: children must be raised, educated, married; parents must be cared for in their dotage; ancestors must be venerated; the sick must be nursed, the hungry fed, the bills paid. The coresidence of spouses is only a duty if they cannot do their other duties otherwise.

Ideally, duty trumps love. If the coresidence of spouses is just a matter of love, then love should fall to duty, as it is a "private" matter of "ease" or "comfort" (*q.v.*), not a group matter. If the more dependent members' needs can be better met by the couple separating, then, even if it is unpleasant for the spouses, they should separate. Of course there is no rulebook; these are decisions that each family makes for itself, and they may decide something one day and then after having tried it, find it impossible and decide to do something else. But the logic of duty requiring love to give way is powerful.

But discharging one's duty can itself be a demonstration of love. Spouses' shared commitment to the family can infuse their act of separating from each other with the meaning of love. Japanese people are disposed to look for love in actions rather than words. Perhaps due to Buddhist thinking, in Japanese culture, words are generally subordinate to deeds. This is true in the religious domain, where dogma is left to the experts and technically correct ritual actions are more important for individuals than testimonies of belief in doctrine.

10.6   Separating and reuniting

I have been describing duties in generic terms, but they are obviously gendered, as can be seen in the case of Nagasaki's teachers by how men and women act after separating. The pressures which separate men and women teachers from family members are the same regardless of the teacher's gender.   But the responses to these transfers differ, showing the influence of "traditional" gender ideas. In the next section, I discuss the decision to quit due to family problems caused by a transfer or a *tanshin fu'nin* arrangement. In this section, I discuss the decision to reunite regularly (*e.g.,* every weekend, fortnight, month, *etc.*) with family members separated due to *tanshin fu'nin*.

Women, as the primary homemakers, feel pressure to spend as much time as possible caring for the people they feel responsible for. It does not matter if she is working full-time or not, nor if she is the *tanshin fu'nin* or her husband is (or they both are separated from their children). Her primary concern should be the children and the aging parents. Her husband, would be better able than the children or the aging parents to look after himself, if only minimally, but she should not neglect him. If he is on his own, then besides concern about his having an affair (which she may not have), she will worry about him growing lonely and depressed, not taking care of his health, not eating a balanced diet, going out drinking too much, and letting his residence deteriorate (this pattern was found in the U.S.A. by Gerstel and Gross 1987).

A case from *Help Guide for Transfer Tribe Wives* illustrates this point (*Tenkin Famirī Shien Sentā* 2001:140-141). A wife followed her transferee husband four times but when the fifth transfer came she asked him to go alone. Because she had suffered post-partum depression and felt very lonely in the third place, when she arrived in the fourth place she made a point of diving into local life, and in four years had become very satisfied with her life and wanted to continue with the work she had been doing as the editor of a local newsletter. Plus, their young daughter had not liked changing schools when she did it last time. Her husband really wanted the whole family to live together, so they went round and round on the matter, but finally he decided to go as a *tanshin fu'nin*. She reports having more time because she does not have to prepare his dinner, but being more troubled about being a single parent and feeling sorry for her lonely husband, who goes out drinking alone more often. His company pays for two visits per month, and so she uses their own savings and visits him with the kids four times a month. They go to his place on long vacations from school, too. When her husband comes home, they cater to his wishes as much as possible.

As the primary homemaker, a woman should find a surrogate to watch over her children, spouse, and aging parents when she is not there. Whether a structured company dorm, an inn, or one's kin, the goal was to have a homelike atmosphere for the man to return to, to give structure and regularity to his life and prevent him from loneliness and unhealthy habits (Becker 2005).

I knew a woman who ordered her husband to move into an inn so that he would have a

"home" to return to, eat properly, be cared for if sick, and so on. She also had her sister's family,

who lived nearby, check in on him periodically. Another *tanshin fu'nin* man was told to rent a private

apartment in the major settlement of an island so he could have the widest access to stores and so

on, making his life convenient; if he had moved into the cheaper staff housing, he would have to

travel to accomplish these things. The comfort he lost by living alone should be recouped by having

a nicer, newer, larger, more centrally located apartment to enjoy.

Cheaper than installing their husbands in private inns would be to lodge them with kin.

Ririko went to her post alone, leaving her children and husband in the care of her mother-in-law, *i.e.*,

in her stem family home. Junpei moved in with his wife's parents when transferred to her

hometown, while simultaneously leaving his children and wife in the care of his parents. Narumi

went to her post alone, leaving her children and husband in the care of her own mother and father

(her husband worked in her father's company).

If no surrogate can be found, or if the surrogate is insufficient, the *tanshin fu'nin* woman

should go more often and may have to quit (see the next section). But even if there is a good

surrogate caregiver, the wife should go to the husband, check on him, cook food for him and put it

in the freezer perhaps, or clean for him. She will be motivated to reunite with the family and with

him out of a feeling of guilt or duty, but maybe also out of love. The wife will be additionally

motivated by guilt at having "troubled" or given a burden to the surrogate, if there is one. This is how Ririko felt, for instance (*q.v.*). She returned as often as she could, but I never met her husband, and only saw her children during the national *obon* holiday, when schools were on summer recess. She stated she had it easy at her own home, where her mother took care of her, in contrast to her husband, who was doing his best with his own mother, but also with the children to worry about.

Men, by contrast, face a more ambiguous situation. In a previous chapter we encountered Sakamoto Yukihiro and Furuga Masamori, two male teachers who, as a result of an untimely Wide Area transfer, decided to take up their posts alone, leaving behind their young children and ill parents in the care of their wives. Neither wanted to separate from their families. Sakamoto, for one, had made a very long commute when that was possible at his previous transfer, and after the Tsushima transfer originally planned to reunite with his wife and family close to every other weekend, but the cost and the transportation difficulties prevented it. Sakamoto then decided to sink himself into his work, which he felt good about as a professional.

In Sakamoto's case, returning often can be considered impossible, so he returns when he can. But during my fieldwork several current and former *tanshin fu'nin* men told me they avoided reunions with their families outside of the major breaks at the end of terms and during "Golden Week," a set of holidays around early May. This avoidance was done out of love.

Given that a husband could expect to be cared for and indulged upon his return, these men

thought that returning home or having their wives visit would be a disruption that made more work

and worry for their wives. One *tanshin fu'nin* man told me he did not want his wife and children to

come to the islands to see where he lived and worked until he was near the end of the term, because

otherwise they would worry. To lessen their burden through such heroic stoicism was to love them.

My informant's thinking finds a parallel in the words of Mr. Kurida, who was transferred in

1981 from Nagasaki City to a Class 5 remote area outer island, as described in a 1984 article:

> Mr. Kurida, who has left his wife and three children behind in their home in
> Nagasaki City, has not even once called his family out to visit him in the island since
> his posting in April 1981. "As for why I came here alone, my children are going to
> JHS and SHS, so considering the problems with education and housing, even if I
> thought I'd like to bring them here, I can't. I think it would probably be important
> for my family to see the conditions in remote areas, but because I don't want to
> trouble them with worry, I'd just like to have them come at the end of my
> assignment to meet and thank (*aisatsu*) everyone here on the island." That's one way
> of thinking, isn't it.
> He lives as a lodger in one room with meals at a *minka*. He does his own
> laundry, which he had never done before in Nagasaki. Since coming to the island,
> "the amount I drank increased," he laughs. He says it was because the master of the
> *minka* drinks and there is fresh sashimi, but it's likely that the drinking also distracted
> him from his lonely life. It is three years since he was posted here. Lately, thinking
> about his health, he has stopped. ….
> All teachers worry about their families, but he says, "I rarely go home." As a
> result, on those rare returns "I become quite giddy with joy." But there's more. In
> the case of Mr. Kurida who has a home in Nagasaki City, he leaves by chartered
> ferryboat for Fukue Port in the afternoon, and arrives at Nagasaki City in the
> evening. The next day he must get up and leave his home early in the morning, or

else he will miss the ships from Fukue Port to Ōjima. "A one-day only vacation, more than the expense, is just exhausting!" he laughs bitterly (Yokose 1984c).

Taking this comforting love one step further was what I call the "romantic self-sufficiency" of some husbands. I knew three *tanshin fu'nin* older teachers and administrators who were proud of their ability to cook, to the point that they cooked meals for their friends. Some were known for their "signature dish" – one's was *oden,* another's was cooked fish. By demonstrating their ability to cook a decent meal for themselves, they set at ease wives who might feel pressured to join their husbands frequently in order to prevent his dietary health from collapsing due to his being alone (Yokose 1984c). Feeding the family well through healthy meals and snacks, attractive lunches (*bentō*), and so on is an important skill for women to have, demonstrating care, showing creativity, and displaying both knowledge and technique. One of my friends gained over ten pounds during his first year of marriage because his wife kept worrying that her husband might not be satisfied, so she served dish after dish. His weight came down after that, as she relaxed and made less food. Related to this, I was told that a cliché way to propose to a woman indirectly is to ask her if she would make miso soup for you. This was thought to be an old-fashioned and clumsy but perhaps heartfelt way for a man to express his desire to put himself in the care of a woman, something a man from an older generation who did not have a poetic tongue or confidence might say.

I heard men who could fend for themselves praised by women and men alike, using terms one might use for a child: *erai*. More often, I heard those men's wives congratulated on having such a husband. Saying things like "aren't you lucky!" when hearing a working woman's husband is watching the children, taking care of dinner, bathing and putting to bed the children, *etc.*, reinforced the idea that such work was her responsibility, perhaps he could by rights avoid it, but here he was indulging her by lifting her burden so she could attend a conference, go to a meeting, practice with her women's volleyball team, and so on. Ironically, a wife who foresaw a time conflict would as often as not have worked ahead by, say, preparing the family's dinner and putting it in the refrigerator so all that had to be done was to reheat it. Such actions on the part of the wife would be acknowledged as difficult (*isogashii,* busy; *taihen,* hard) but did not rise to the level of heroism.

All the cases I knew of men avoiding reunions in this way involved older men, men who "legitimately" could be expected to be dependent on their wives. In contrast stands the case of a young newlywed man on Kamigotō who was teased by his female colleagues for his love of his wife – "Young!" they explained – who lived with their newborn on the mainland with his parents, and to whom he returned nearly every weekend. To accomplish this feat required cooperation from the weather, roughly a hundred dollars per roundtrip, and terrible self-discipline to get all his work done within the workweek so he did not have to bring any work with him on his weekend.

The tone of their teasing suggested his colleagues were approving and praising him.   Far

different was the experience of men in the 1970s and 1980s, who reported that their colleagues, by

their cold demeanors, sent the message that racing home every night and living far from school were

selfish acts, putting personal matters ahead of the collective duty to the school. The newlywed's

experience signals that when men take a more active role in the homemaking, their separations and

reunions take on new meanings (see Harris, Long, and Fujii 1998 for interesting related data).

10.7 Quitting

"Traditional" gender ideas are most evident when a transfer would oblige a separation

(*tanshin fu'nin*) expected to make things truly difficult for the transferee's family – that is, a transfer

which forces teachers to wonder, "Is it better if I quit?"

A married male teacher generally does not quit under such circumstances, because it is

socially awkward, culturally disfavored, and impractical because he generally has less experience and

fewer skills at homemaking and care provision versus his greater ability to earn money. If his salary

is greater than his wife's, his quitting becomes even more unthinkable. This means a male teacher

should be prepared to endure any posting, whether he can go with his family or must go alone.

Two examples illustrate these themes. The first is that being a breadwinner is a primary source of pride for a man. One day, I told a SHS teacher I was talking to that I would not mind being a full-time homemaker if my wife made more than me. He looked appalled and asked me, "Have you no self respect?" I might add that he his reputation for favoring traditional gender relations was well-known, and that he admitted that thinking was a result of a feeling of having missed out compared to his peers because his mother worked a full-time job and wasn't home to greet him when he came home from school: he wanted something different for his own child.

The second is that all men should work, a theme which confronted me in the field. When I was doing my research, I read about male full-time homemakers, but it was presented as a novelty. Though still very rare, perhaps it will increase as smaller families might lead to more no daughter families in which sons might help their mothers cook. I know several of the older women in particular felt sorry for my wife because I did not (seem to) have a job, but instead stayed home most days, doing the laundry, and then going out most nights drinking and feasting! After all, how could I be a university student if there was no university on the island? And how could I be doing research if I wasn't passing out surveys? (We finally decided telling them that I was writing a book.)

Whether from within or from without or both, Japanese men feel pressure to be the primary breadwinner in their family. So Japanese men are motivated to keep working, no matter the transfer. That said, let this third example, of a male private sector employee, be the exception that proves the

258

rule: After 23 years (and 13 transfers) he gave up his career to stop transferring after his children were born. At his new job his salary has diminished, he reports, but the whole family is happy so he thinks it was a good decision. Now that he knows he will not be transferring he wants to get more involved in community life (*Tenkin Famirī Shien Sentā* 2001:142-143). It is not said whether his career had stalled or not, so what is noteworthy here is that he apparently did not have any children until his early to mid-40s. They obviously were very precious to him, and he is lucky to have been able to find an alternative career. In my study of teachers, I found that some teachers are also successors to temple families or shrine families, and so they may leave teaching (or in some cases switch to teaching) in order to take over that family enterprise.

A married female teacher has different pressures, because she is always in a dual-income family (Shauman and Xie 1996:456-457 on the similarity with scientists). Her husband, whether or not a teacher and whether or not his income is lower, will find exiting the breadwinner role difficult. This means a female teacher should be prepared to quit her career rather than take up a distant transfer if doing so would cause trouble for her family. Likewise, she should be prepared to quit and return home if she goes as a *tanshin fu'nin* and finds that her absence is causing problems for the family. All the cases I knew of one spouse quitting in a two-career family involved women quitting.

Some female teachers prefer to quit rather than take up a new post as a *tanshin fu'nin* in the first place. One woman, an island native and excellent teacher – she had been chosen to be her

259

school's Research Manager and other important posts on more than one occasion, married an island man whose job would not permit a transfer. They had three children while she worked the maximum of 15 years on the island. On the verge of her Wide Area to the mainland, she took early retirement – despite the fact that her and her spouse's incomes were more comparable than not and her spouse's co-resident parents might have been able to help watch her children and spouse.

Another example, albeit a predictive one, comes from Hatsune. During an interview, she told me that some transfers are very "strange (*hen;* 変)" in that they seem to have unnecessarily created problems for teachers by sending them far from their homes or sending one but not another to an island, even if they had just been married. So I asked her what she would do if she received a transfer from her home to some distant island post but her husband did not.

> If I were 40, if it were anytime up till about now, I'd probably go alone, I think.
> Now I'm 39, 40: I'd do that. But if they said when I was 45 or so, "Go alone," I'd
> have to think long and hard about it, and I think about half of me would say, "I
> won't go." Even now [at this age], if I were to quit, I'd think, "Maybe that's better."
> You know, in my heart I think I'd like to do my best until I'm 50, it's a little bit more
> until I get there, so. 50 – Yes, there was this teacher who was about 47 years old or
> so who was told to go to Iki alone, right? A female teacher, and her kids, the oldest
> is in college, and the youngest is still in senior high school, I think. Anyway, because
> her husband is a head teacher, well, she went to Iki alone (*hitori de*). But after one
> year she went and quit. After a year she quit, she said. Well, it was hard on her, and
> on her family too. Her husband said, "Hey, it's okay if you just quit," but she really
> wanted to work a bit more and help the family budget, but, "Hey, it's okay, you don't
> have to kill yourself," her husband said, so she quit, she said (FN 031018).

Note that "to help the family budget" is a non-selfish, family-centered reason to work (doing one's duty), as opposed to something like "because she loved her job" (*cf.* what Imamura's female informants told her; Imamura 1987).

Some female teachers try *tanshin fu'nin*, hoping it will work out, but eventually quit when the family's needs trump their careers. Yoshihiko's wife and Saori are two examples of this.

Yoshihiko took up his transfer alone because of his wife's career. A clerk born in Ōmura, his first posting was to Matsuura City. New hires are marked for transfer after three years, so he asked to go to Ōmura, but instead was sent to another Matsuura school. During that time he met his future wife, and they were married in his sixth year in Matsuura. Because she could not leave her job in Matsuura, Yoshihiko asked to remain there. But, on the grounds that he had already worked six years in a municipality that was not his main work area, the Pref. BOE transferred him – to Isahaya. "It was lonely!" he said. "I couldn't commute from Matsuura to Isahaya. We had two months as newlyweds, then we resided separately (*bekkyo;* 別居). So I felt bitter, you know, towards transferring" (FN 031219). His wife eventually quit her job and became a full-time homemaker, following Yoshihiko with his transfers. When I met her in Kamigotō she was a part-time tutor. (The problem a "tied mover" or "trailing spouse" faces in trying to find new work has been recognized by researchers in the U.S.A.: Bielby and Bielby 1992; Brett, Stroh, and Reilly 1992. When the destination is rural or remote, the spouse faces even greater difficulty: Shellenbarger 2002.)

Saori was a public school teacher and her husband a different sort of prefectural public

servant, yet also subject to transfers (FN 040219). Like many of the teacher-teacher couples I met

during my fieldwork, Saori and her husband had been fortunate enough to receive their transfers to

the outer islands at the same time, so they could go together. However, their oldest child wanted to

stay behind. It was her last year at ES and, because she attended a joint ES-JHS school, if she

stayed, she would be able to go up to JHS with her classmates.

Saori and her husband decided to allow it. First, they had ideal substitute caregivers: Saori's

parents. Also, Saori was certain her outer island stint would be no more than four years. Too many

other mainland teachers were waiting to get onto the islands for the Pref. BOE to have any need to

keep her there, especially under such circumstances. Indeed, her own outer island transfer had been

delayed: She and another had expected to be transferred to the outer islands at the end of their sixth

year in the mainland Wide Area site, but were kept on for an additional year, a stunning outcome.

They had already packed away all their things, so they spent the next year living out of boxes, Saori

said, leaving them as packed up as possible to avoid having to do all the packing over again.

So Saori, her husband, and their young son, who was a 3rd grader, left for the outer islands.

With Saori making trips to the mainland as often as she could, it was hoped that everyone would be

able to endure the four year absence. But almost upon their arrival her son began to have trouble at

his new school, getting into fights and so long. He was sent back to the mainland to stay with his

sister and grandparents and return to his old school, but despite this change and Saori's weekly visits, his problems continued. Desperate, Saori requested to be allowed to transfer back to the mainland to deal with the situation, but her request was not granted. And so, with no resolution in sight, this veteran with over 20 years' experience in the classroom and less than two years to go felt she had no choice but to quit and reunite with her children and parents, leaving her husband on the outer island to finish his tenure. One wonders if the fact that she was in the union and had some differences of opinion with her principal had caused her situation to be dealt with so inflexibly when she needed it (splitting her term into two and two) but so flexibly when the Pref. BOE needed it (keeping her an extra seventh year on the mainland).

My final case, that of Osamu and his wife, shows that even if a woman quits her job to be with her husband, she does not always continue to follow him from post to post: other duties, such as the children's education, can cut in and take precedence.

Osamu, an ES teacher, said the loneliness of the transferee life was the paramount negative of transferring (FN 050819). When I interviewed him he had just begun his twenty-first year as a regular member of the teaching staff. For seven of those years – a third of his married life and a third of his career – he has lived alone, as a *tanshin fu'nin.* He worked in nine different posts, seven of these in Gotō, but each transfer obliged him to cross the ocean and change residences.

While working at his first school, he married his wife and their children were born. He was transferred at the end of his fourth year there to a small and distant island, and in order that his wife could continue with her job and receive help from her parents, she and the kids stayed behind as he went to take up his assignment alone. They were separated for three years, then reunited for three years, separated for one, reunited for two, and separated for one again. He found himself on the mainland, working as a head teacher for the first time.

At the end of a tough and lonely first year, his wife decided to quit her job and the whole family came to join him. The next two years were fun, he said, as his children enjoyed living in the big city and the family took many trips around Kyūshū. The family went with him to his next assignment, back in the Gotō islands but not his hometown. During this time they built their house, although it sat empty, because they could not yet live in it: "I was thinking, *I really want to live there*," he said. With his next transfer they were able to move into the house. But then, two and a half years later, he was sent to a different island as an emergency replacement, a post he took up alone.

"So many ups and downs!" he said, gesturing with his hand to make a sine wave of peaks and valleys. "I'm happy for a little time, and then, next, I become unhappy – over and over again!" We laughed together at his unlucky fate. He was glad to receive his promotions, he said, but the sole determinant of whether he liked a post was whether he was able to live with his family or not. The rest – size of school, type of students or coworkers, and so on – "doesn't matter."

264

The biggest problem transferring had for him: "It's made me be 'single.' We live separately, me and my family. That's the biggest thing. Living with your family is best, isn't it." And yet to have his family move with him, which he treasures, asks a lot of them. Instead of one ES, one JHS, and one SHS, his children have attended multiple schools: two ESs and two JHSs for his son; three different ESs for his daughter. "If they change schools, then they make friends, but have to leave them, then they make new friends again, but again have to leave them …" He calls it an "adult's sacrifice (*otona no gisei*)," which I regret is ambiguous: there is the sacrifice he makes of living apart from his family when that is best, but then there is the (adult-like?) sacrifice his children make in order to live with him. Finally, he mentioned the problems distant transfers cause for one's parents.

> They get old and might fall ill, or something. If you live nearby – You don't have to live *with* them, but if you live nearby you can get there soon and meet them. But if you are far away – especially on another island – you can't always get there, can you? Just like in my case, with my kids: parents [= a transferee's parents] get lonely when their kids aren't nearby. Plus, the transferee is worried about his or her parents. So that isn't good.

Even if a woman quits her job to be with her husband, she does not always continue to follow him from post to post: other duties, such as the children's education, can cut in and take precedence.

265

10.8   "Traditional" gender patterns in the school

The above cases showed that "traditional" gender ideas – supported by a structure which makes single-breadwinner households viable – shape teacher behavior when transfers put them and their families into extreme duress. In this section I will provide a few examples of how certain school system practices reinforce "traditional" gender roles, creating a climate where teachers come to favor making choices which align with that "traditional" division of labor.

The first example is that it is more accepted for married female teachers to leave the workplace and other non-mandatory work events earlier and to opt out of after-hours socializing and the most onerous club leadership and administrative positions. She does not invite criticism if she finishes her work at home rather than, as men commonly do, staying at school to finish up. Although teachers will know their colleagues' specific circumstances, they will assume that a married woman must leave early in order to meet her children when they get home from school, prepare dinner or the next day's lunch, do the laundry and other cleaning, and other homemaking duties. That is because it is generally true that all married women have a spouse who also is a full-time regular employee, a generalization that cannot be made of all married men. In a two-income couple, it will be assumed that the woman is the primary homemaker and the man the primary breadwinner. If a teacher is married to another teacher, the couple would have an incentive to allocate primary

homemaking responsibilities to the wife, to take advantage of this acceptable means of getting someone home earlier to do the homework, although this does not always work out, as Seiji's case (*q.v.*) showed. This example is significant because it can be witnessed most days of the year.

My second example relates to child care leave. Although men and women alike are eligible for it (*cf.* Creighton 1996:200), I only know of one man who took it. His wife said that he faced a lot of scorn from his principal for requesting it, but he persisted in part because as a union member he was a more zealous defender of employee rights and had a higher tolerance for confrontation with the BOE than the average employee. Such administrative discouragement is the flipside of making it easier for women to prioritize the homemaking and men to prioritize the breadwinning.

(To be fair, it also relates to parents' general concern about their children's studies being disrupted by teachers leaving in the middle of the year and replacements being brought in. Some principals championed teachers' rights to take leave in the face of this pressure: I knew a principal who refused a female teacher's request to work in March, the last month of the school year but also past the time at which her maternity leave was to begin, because he did not want her to set a precedent which made it harder for future teachers to enjoy the full 12-month break. I can't say whether this principal would have stood up for a male teacher's right to take child care leave.)

Related to these examples was the reaction to a small sample I took of transfers within the Nagasaki Prefecture public SHS system. I found that the average age for male teachers was highest

in Area A schools, whereas it was highest for female teachers in Area B schools. (I had been checking age on the presumption that older teachers have more clout and so can end up where they want – *cf.* Singleton 1967:103 – not to check on whether the Wide Area policy had eliminated the age discrepancies!) I asked some SHS teachers about it, and one said perhaps that result is the best: men would be in the more prestigious city schools, while women would be in the not as demanding county schools, which would give them more time to spend at home. I asked this teacher, "So what do you think about an older man at an Area B school? Has he 'failed' in some way?" "Who told you!" asked the grinning teacher. This SHS teacher at least felt strongly that it would be common knowledge that successful, experienced men teachers should be in the more challenging schools.

Acting outside "traditional" gender roles risked inviting scorn, like the "free part-timers (*furī arubaitā* or *furitā*)," men who refuse to commit to steady full-time employment with a single employer, or the so-called "parasite singles (*parasaito singuru*)," women who do not marry but who spend their income on frivolous things, relying on their parents to cover the rest. In the woman's case, by refusing to marry and bear children, she is refusing to take her turn as the indulger of previous and future generations and of the current generation of working men. In the man's, by refusing to settle down in a single career, he is not only hindering his own prospects but robbing the nation of the fruits which come from having companies with well-trained workforces. As I will

268

show in the next chapter, these moral critiques remain relevant, even if there are other, structural

factors involved in the trend toward delayed marriage, childbirth, and full employment.

Third, there was a somewhat broadly held opinion among teachers that it is easier for men to

be hired and to be promoted. For example, when I was asking if certain people seemed destined for

administration, Yukiko mentioned two of her colleagues – both men. What about her, I asked, but

she laughed it away, saying that she did not want to do all the studying necessary. She then

mentioned the importance of patrons:

> Even people who don't want to be one, you know, in Japanese society, somehow,
> people around you (*mawari*), you get asked to by people around you – 'You gotta take
> the head teacher test, you gotta be a principal' – and then you think well there's
> nothing to do but take it. There are a lot of such people, I think (FN 031111).

I responded with a story about a male friend of mine who seemed to have been tapped in that way,

and she commented, "There sure seems to be people like that, especially men" (FN 031111). This

suggested that women teachers were not being pushed or pulled by patrons to enter administration

as often as men were. Yukiko explained the paltry number of female administrators as due to the

sexism lying beneath the rhetoric of gender equality:

> Yukiko: It's because they don't like women administrators, don't you think? The
> prefecture's like that, I think. They keep saying "Please become one," but in the end,
> what they feel in their hearts is, you know – there's still this thinking for Japanese,
> from a long time ago, that a woman should be one step behind. …. [And that
> feeling is not only true in the Pref. BOE.] In localities (*chiiki*), too, in the countryside

269

(*inaka*), if they hear that a woman principal is coming next year, they ask, "Why does a woman principal have to come to our place (*jibun no tokoro ni*)?" Like the prefecture is somehow looking down on them. "Why are they sending a woman principal to our place? Why wasn't it a man?" they say.

BPC: …. If it's just a head teacher, that'd be alright, these days.

Yukiko: It's the same for head teachers, mostly. [BPC: Really?] "Why, when some other locality has a hard-working man (*otoko no shikkari shita*) come as a principal, why does our place ...?"

BPC: They seem to have no power.

Yukiko: Yeah, they say they seem to have no power. That's a feeling people in the locality have, it seems. But for me, I don't want to study, so [I'm not as troubled by this state of affairs as much as other women] (FN 031111).

Another case of inequality in gender treatment was in hiring. Prior to my interview with

Yukiko, one municipal superintendent (a man) had told me that because there are so many women

working as teachers, particularly in the elementary schools, it is easier for men to become teachers.

Yukiko agreed this was so, backing it up with a personal anecdote:

It's easy, yes. *Easy.* That's why male staff get a lot of favorable treatment. It seems easy. My older brother, he's a teacher, but when he took the employment exam, they didn't ask him to play piano, sing a song – even though he can't do a thing as far as those skills go, they took him. Why? For me, I was slaving away, practicing piano and singing, practicing mat exercises, you name it. Why are they taking someone who didn't do anything? Just because it's a man, it seems, it's easy to pass, that's the atmosphere.

Where the male administrator discussed this matter-of-factly, Yukiko saw this as another instance of sexism. By the same logic, it should be easier for women to get promoted, but Yukiko did not see that "gender balancing" logic at work there – just talk.

My final example is that teachers perceive it to be easier for married women than married men to postpone a Wide Area transfer in order to accommodate the need to care for family members. I know of many cases where, like the Sakamotos (*q.v.*), both teachers in a teacher-teacher couple are marked for a Wide Area transfer and the husband is sent to the distant post while the wife is allowed to remain in place or is moved only a short distance. Not all women with family care responsibilities are accommodated: *cf.* Hatsune's unmarried friend, who was transferred near her main work area in Shimabara rather than where she'd built a home to care for her mother (*q.v.*). But the perception that there is a pattern of favorable consideration gives teachers, regardless of their preferences, an incentive to play up such a woman-as-primary-homemaker angle in their Request Forms and their discussions with administrators, so as to maximize their chances of obtaining a workable transfer outcome.

10.9   Summary

Personnel policies for teachers are mostly gender-blind, aside from those accommodating menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and nursing. But because the compulsory transfer system leaves teachers at risk for a disruption to the arrangements which allow both they and their spouse to meeting their work and family responsibilities, teachers are motivated to use what they can to help them fashion a workable life, one where both partners can continue working if they wish. These things include gendered practice in the workplace as well as logics built on those practices which can be deployed strategically as teachers wrangle for desired or at least workable transfer outcomes. But by using (successfully) these gendered logics, teachers are helping to reproduce that system. As the discussion of *tanshin fu'nin* shows, teachers often approach this in a way which reveals sensitivity to "traditional" gender roles and expectations. I did not meet teachers in strongly utilitarian, interdependent marriages. I met some in companion-type marriages where love is expressed through performance of duties that are held collectively. Teachers in companion-type marriages which require plenty of emotional sustenance gained through co-presence will face a harder time living apart, but as the next chapter shows, changes to the infrastructure among other things may make it easier for them to do so by allowing them to commute more often. As I shall show, this involves a change in their concept of work.

11. The Persistence of the Sacrifice – Selfish Frame

Teachers' discussion of the merits of transferring suggest that many – perhaps most – teachers would prefer to maintain a stronger boundary between work and family. Having a stronger boundary would give teachers the ability to have more privacy, anonymity, and freedom to act without being subject to judgment. It would give teachers the ability to choose the amount of involvement they felt appropriate to them at a given point in their lives. They could become involved if that was what they wanted to do, or they could commute home at nights, or on weekends, even in the face of an untimely transfer.

Thanks to various developments in the 1990s and 2000s, including the urbanization of the outer islands and other rural areas and changes in school policies, the boundary between work and family has become easier to maintain. These developments have reduced the amount of time teachers must spend in the school district after hours, lowering the stakes of transfer decisions and helping teachers more easily live according to their more flexible understandings of gender and work.

But public school teachers continue to face pressure to be involved in the life of the school

district in which they work – particularly in more rural areas, like the outer islands. After-hours

involvement in the school district is, like accepting a transfer, a way a teacher can demonstrate

commitment to his or her professional identity as a teacher and public servant. So reducing their

presence in the school districts leaves them open to criticism from parents and others who hold

teachers to an older, higher standard. This is a continuation of the debate discussed in Chapter 5.

This criticism occurs in a historical moment, the end of the Lost Decade, in which Japanese

people were expressing great nostalgia for the hopefulness and the sense of community they

attribute to the years of the postwar recovery. as well as fear about "the end of Japan." That that era

also saw the domestication of the Japanese woman in ascendance suggests that there is great

ambivalence about contemporary flexibility in gender and work concepts.

11.1   Continued expectations of teacher involvement

Public school teachers face different pressures to be involved than other types of public

servants. A judge told me about a conversation he had with a principal as they shared a plane ride

out to their new posts in Tsushima (FN 050519). As they talked about all the things they had to do

upon arrival, they realized that, though both were public servants, the judge was expected to remain

aloof from the community, to avoid the appearance of corruption, but the principal was expected to

get involved in it, to show commitment. Police, magistrates, and other state agents with power over

people and resources are often transferred regularly and/or otherwise isolated from the local

population out of a recognition that over time they are likely through the ordinary give-and-take of

social life to become entangled in relationships with the local public over whom they should act

impartially (*cf.* Ames 1981, Zwart 1994). Teachers, however, are expected to dive into local

communities in spite of being transferred there.

Writing in a trade journal, Hayashinai (1996), a former teacher and Kagoshima Prefecture

BOE member, presented a (well-chosen?) few responses to a local survey which had asked residents

of a locality to answer the prompt, "I expect the following things from teaching staff":

- "I want them to grow to like the locality. I don't want them to think of it as just
  the place they come to work in (*tsūkinchi*)."

- "More than being superb academically, I think taking a balance is necessary. I'd
  like to bring together as much as possible those with varied experience, or in
  other words, people who have come by roundabout ways, that's the sort to look
  for, I think."

- "The importance of spiritual education, those who have social moral principles
  of coexistence (*kyōson*) and co-prosperity (*kyōei*) (individualism has grown
  terribly), moral revival (*shūshin fukkatsu*)."

- "Everything in the world's growing more like the 'salaryman,' right? It's no good
  if responsibility for everything is laid on teaching staff, but recently it seems to
  me that teaching staff with passion have grown few in numbers. As a minimum,

275

I'd like them to clearly explain to the guardians of their classes their thinking as teaching staff members (Why did they proceed with a lesson this or that way? 'We deal with this sort of thing in such and such a way.' *Etc.*) I'd like them to have ears to listen, even about advice on the bad things about their school."

- "It's not that I ask teaching staff to have an ethical (*rinrikan*) or moral sense (*dōtokukan*) far and above what ordinary people have, but as with doctors, lawyers, politicians, and so on, I'd like them to be people with good sense who have the ethical sense related to their profession" (Hayashinai 1996:81-82).

Hayashinai summarizes the hopes the local communities have for their teachers:

more than wanting teachers who have merely specialized in effective techniques for teaching subjects, they have a strong expectations for teachers who, as "life teachers (*jinsei no kyōshi*)," can respond to, watch over, and care for children – each of whom is experiencing a unique, diverse, separate life (Hayashinai 1996:82).

A teacher – especially a public school one, in ES or JHS – should be interested in the development

of their students as a whole person, not just with respect to their academic skills, and this entails that

a teacher should be involved in the life of the community. I hit upon the phrase "neighbor

extraordinaire" to describe what politicians and others would have the teacher be, the interface

between the government and civil society (Nakano 2005, Ogawa 2004, Wilson 2001). Such

involvement is not precisely defined, though. Joining a local group, such as a sports team or flower

arranging group; regularly patronizing a bar, restaurant, coffee shop, and/or shop – any of these

might be evidence that one is "involved," because they provide a chance for the teachers to learn

about the public – and for the public to learn about and communicate with the teachers.

Is this just talk? How many teachers are involved in this way? Do teachers care if they do

not live up to this standard? Rohlen's study of five SHSs in the city of Kobe would suggest a great

mismatch between the rhetoric and the reality already by the time of his fieldwork, 1974-1975 –

albeit in a metropolitan setting rather than a rural or provincial one. During his fieldwork, Rohlen

(1983:198) found a "nostalgia for an ideal past, when teacher-student relations were closer."

Although principals and some teachers – particularly physical education teachers – would speechify

or act on this ideal of "close ties between teachers and students," it was only reached occasionally,

because the relationships are dominated by the exam preparation and the organization is too

bureaucratic (Rohlen 1983:198, 208). The same was true for teacher-teacher relations. Some

teachers socialized after hours, particularly if they went to the same school or college, and some

older teachers become patrons (*oyabun*) of the younger ones (Rohlen 1983:176). Teachers of the

same subject, particularly physical education and English, had an extensive network throughout the

city (Rohlen 1983:175). But Rohlen states, "I found the majority of teachers … to be rather private

and disinclined to socializing with their colleagues" (1983:176). Although there is much more social

activity than an American would find normal, he says, Japanese teachers have far more

independence than Japanese company employees – and some teachers chose the profession for that

very reason (Rohlen 1983:176). He explains that because they are given tenure when hired, teachers

can ignore administrative work, club leading, and *tsukiai* or after-hours socializing with colleagues

without penalty, and many did so because the material rewards for such work were slight – stipends were few and small, and such work did not lead to any sort of promotion that Rohlen recognized. That left as main motivators only peer pressure and appeals to idealism and professional pride, and although the school administration was organized to bolster the strength of these motivators, these were not strong enough spurs in enough cases to realize the nostalgic vision (Rohlen 1983:175-177).

Given Rohlen's greater familiarity with for-profit companies (Rohlen 1974), this may be a case of his seeing the glass as half empty instead of half full. Does one emphasize the local contrast between public and private sector, where the financial motive entices greater participation than an appeal to values and reputation alone? Or does one emphasize that ideals and reputation can have such a strong effect in the absence of financial enticements – after all, even in the urban schools Rohlen studied the administrative work of the schools was accomplished? I take Rohlen's point that the practice does not live up to the rhetoric, but I cannot sleight the motivating power of these concepts about what it means to be (schemas of) a good professional, a good teacher, and a good public servant combined with the drive to gain a good reputation and avoid a bad one.

To bolster my point, consider recent research in the U.S.A. by Bartlett (2004). Bartlett studied two SHSs in California, both of which introduced new administrative work to the teachers' responsibilities, on the principle that including teachers in such work would give them a greater feeling of ownership of the school and professionalism, making the job more attractive to them and

278

aiding in retention. One school integrated these responsibilities into the work day, giving teachers

extra time and money to accomplish them; the other did not. What struck Bartlett was that even at

the one that did not, teachers did not jettison this expanded role. The reason, she argues, is that

these teachers had come to accept these new responsibilities as part of what it meant to be a "good

teacher" and so to give them up would mean that they failed to live up to professional standards

they held for themselves and felt peers held for them too (Bartlett 2004:576-578). This fed into "the

moral imperative for teachers to serve students well, regardless of personal cost … even if it martyrs

them" (Bartlett 2004:577). By internalizing these conceptions of what it means to be a professional,

teachers "disciplined" themselves in the Foucauldian sense to give more – and living up to this ideal

must obviously have been in some way pleasurable for them (like the craftsmen in Kondo 1990),

even though they could not sustain the giving at the latter school, where teachers burnt out and quit

to a high degree (albeit not due to this added administrative work alone). Professional ideals and

concern with reputation can have significant motivational power.

Though not all Nagasaki teachers live up to the "institutionalized value" for involvement

(D'Andrade 2008:123-125), they as teachers must confront it. Hence I found that teachers who did

not get involved locally told me they *wished* they were doing such things, they would *like* to do them,

but somehow they were not, they had become too busy, maybe next year, and so on. That is, they

put on a guilty look and tone, and offered excuses or justifications for their failing to measure up to

279

the standard. Even if they only gave that answer because they thought it would sound bad if they said otherwise, this shows that they felt the expectation was on them (*cf.* Strauss 2005). They knew the public might read their actions as a commitment to or rejection of their community.

11.2   Praise for those who are publicly active

All teachers are aware of the expectation of involvement, although some roles carry a greater responsibility. Some teachers meet this expectation more joyfully, because it overlaps with a hobby of theirs. Others do so because they feel it is a fair expectation the public can make on them, and see it as a mark of their commitment and professionalism. Others may prefer to do something else, at least sometimes, but find these interactions with the public or their colleagues unavoidable.

All public school teachers feel the pressure to become involved. It is a duty to the public and a duty to one's colleagues. For example: one day in Nagasaki Prefecture had been designated "education day," and seminars and other events were scheduled around the island. The morning event in Urabe was a roundtable discussion featuring the principal of Urabe ES, so as many of the teachers who were on the island at the time went and sat in the audience to lend their presence in support of him. When the principal mentioned that he would be speaking, each silently thought, "Perhaps I had better go," and in the end they all attended. After the morning roundtable session

was over, when leaving, they said, "*O-tsukare sama deshita,*" to each other, just as they do when leaving work for the day. I would translate this expression as "You have become tired (from working [on my/our behalf], which I note with gratitude])." None of these employees – not the administrator, the homeroom teacher, or the rank-and-file staff – received any extra compensation or "comp time" for attending these activities. These are simply actions that public school teachers as self-consciously responsible professionals should do. But they are not forced to them. If they do, they are feeling and responding to the social pressure and their own ideas about what a professional is and should be (*cf.* Rohlen 1983:175-177, who emphasizes that many urban SHS teachers in 1974-1975 took advantage of their power to opt out without having to face repercussions).

Some roles carry a heightened expectation of participation. The principal is such a role. For example, Rie told me she feels guilty that she does not host parties. Then she told me how she, if you will, "makes up for it": She shops locally. She stays at the school rather than spending most weekends away. She accepts every invitation and stands at the gate every morning to greet students and make herself available for parents and guardians. At one event, she was pleased to tell me, one of the locals asked her where she was from, expecting the answer to be somewhere nearby, apparently because no recent non-local principal had been so active in community affairs.

The head teacher role also has an extra responsibility. Rie praises and supports her head teacher and especially his wife for hosting parties for locals and staff. She makes sure to attend

281

them. Elsewhere, I heard a different head teacher disparaged by parents, guardians, rank-and-file

staff, and his own principal for not being more involved with the public, among other shortcomings.

For example, he spent much of a sports festival day inside the school rather than out where he could

be seen and talked to by parents and others, and he arrived conspicuously late to a second party.

The homeroom teacher role is another one with added expectations. For example, on

Kamigotō one town has an annual town speech contest, and the finalists from the various schools in

that town were going to have their final presentation to determine who won which prizes. All the

finalist's HR teachers from Urabe ES went as a big contingent. Another example: I was at a town

cultural festival final rehearsal at the town gymnasium late one evening when an Urabe ES teacher I

knew arrived. He was not performing: two of his HR students were. Now even when the

community has its own cultural festivals (*bunkasai*), athletic meets (*taiikusai*), and *matsuri,* separate

from the school's, students might be performing in them and certainly will be in attendance.

Therefore, it is considered good form for a teacher to attend them, particularly if his or her HR

student is performing, just as with the speech contest mentioned above. But this teacher had to take

Urabe's basketball team to the mainland for a game on the day of the performance, so he had come

here this evening to encourage them to do their best.

Some teachers seize the opportunity to get involved locally. One teacher I worked with in

the mid-1990s rented a house rather than move into staff housing when he was transferred to the

282

outer islands, and rather than joining one of our school's night softball teams, he joined the one from his neighborhood. He made a great many local friends. Other teachers were very active with both work colleagues and local colleagues. I asked another of my former colleagues about it, and reflecting on his time there, he said, "I think they might have been happy" to have received through transfer an active teacher like himself, compared to someone who just kept to himself or herself.

With others, a sense of obligation or duty seems dominant. I knew several men who professed a deep love for their family and a desire to spend more time with them, but they were almost compulsive about accepting invitations from coworkers or the public. Perhaps they actually preferred going out to going home, or perhaps they were too weak-willed when it came to external requests and found it easier to ask their families to endure their absence.

Regardless of their reasons for getting involved in community life, those teachers who choose to do so receive praise. At the farewell ceremony (*rininshiki,* 離任式) at Urabe ES, the principal made a point of mentioning in a positive light those departing employees who had been active in community life, especially if they were not local-born. Around the island I occasionally heard such comments as well – so-and-so is involved in some activity, isn't that a good thing, *etc.* Active teachers also attract more well-wishers than others when they depart for an off-island post. Witnessing the farewell ceremony and seeing-off teachers at the ports (*miokuri*) gives teachers the

opportunity to reflect on the kind of parting they might like to make when it is their turn to leave (*cf.* Matsuo's desire to be the sort of teacher the islanders would be sad to see leave, Matsuo 1984).

11.3   Criticism for those who are not publicly active or put their private lives first

The Master of Toraya, a bar-restaurant specializing in *yakitori,* or skewered, grilled meat and fish on Kamigotō, was someone who thought teachers had become less active in the island community and thought this was a bad development. His restaurant serves good food and is close to several schools and teacher housing units. When I was teaching in Kamigotō in 1994-1997, it was known as a "teacher bar." In the spring, when the towns' night softball leagues played, it was one of the main destinations for the after-game dinner-and-drink sessions held once or twice a week and usually attended by a dozen or so of the players on my school's teams. In the off season, teachers still came, perhaps a pair taking up one of the "regular's" seats at the counter – unless (or until) the party grew to four, five, and beyond, as someone took out a phone card and invited others to join. But when I returned to begin my fieldwork in 2003, the boisterous teacher parties of yore were no more. The few regulars were all native-born non-teachers. Once I was satisfied that I hadn't just been experiencing a series of "slow nights," I started to nose around, and found that no other area establishment seemed to have taken Toraya's place as the "teacher bar." So one night I asked the

Master, "Where is everybody?" He responded that I had been on the island during a "Golden Age" when there were really excellent teachers, such as A, B, C, and D. But the teachers now are not as good: hardly anyone comes out. As a result, they are becoming bad at relationships, selfish, and "dry." They are just like the students, he quipped derisively: staying at home and playing video games. When I began suggesting alternative explanations to him – Maybe they have become busier, because there aren't Saturday classes anymore but they still have to cram in all that material? Maybe they have less money, because the decade-long recession had led to cuts in public servant pay? – he would have none of it. 'How much is a drink?' he scoffed. They don't have to spend a lot of money, he told me. And it wasn't about whether they spent money or not, it was about whether they wanted to be out in the community, to get to know the community.

When I floated the subject by other proprietors I knew, they, too, felt that teachers were going out less often. One said that he no longer could predict what nights would be busy and what nights slow. Another echoed the change of values theme, saying that he came across teachers who were bad at human relations, lacking good manners and "social sense" or common sense about society. (Although, to be fair, one proprietor said that people just didn't like the Toraya Master (FN 040811), and he had a reputation for being a bit touchy!) Many islanders and teachers perceived a drop in teacher-teacher and teacher-public interaction too. Their remarks were not limited to Kamigotō teachers, but were general statements: "People do not do recreation as much as they used

to," concurred several teachers. When I suggested to a teacher who was active in community life during his time in the islands that perhaps the new generation was busier, his response was swift: "We were busy, too!" That sort of excuse would not be sufficient for him.

Whether it is true or not that participation has fallen off is a question I will set aside. Some research I did (tracking membership declines in various clubs, talking with restaurant owners and locals, asking teachers themselves) suggested it had fallen off some, but there was not enough to convince me that it was a trend as opposed to happenstance. The important thing is how Japanese teachers and the wider public perceived it, and what those perceptions led them to say and do.

Teachers not only faced heat for seeming to dodge these nebulous after-hours duties to the public. They also had an obligation to each other, as I have described elsewhere, and teachers who shirked their colleagues had a poor reputation. There was an expectation that staff should pitch in on a task if the occasion presented itself, unless some other pressing matter – work-related – intervened. Leaving before the work of the school was done could be seen as a selfish act (although as described above married women were expected to need to get home by a certain time).

If leaving early could be a problem, and taking time off awkward (Yokose 1984e; *cf.* Kondo 1990:290 discussing Glenda Roberts' data), quitting mid-year definitely was beyond the pale, as I observed one day (FN 040221). A school was in the midst of a multi-day project and the full staff had gathered for some box lunches (*o-bentō*). One of the staff members then announced to the rest

286

that a former colleague had sent money for drinks for all the staff, "but I forgot to bring them. I'll bring them tomorrow." Normally this act of generosity would be remarked upon with a comment such as, "Oh, she didn't have to do that." But this ex-colleague had quit her post in the middle of the year due to some family trouble. The announcement of her act was met with absolute silence – everyone kept eating, as if the remark had never been made. No one even looked up! I spoke with one of the staff members about this later and she said that she did not think the rank-and-file held a grudge against the ex-colleague, but were probably just embarrassed because they suspected the principal might. Be that as it may, I drew the lesson that to become a *persona non grata* would be most unpleasant and that I should not want to ever find myself in that situation.

11.4   Explanations

Many different theories were advanced to explain the perceived drop in teacher involvement. First I will discuss some of the "young teachers have different values" arguments.

Hayashinai (1996) suggests that the younger generation of teachers, though maybe excelling at skills which can be rationalized and routinized and prepared in advance, have become unskilled and uninterested in the "ambiguous" area of relationships. To be good at relationships, to be a good "life teacher," requires "the courage to, for once, forget one's own area [of specialization],

think about what that child needs, and act” (Hayashinai 1996:82). This is what distinguished many

of the teachers celebrated in 1984’s *Outer Island Teachers,* who were thrown into situations for which

they had no preparation but improvised their way to a praiseworthy solution. It is also the same sort

of ethic that Nagayuki and that Singleton’s (1967:112) union members exemplified: if something has

been decided, do your best to see it through.

Yamada Yūkō, a retired principal and native of Kamigotō, argues it is a matter of teaching

philosophy. Reflecting in 1996 about his first post, Chūchi JHS, to which he was assigned in 1955

when he was in his mid-20s, he said, “the words ‘school rules’ did not exist,” explaining that teachers

approached children not as students to fit into school, but as human beings to be raised (*Shin

Uonome Chō Yakuba* 1996:39). This resonates with Hayashinai’s comment: do not be routine, but

personal, and educate the whole child.

Yamada denied that infrastructural changes influenced his choice to be involved, which

included playing many games with the children even after hours. Yamada emphasized values:

> At that time, it was only natural that teaching staff would live in their school district.
> That was not because the transportation situation was such that it would not allow
> for commuting, I think, but fundamentally because doing so was based on an
> educational philosophy of ‘education rooted in a locality’ and ‘integrating into the
> place, becoming one with the people of the locality is appropriate for the education
> of children’ (*Shin Uonome Chō Yakuba* 1996:38).

Those values and ways of thinking had been in his case quite enduring, he said: "The thinking that

'How very important to a teacher are the hearts of the people of the locality' I carried with me

straight through for 37 years from that time, and after my retirement my thinking has not changed"

(*Shin Uonome Chō Yakuba* 1996:38).

Tadashi, a principal who was born and raised in Kamigotō but attended college in Tōkyō,

related the generational change to a regional difference between urban- and rural-style social

relations. In urban areas (*tōkai*), having strong ties to the people in one's neighborhood appear to be

decreasingly the norm. One does not know one's neighbors at all or have any relation to them. The

people there take the "Don't be dependent on others (*Amaeru na*)!" ethic to an extreme, he said,

thinking they can and should do it all alone, without bothering or troubling anyone else. In the

country (*inaka*), however, there has been a feeling that everyone must help each other. But doing

that requires one to have knowledge about others, and to the young generation, even in Kamigotō,

that's unpleasant (*iya*). So such socializing is growing less prevalent everywhere, he thought (FN

040811), like Hayashinai (1996).

To suggest a value change as a cause of a drop in teacher involvement begs the question:

what caused that value change? Answers given involved changes in the amount of time teachers

spent with each other, caused by changes in policy, commuting and residence patterns, and a change

in the climate as such choices became more common. In *137 Keywords for Education* (1997)*,* Egawa

too notes that younger teachers socialize less, although he focuses on teacher-teacher relations rather

than teacher-community ones. Egawa thinks one factor in "the weakening of teacher interpersonal

relationships" is the rise in commuting:

> These days, there is a particular trend in society: "let's avoid human relationships." Within the last ten years this trend can be seen in the teaching world. It is especially common in the young generation.
>
> For example, there are teachers who don't go on office trips. This is said to be common in the young generation. Each teacher probably has his or her various own reasons, but previously, unless one was sick, that sort of thing never happened.
>
> Furthermore, the following spectacle never was seen in the old days: A number of teachers from the same school were invited to the principal's house, but even when shown into the drawing room, instead of chatting with each other until the appointed time, they read various books, watched TV, and so on, with each person doing as he or she pleases.
>
> **The pitfall of teachers' commuting by car.** For over 30 years cars have been used to get to school. Nowadays, in the greater half of schools commuting by car is a matter of course. It goes without saying that in some places it is difficult to get to school without a car.
>
> Commuting by car can be seen as comfortable, convenient, even luxuriant, but in fact there is a big pitfall: namely, that it causes the weakening of teacher-teacher relationships.
>
> First of all, teachers' chatting with each other after work over food and drink is significant for a number of reasons. It can become a time for chatting about work-related dissatisfactions, complaints, concerns, aspirations, and so on, but in this sort of situation, is it only a simple exchange of information? It can be a place for stronger feelings of friendship, of deepening mutual understanding, mutual respect, and mutual trust. Moreover, one can naturally cultivate an attitude of mutual support, cooperation, spurring each other on through friendly competition, and so forth. In addition, as these sorts of occasions pile up, it is likely that teachers will grow to acquire the art of listening to others with affection and giving counsel in an appropriate fashion. In other words, it is a place for teachers' deep study.

Before the advent of the car society, this sort of thing was a normal scene in teacher society, and created school culture or teacher culture. Yet as the number of teachers commuting by car increased, that sort of valuable opportunity has gradually become extinct. Already 20 years or so has passed since things became this way. . . . .

In any event, the job of a teacher does not consist of avoiding human relationships. Fundamentally, a high degree of skill at human relations is necessary. Moreover, teachers are in a position, as a part of student guidance, to give children counsel and advice on human relationships. If only for that reason, raising teachers' skill at interpersonal relations is a very serious matter (Egawa 1997:192-193).

Egawa thinks as more teachers commute, leaving early has become the dominant rather than the rare event, releasing the social pressure that had promoted teacher-teacher interaction.

This pressure was found in Nagasaki in the late 1970s and through the 1980s, where the Wide Area policy was associated with a rise in commuting of all teachers, whether island or mainland (*Ritō Kyōshi Shuzai Han* 1984k). Hayashi describes it this way:

> If they submit the Request for Leave, they get a nasty look of 'Again?' … even among their co-workers who are warmly passing their tenure at the school, a critical atmosphere is born, with nasty talk behind those teachers' backs about 'spoiling the mood' and so on. …. Many teachers who have gone to their posts on their own, leaving their families behind, have reserve towards their co-workers and guilty feelings about their relations with the students, and they take it out on their own families (Hayashi 1984k).

Their frequent absence from the post led to rancor and discord in the teachers' work relationships.

Writing in 1979's *The Truth About "Draft Notice" Personnel Transfers,* SHS union members reported that when many in the staff commuted, staff meetings focused only on essentials so people

had time to begin their commutes home. Some teachers were reluctant to invite commuters to

socialize, expecting they will always decline.   Hence a split can develop between commuters and

those willing and/or able to socialize spontaneously. The planned events may become the only

times that the entire staff can socialize outside of working hours.

The same was true with the teachers' relationships to the parents and others in their school

district. The head of an outer island chapter of the Pref. SHS Teachers Union contrasted teachers

who came on the voluntary dispatch system with those who came due to the Wide Area system:

> People who came as a result of the previous 'dispatch' system, because they came as
> a result of their own request, they came with an appetite and with expectations, and
> their whole families came with them to their new residence. Hence, even though
> their time here was short, they participated a great deal in events in the town and
> really dove into the locality…but with people who come to their posts forced to live
> apart from their family, when a day off comes most of them go home if they can, so
> they cannot participate in town activities. Naturally, they fall out of favor with the
> townsfolk. A suspicion arises: 'Do they really feel a sense of responsibility for
> education in the island?' At the workplace, too, on Saturday afternoons, the mood
> of 'What's everyone up for?' has gone, cutting the 'lubricating oil,' and by and by the
> mood becomes full of friction. And so, the truth of the matter is that even the
> people going home are doing so with great anxiety (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō
> Kyōshokuin Kumiai* 1979:16).

Winning over locals who view transferred teachers as transients – "strangers," "outsiders,"

"visitors," or "travelers" (*yosomono, yoso-no-hito, tabi-no-hito*) (*Nagasaki-ken Kōtō Gakkō Kyōshokuin Kumiai*

1979:12; *Ritō Kyōshi Shuzai Han* 1984i) – is hard enough if the teacher accepts his or her transfer.

Up through the 1980s, commuting home from a distant post invited suspicion and scorn from both peers and public. It seemed a clear signal that the teacher did not value either, because it was so rare and hard to do in terms of time and money. (Given that the "alarming" percentage of teachers with commutes of an hour or more *after* its institution was between 2% and 4% of the teaching corps, prior to the Wide Area policy such commuting must have been rare indeed; Hayashi 1984q.) Therefore, *tanshin fu'nin* teachers might find it almost a relief to stay in the new school district and be active there, like Sakamoto (*q.v.*), whether they had gone voluntarily or not (unless they faced additional pressure to go home, as married female teachers did).

But over the course of the 1990s and 2000s commuting home ever more possible. My examination of infrastructural developments in Kamigotō over this period reveals:

(1) Transportation off-island became easier – more common and faster, particularly in the 1990s, when day trips became possible;

(2) Transportation over island became easier through public investment in roads, bridges, and tunnels, and private car ownership rose;

(3) More grocery stores and shops opened, and more areas were served by better utility and communication service – including pager, internet, and finally cell phone service in the 1990s;

(4) More places for leisure and learning, such as restaurants, athletic grounds, community centers, auditoriums, and other public facilities opened – particularly in central settlements, which grew in part through massive, government-funded land reclamation projects; and

(5) As populations crashed in the most rural peripheries, leading to school closings and mergers, the central areas of the island became built up, and home to more and more of the population – including more public school teachers, who

increasingly chose private apartments in central settlements when staff apartments in those settlements were unavailable.

In 1997-1998, the only year for which I have data, 19 employees on Kamigotō had commutes of an hour or more. Given a total of 444 employees (a figure which includes two groups who almost always live near the school, custodians and administrators) this works out to 4.3% – far above the mainland figures deemed so alarming. What's more, including commutes of 45 minutes or longer doubles the number to 38, or 8.6%.

One administrator who lived and worked at a school in Tomie (*cf.* the case of Osaki, *q.v.*), Shimogotō, said that especially the older people would like the teachers to live locally – that's what they remember teachers doing "in the old days (*mukashi wa*)." But only half of the staff lived in Tomie, the other half lived in the major city of Fukue. The teacher explained, "Since everyone has cars these days, and especially since the tunnel went through" – a tunnel which reduced the commute between Fukue and Tomie – "it is natural for teachers to want to live in and commute from Fukue." The teacher added that "new apartments were not being built here in Tomie, but in Fukue" – as was also the case in Kamigotō.

Teachers could take advantage of these new developments thanks to an increase in their salaries, which occurred around the time of the Wide Area policy's implementation. The increase enabled *tanshin fu'nin* teachers sent to the outer islands to visit their mainland home more often from

294

the outer islands (high speed travel, which in the case of Kamigotō cuts a journey from three hours

to one and a half, is correspondingly twice as expensive) and gave all teachers greater means to

commute by car from a private apartment in a more convenient and central settlement rather than

living in cheaper but older and more remote staff housing.

As the impossible became possible, the hard became easy, and the rare common, the moral

landscape within which teachers made their decisions about how much time to spend in their school

districts and how much to spend outside of it – particularly if they had family or home outside of it

– changed. More teachers began to commute, and more began to favor flexible relationships with

lighter or narrower commitments to their fellows and the public – the sort of urban-style social

relations described by Tadashi above. By 2000, *not* commuting home regularly might make the

teachers heroic in the eyes of their colleagues and the public in the outer islands, but cold in the eyes

of their family. Even if the family did not put such pressure on a teacher, a *tanshin fu'nin* teacher

might put it on himself or herself – again, especially women.

Less time together is one way the opportunities for collaboration with one's colleagues have

been eroded. Sometimes these opportunities fell away as an unintentional byproduct of some

development. Here is a small example: When I worked at the SHS, the photocopier did not collate

multi-page documents. Hence, when many multi-page materials were needed for students, such as

at test-time, it was common for a teacher to bring the prints out to the staff room to assemble the

295

materials, whereupon any teacher present in the staff room would run over and pitch in to help their colleague finish the work faster. But eight years later, the new photocopier did all this work for everyone. Rather than bonding together to trade favors, teachers now could sit at their desks uninterrupted. I think changes like this, which make the staff more self-sufficient and less interdependent, cumulatively weaken the spirit of camaraderie.

In this light, consider the elimination of the requirement for teachers to do night patrol of the school buildings and grounds. Egawa discusses the affects of this in *137 Keywords for Education*:

> Obviously, this was done to lighten the burdens on teachers and contribute to the reform of their working conditions. But at the same time, it clearly eliminated one more place where teachers could get together. A time when mutual friends or older and younger teachers could talk with each other, relaxing over *go* or *shogi*, vanished. The end result is that chances for teachers to interact with one another and grow together have disappeared (Egawa 1997:193).

The same was true of the elimination of Saturday classes (a process begun in 1992). But this had larger repercussions, for it gave teachers who had no other commitments such as club leadership a block of time each weekend to use as they saw fit. So some had the motivation to reject invitations and opportunities to socialize after school during the week, so they could work ahead and take the weekends to spend time with their families or engaged in other non-work pursuits. That is, teachers were better able to conduct their lives over a wider spatial range.

With respect to Nagasaki Prefecture, the prevalence of high-speed travel options led to a change in practice with respect to outer island teachers' business trips to the mainland. In the past, teachers who had business on the mainland typically left in advance. Because no morning ferry could get them to an 8 AM or 9 AM conference, outer island teachers going to training sessions, for example, would have to leave the afternoon before. As one interviewee told me, this meant that outer island teachers would frequently find themselves on the same ferry to Nagasaki, and coordinate their hotel reservations so that they could spend the evening together. They also were likely to be returning on the same ferry. These were times for drinking and conversation, a time when old friends reunited and new relationships made, ideas exchanged, and so on. He felt this was a valuable thing, and given the isolation of some island schools, one can understand why. When I was working on Kamigotō in 1994-1997, the business office often arranged for the cheaper but slower ferry trip, coupled with a hotel stay. But over time, according to this teacher, schools began paying for teachers to take the high-speed ships so that they could leave and return in a single day, without the overnight stay. This decision eliminated the chance for the long, informal meetings with one's outer island fellows.

Such technological- and infrastructure-related developments led to diminished opportunities for collaboration across the staff, but two major policy changes which occurred during my field work actually threw workmates into competition with one another.

297

The collaborative spirit between teachers is challenged by the reanimation of an idea killed in the 1960s, namely, teacher evaluation (*kyōin hyōka*). In the new version, being rolled out in compulsory schools in 2005, all the members of the rank-and-file teaching staff within a school are asked to evaluate themselves on a five-point scale and justify their evaluation. These comments will be weighed by the principal, who will then issue evaluations of each staff member. These are relative evaluations on a bell curve, with the number of 5's equal to the number of 1's and the number of 4's equal to the number of 2's. Those with higher evaluations receive more money; those with lower evaluations, less money. These evaluations become a part of a teacher's permanent file. I heard one old union member suggest that his colleagues could subvert it by agreeing amongst themselves to take turns receiving the lowest and highest evaluations and redistributing the money. I suspect this will not happen. For example, what should one do if one were transferred before one's turn to win the bonus came? Or if some did not want to join the scheme?

Another policy change which seems to pit teachers against each other is the so-called "free agency system (*FA-sei*)," a component of the revised Wide Area Exchange Personnel Reshuffling policy that applies to SHS staff. This change gives principals the ability to keep up to 20% of their staff who might otherwise be subject to transfer if they identify them as important to some project or undertaking at the school. Teachers, likewise, have room on their Request Forms to identify special missions or projects which they wish to continue with in order to further their professional

development and thereby justify remaining at a school (or transferring to a different school). The policy is designed to help promote school specialization and other long-term projects.

I discussed the policy with Rie, a SHS principal (FN 040602). She opened by saying that you never can have perfection with any human enterprise, choice, or system – there will always be good and bad points. Through the FA system a principal can keep the best or best fitting people at the SHS, making sure the focus is never lost and the quality is never diluted, but keeps growing and growing. The main idea seems to be that this will help those at the top reach higher. Rie posed this rhetorical question: "We *should* help those at the top get to Tōkyō University [Japan's Oxford], but is *that,* is *building 'elites'* the goal, the role, the responsibility of *public* education?" She drew an analogy to professional baseball and the relationship between the Japanese and American Major Leagues. All the best Japanese players (Matsui, "little Matsui," Ichirō, Fukudome, *etc.*) go to the Major Leagues. They do wonderfully and baseball thrives. But what happens to the Japanese League? It becomes second tier. Perhaps this could happen to education, she said. In the process of building up talent, you create a two-tiered, unequal system. Is it fair (*byōdō*), she asked, for a student to receive a poor education based on the "accident" that they happen to be born in this or that school district?

The FA system seems likely to exacerbate the "contour line" transfer problem, wherein teachers are only transferred within the same "class" of schools, college prep to college prep, low-achieving to low-achieving, *etc.* Inter-level mobility might be stifled on the grounds that a teacher

299

with experience in a low-achieving school will not be prepared for work in a high-pressure academic place, not be best able to help students get students into Tōkyō University or one of the other top universities. Is it better to have a policy which promotes specialization, or one which promotes equality of opportunity for teachers?

The FA system also added a new way for a teacher to argue for a favorable assignment. The Request Form has always given teachers room to describe personal responsibilities which warrant consideration, even special consideration, when the transfers are decided. Such requests are grounded in the language of the unavoidable circumstance: a teacher "cannot help" having a medical condition, or being pregnant, or having a spouse who cannot transfer, or owning a house, or having a child who has become old enough to take college entrance exams. These are not things that pit one teacher against another directly, although they may do so indirectly. There is the sense that such circumstances might befall anyone, might happen to everyone in good time. But with the FA system, staff can give a professional reason for their requesting to work at a specific SHS. Rie felt that this would reward the wrong behavior. Japanese value humility, so what sort of self-respecting Japanese person would write, "I have x, y, z talents so I deserve this transfer"? Most will write nothing, she said. When I told her that I had asked a teacher what he wrote in that space and he had replied, "Oh, I left it blank," Rie immediately commented, "Of course!" Given how well ensconced such values of self-effacement and humility are in Japanese society, do we want a system that obliges

Japanese teachers to do this sort of thing? What kind of system would reward the best boasters?

Encourage a teacher who sees himself or herself as superior to his or her colleagues? As with the

self-evaluation system, won't the FA system motivate teachers to self-aggrandize rather than share,

in order to demonstrate how worthy they are to receive special treatment or extra money? Even if

this paradigm works well in business, does it work well in public education? (Note that Rie later, in

keeping with her "good and bad points" theme, argued the other way: It wouldn't do for schools to

be so conservative and resistant to change that they do not prepare students to do well in society,

i.e., the business world, where they must make their fortune.)

Taken together, these two policies promote an ethos of self-centeredness, turning one's

colleagues into one's competition, and exacerbate school differentiation. Weren't these some of the

very problems that the Pref. BOE had had with the voluntary transfer system?

It was too soon after their enactment for me to see any effects of these policies on intra-

staff relations. Rie had given the FA system a lot of thought. Old union leaders in the compulsory

system had dealt with self-evaluation schemes before and were prepared with arguments against the

new one. But many teachers only shrugged when I asked how they felt about them. They were

taking a wait and see approach. It remains to be seen whether these policies remain in place long

enough to begin to influence teachers to act in a way that maximizes their chances to live the life

they want, and whether the ramifications on intra-staff relations anticipated above come to pass.

The Master of Toraya had a theory as to why staff involvement in society (or at least going

out regularly in the community) had fallen down: a collapse in the *oyabun-kobun* structure (*cf.* Rohlen

1983:176). The *oyabun* is the "parental role" and the *kobun* is the "child role" in a patronage or

sponsorship type of relationship specific to a particular clique or faction. These terms, used within

criminal gangs and political parties, carry more symbolic weight and point to specific relationships of

indulgence and deference. In contrast, their nearest synonyms, *sempai,* "elder," and *kōhai,* "younger,"

can be applied just on the basis of age to anyone within a specific social frame – a class, a club, a

college, a work site – with correspondingly less obligatory and more generalize role expectations.

The *oyabun-kobun* relationship is sustainable when the *oyabun* is in a position to teach useful

skills and impart useful and desired knowledge to the *kobun* and the *oyabun* is in a position to confer

a useful identity upon the *kobun*, opening the door to the *oyabun's* network and from there to useful

and desired assets. Put another way, it is sustainable when age, seniority, possession of useful

knowledge, possession of useful social capital, power in the organization, and prestige are positively

correlated. Although he uses the friendlier (and less feudalistic, if less colorful) *sempai-kōhai*

terminology, the following quote by Mimura Nagatoshi, the superintendent for Nagasaki Prefecture

who pushed through the Wide Area policy, illustrates the system in action:

> Through Wide Area personnel transfers, imbalances in the age composition of
> teaching and support staff in each school have been corrected. I want these young
> teachers to ever be setting a new breeze blowing through the schools through their

go-getter energy, even as the rich experience of their seniors (*sempai kyōshi*) is being handed down (*denju*) to them. Eventually there will come the time when they in turn must lead (*shidō*) their juniors. That teachers have the joy of influencing and developing teachers in turn – you can call that a truly fulfilling life for teaching staff, don't you think (Hayashi 1984q; *cf.* Lebra 1984:240-241)?

If teachers had the right values, said the Master, then good *oyabun* would take the lead and make sure the teachers were going out into the community, and when the good *kobun* got the call from their *oyabun* saying that a group was going out, they would go out to join them. During the "Golden Age," there were good *oyabun,* such as A, B, C, and D. But now, there are no good *oyabun* at the school and no sense among the young of how to behave in an *oyabun-kobun* relationship.

I asked the Master if Fumio hadn't taken on the mantle of *oyabun*. One of the "new" members of the A, B, C, D clique at the time I left the JET Program, Fumio was now one of the longest-serving veterans at the school. The Master shook his head and made a dismissive sound. Fumio had given up drinking and taken up running instead. Apart from visiting the island friends he had made at their local snack bar, Fumio seldom went out. This meant that he was seldom, if ever, leading a group of juniors into town, as our former *oyabun* had done for (to?!) us. So the Master felt Fumio had failed to live up to the leadership standards of that "Golden Age." When I suggested that Fumio just did not happen to have a dynamic or robust personality as our *oyabun* had, making him less of a leader, the Master countered that one did not have to be a dominating figure to be a good *oyabun*. He gave an example of a man who was a good *oyabun* because he valued relationships,

making a point of showing his face regularly, sometimes just for a drink, sometimes even spending

the night at the home of the Master and his wife.

As for Fumio, I found he had matured as a teacher and a person. I had overheard two of his

students shopping for flowers to give to him at the school's farewell ceremony and their words

revealed how close they felt to him. When I told him about that, he humbly cast suspicion on it, but

later on admitted that getting through to the students was the achievement of which he was most

proud, because it was the concern that had most worried him during his years here. I learned that

he had taken on an elder brother role for a number of younger women at the school. During the

course of our long and deep conversation he told me how important it had been for him to have

that snack bar, that the relationships he made there had run very deep, and that he made a point of

telling all the new transferees of its virtues. That bar was the site of the third party on the night of

the school's farewell party for all departing teachers, and Fumio told me how many of his colleagues

had come up to him then and said how impressed they were that he had made such a relationship

with the people there. So: a devoted teacher and caring mentor who had made strong relationships

while on the island. I came away wondering if the Master hadn't just been grousing because *his*

establishment was no longer one of the favorite haunts of any of the school's staff.

But when I discussed the Master's hypothesis about the decline of *oyabun-kobun* relationships

with various teachers and staff in 2003-2005, many felt it had some merit. They felt that new

304

teachers in those days had a different mindset than new teachers did in the past, because at present new teachers were less beholden to the older, veteran teachers. In the past, the young teachers had every reason to listen to their elders and hence it was only natural that they would defer to and be solicitous of them. But now the prototypical correlations no longer held. First, young teachers had things of value to their elders, setting up an exchange rather than patron-client relationship. Moreover, in some cases the elder's experiences were deemed unsuitable for the present age, and hence not as valuable to the younger teachers.

One example of this generational upheaval that I was given related to the microcomputer revolution. Veteran teachers still have more experience in classrooms and the school, and that experience is valuable to beginning teachers. But beginning teachers are more familiar and proficient with technology, particularly computers and computer programs. This gives beginning teachers something to teach or do for the veterans, reducing some of the grounds or justification for a length-of-service hierarchy. Veteran teachers interested in tapping into this experience are by needs more solicitous of the beginning teachers than they would have to be when they as it were "held all the cards." In turn, beginning teachers feel less need to be as deferential as otherwise might be the case. The authority of the older teachers in general and the *oyabun* in particular was undermined and that of the younger teachers bolstered. So, this explanation went, younger people began to get fat heads, so to speak, viewing older teachers as less a resource than a hindrance.

Hence, among other things, they felt freer to decline their superior's invitations to after-hours *tsukiai*, if the timing were inconvenient for example.

I did not personally witness this, but it sounds likely. It fits with the theme from earlier chapters about internal divisions between incumbents and those teachers who could not get a transfer out of their school. It echoes the shifts toward merit-based personnel systems within the private sector, described by Gordon (1993:385-587) as involving a zero-sum contest between motivated but stifled young employees and veteran but less active veterans within the organization. It likewise echoes the shifts in power dynamics within three-generation households in Nagano, described by Okpyo Moon (1998), where members are arguably in a collaborative environment. In the past, when they were farm households, the elder generation held the power, but now, these households run inns to attract tourists who have come to ski. The older generation does farming, perhaps just enough for the household's use; perhaps only the grandmother has the necessary license to run the farm equipment. Moon described that the younger generation, particularly the wife, had more authority within the household than in the past, because they play a more dominant role in the household economy, one in which their elders are less able to advise them: the young speak Tōkyō dialect and are thought to better know what young tourists might want to eat or do.

11.5   Those who thought it reasonable that teachers focus on their personal lives

Some teachers thought that the expectation that they sacrifice their personal lives for work

was excessive. Saori, the union member who ultimately had quit, felt the administration deployed

the idea of self-sacrifice against teachers unreasonably. This point emerged first in her critique of

the unyielding nature of Nagasaki's transfer policy when contrasted with a more flexible one, like

Fukuoka's. Saori did not ask to choose the exact school where she would be transferred, but she

would like to have control over the general areas. When pressed, she admitted that the

administration would have a hard time meeting everyone's requests, but she thought that in

Nagasaki it was more than simply a logistical problem that led to troublesome transfers:

> In Fukuoka and other places, for the workers to do their work – if you don't support
> their family, the workers can't work just because you tell them to, can they? But in
> Nagasaki, to use an old expression – Do you know the word *'seishoku*? ['*Seishoku*'?"]
> They have *seijin*, 'saints,' you know? So they say *seishoku (*'a sacred profession, a
> saintly profession, a calling'; 聖職). That's really being emphasized now. My former
> principal himself does it. Stuff like, 'A good teacher is one who dedicates his life to
> the children, rather than concerning himself with his own body,' they're saying stuff
> like that a lot. If that's how it is, then they can say that teachers who say they can't
> go when transferred because they have their own lives to worry about are bad
> teachers. It seems to me that bit by bit, Nagasaki is moving in that direction, where
> that sort of thing can be said (FN 040219).

Although she seemed unaware of it, as shown above, the Pref. BOE used precisely this line of

reasoning during the period from 1976-1984, and particularly in its 1979 White Paper.

Saori supported her argument that the administration's thinking was heartless because it

thought asking teachers to sacrifice was good in itself with this evidence:

> Actually, at some ES in Isahaya a while back, there was this discussion of how they
> should escape if there is a fire. At that time, my friend was the HR teacher for the 3rd
> and 4th grade class. So, apparently the administrators said, 'If there is a fire, get all
> the children out, then, one more time, go back into the fire to make sure whether all
> the children have gotten out or not.' In other words, it's like they were saying, 'You,
> die.' And then, when my friend asked, 'So can we get some fireproof clothing?', they
> said no, you can't. [BPC: "No way! They said *that*?!"] And then my friend said, 'So
> if there's a fire, I have to die. What sort of a person is like that, that is supposed to
> die?!?' Of course, my friend understood that you have to make sure the children are
> OK, you have to go and look. But my friend had already gone and looked. So then
> what? My friend said all the other teachers had been nodding their heads in
> agreement with the administrators. My friend was the only one who gave any
> opinion. It was unbelievable (*osoroshii*). My friend thought, 'They don't really think
> that way in their hearts.' But nowadays in Nagasaki, people hold their tongues, it
> seems (FN 040219).

Here Saori asserted that the administration was so preoccupied with the idea that teachers should

sacrifice themselves that they expected them to give their very lives – even when doing so would

serve no purpose. By extension, the Nagasaki Pref. BOE put more value on holding to its rigid

system and asking her to sacrifice her children's happiness and future prospects than on keeping an

experienced and dedicated teacher. Not granted a transfer and unable or unwilling to sacrifice her

family's needs, she chose to quit, and so her students now were taught by a substitute teacher and

everything at the school became difficult. Was it so important that she sacrifice her family?

Shigeru, who worked at the Pref. BOE, said that the workload and pressure there were very hard on the teachers and staff. The workload was staggering and for many involved a lot of business trips, guaranteeing long nights. Many of those chosen for the Pref. BOE were high achievers who had high standards for themselves and, as a result of their drive for perfection and some structural problems which increased the bureaucratic workload of each task, ended up working long hours of overtime to make sure that what they were working on came off successfully. During his first year there Shigeru looked around in fear as he saw what he considered to be excellent professionals waste themselves away at the job. People have died from overwork, he told me. He told me the story of one man who was hospitalized from exhaustion, yet he still checked himself out of the hospital on weekends to sneak back to work on things, because he did not want his absence to create a burden for his colleagues. The issue became so bad that the Pref. BOE instituted weekly "no overtime" days, but Shigeru said this just pushed the overtime work onto other days, the weekend, and so on (*cf.* Levine 2005:363 on the failure of a media campaign supported by some government bodies to encourage full vacation-taking by Japanese workers, so that they might spend more, to the betterment of the economy). So he viewed this as more a public relations exercise than a real solution to the workload problem, which would involve, at a minimum, cutting out unnecessary paper-pushing. Shigeru was not against working hard per se, but having that work have value, having it lead to something, was his point.

309

Several teachers, including Shigeru, told me that it was just those perfectionists who were likely to become depressed or suffer a mental breakdown from "stress (*sutoresu*)," a problem teachers told me was regrettably common among the staff. One principal told me that the key was to have a sense of balance between work and leisure. He socialized with his staff and the public to a great extent, so it is hard in his case to say where personal goals end and duty and professionalism begin.

Rie, a principal who had worked at the Pref. BOE, said that members of the community want teachers but *especially* the principal to have deep roots in the community. This is very hard on the staff, because they transfer, and have families and friends, a house of their own, *etc.* somewhere else. It seems unreasonable for parents to expect this of teachers, she felt. But she herself seemed to hold principals to a higher standard than the rank-and-file teachers – she had sympathy for the rank-and-file, but criticism of her predecessor who seemed to spend too much time hiding in his office or absent from town (FN 040602).

But just as some islanders were critical of principals or of all teachers in general, others were understanding and sympathetic. One islander asked, Where should a transferee teacher be active? Their school wants them, their neighborhood wants them, their hometown has a call on them, and perhaps they are married to a teacher spouse whose school wants them. These transferees are pulled in several different directions, she said, and there are only so many hours in the day, the teachers cannot be in two places at once. Another islander told me that people in her village did not make a

point of inviting teachers – many of whom lived in one of the apartment buildings that had been

recently built – to every local activity, on the assumption that as temporary residents, they would

prefer to remain aloof from it. Not inviting them spared everyone the awkwardness of a refusal.

But, she clarified, if someone in the apartments *wanted* to participate, they were welcomed.

Along these same lines, another woman from that same village told me that she sometimes

wanted to get out of community events, such as the annual weeding day or other clean-up drives

that start early in the morning. But she knows that someone she knows will be there to notice if she

goes or not, making it awkward to get out of it. Often one of her friends form the neighborhood

would say that she doesn't want to go either, but felt the same pressure, so the two of them would

decide to go together, which would make the event more palatable.

11.6   Staving off "the end of Japan" through community involvement

This reminds us that whatever was true for teachers as a result of the improved services and

transportation network was also true for the parents of their students and for the island population

in general. Going to the mainland for day trips or short jaunts to shop, visit friends, see a movie, get

a haircut, consult a medical specialist, and so on, was something islanders, like teachers, did more

commonly through the 1990s and 2000s. Islanders, too, sought to move into more convenient

settlements. There was a waiting list of islanders seeking to get into municipal housing in such areas.

Young families bought land to build new houses in the central areas. And those who did not move

there nevertheless spent more of their time there shopping, visiting a hospital, or partaking in some

form of entertainment. Island families too had become more affluent, and they too had cars.

Because islanders themselves, particularly the younger ones, were spending more time in the island's

central settlements and the big cities on the mainland, a teacher's temporary absence from the

school district had a different meaning. There was less "a community" than in the past. Teachers

and islanders alike in Kamigotō live in a more "splintered urban" (Graham and Marvin 2001) world

than existed there before.

Some suggested that people's personal and individual rights should be better secured, with

greater accommodation for worker's personal goals and obligations, a curtailing of overtime, and so

on. Once I was visiting a former colleague who had been transferred from Kamigotō to Hirado,

and as we toured the castle I asked her if she ever thought she would like to live in the old times.

No, she answered. It was a hard time for most women. She seemed happy to move forward. And

this was not incompatible with retaining other treasured items from the past: she was a home

economics teacher, knowledgeable in cultural practices such as flower-arranging and the tea

ceremony, as well as a musician.

But others felt, like Egawa (1997), that they had lost something in the transition to car

culture, something bigger than just relationships with teachers. For example, one year, during the

annual holiday of *o-bon,* an autumn festival, my wife, daughter, and I walked to the neighborhood

graveyard to join our neighbors in paying respect to the ancestors. After we had visited all the

places deemed appropriate, we were offered a ride back to the settlement. As we walked past a line

of cars parked along the side of the mountain road, the woman who was giving us a ride remarked

that when she was young, people used to walk to the graveyard, not drive, and they would stay most

of the day, socializing and so on. After listening for a while, I asked her why she didn't just decide

to walk instead of drive. "Ah," she replied after a moment, "but I am too busy!" We all then

laughed, for she recognized that that was probably how everyone justified their use of the car, even

if they didn't like the results of everyone driving everywhere.

So some recognized the loss and felt nostalgia about past forms of community life but were

not willing to give up their conveniences. This ambivalence can be seen in the responses of

Japanese baby boomers (those born between 1947 and 1949) to a September 2006 national survey

done by the *Yomiuri Shinbun* (November 16, 2006). Although a majority of respondents were glad of

the "rise in affluence" (80%) and improvements in technology (62%), they were equally upset about

the "decline in morals" (80%) and the rising number of people who "had lost their ties" to local

communities (*chiiki shakai no tsunagari*) (57%).

Others felt there was no turning back, and that social life in Japan was moving inevitably towards greater "my homism" or "self-centeredness" or "individualism" or "selfishness" or becoming "just like America." The bursting of the economic bubble and the long Heisei recession which followed had tarnished Japan's international image and several people predicted that we were in the midst of "the end of Japan," saying things like, "Well, it's all finished up for Japan (*mō, Nihon wa naku naru yo*)." Japan was fading, China was rising.

But still others took these developments as a challenge and tried to think about and/or work in ways that would change society, or at least their little piece of it, to preserve those (romanticized?) ways of socialization associated with the past and the rural. Their varied gestures can be seen as part of a yet-disorganized sort of revitalization movement whose resonance can be seen in the broad appeal of the movie *Always – Sunset on 4th Street* (2005), a blockbuster which looks back at early postwar Tōkyō with fondness and suggests that living then may have been hard, but dreams, hope, potential, and feelings of community were in abundance. All the darkness and grittiness of, *e.g.*, Kurosawa films made in the early postwar period has been drowned out by warm, sentimental hues.

Many urban Japanese felt that their desired form of community could be found intact in rural Japan. Some went so far as to put their feet where their beliefs were, migrating to rural areas in search of these "lost," warmer, closer forms of social relations in a cleaner, more "human" natural environment. What would have been almost unthinkable in the 1960s occurred in the Heisei era, as

people with no kin connections there voluntarily settled in Kamigotō and other islands, some for

retirement (I knew of two such individuals on Kamigotō), some to make a new start (one who came

to farm – part of a "back-to-the-land," "slow life," and "slow food" movements and encouraged in

Nagasaki's case by subsidies – wrote a book about his move, Utano 1997), and some transferees and

dispatchees who desired to stay, like the teachers mentioned above (I knew one man who was sent

here to sell kimono and stayed to open his own business ventures, including restaurants and snack

bars). I found several publications devoted to this trend, including a pocket-sized guidebook on

country living and a monthly magazine, *Country Living Book* (*Inaka kurashi no hon*). Besides containing

lovely pictures, profiles, and tips, this magazine has a letters section. The letter below is one of the

least romantic of the bunch (*Inaka kurashi no hon,* August 2003, pp. 140-142):

Full of courage, I'd like to jump into country life

Currently I am thinking about moving with my husband to a rural mountain place in Wakayama or Nara. Partly because I have slight dermatitis and would like to move to a place where the air, the trees, and the food are good, and both my husband I would like to do jobs where we can work our bodies hard, if we could do that in the middle of nature, we think it would be perfect.

When I was first thinking about moving to the country, the big part of my dream was the jobs we'd have, the house we'd live in, living in the middle of nature, something very far from what we're doing at present. On the weekends we went around countless times to see various places where we might move, and while we were contacting the various welcome (UJI turn) institutions and so on, our image of what life in the country at present is really like changed. A tile-roofed home, or one beside a well -- for me now, what kind of house it is doesn't matter.

I always hear that country people are closed and they seek deep relationships, but even so I'd like to try jumping into that environment. My thinking now has become,

315

without over-idealizing country living, what sort of life would I have in such a place?
Because I'm only 24 years old, you might say this is just youth talking, but if I can't make it
there, then I can just move to a different place or return to the city, and so I think I want to
give it a try.

<div align="right">Yamamoto Rika, Ōsaka Prefecture</div>

These letters show a focus on living within nature and on a more human scale, with less hustle and bustle. Other letters link country life more explicitly to stronger and deeper social relationships, presenting a connection between physical health and social health.

The Master of another *yakitori* bar-restaurant told me that he gets letters from some teachers who had transferred off the island, saying, "Oh, I am lonely now, there is no one to go out with." These teachers found in the outer islands people who had or made the time to socialize regularly with their neighbors, and found this largely missing from the city.

When I discussed with Ichirō, one of the *oyabun* praised by the Master, the perceived drop in teacher involvement, he stressed that to be active like he had been took the willingness to do so but also the money and the time. At the time he had been older and unmarried, so he had both of the latter. That said: even after Ichirō left the island, married, and had children, he and a few of his *kobun* – who themselves had become married with children – made themselves free whenever I came to the mainland, and I learned that this smaller core group still socialized rather regularly, if not as regularly and with as many members as they had when on Kamigotō. Another member of his clique, however, thanked me for coming to the mainland, explaining, "We don't get together like this

all the time." My arrival was a special occasion, like a wedding reception, which made the get-

together of many of them from disparate locations important.

The urban, connected world gives people more choices, and where consensus had existed

around a few "mass culture" objects, now there is splintering among a proliferation of microniches.

Affluence and an overabundance of choice are thus the enemy of consensus. The appeal of rural

and historical Japan is tied to the idea of a simpler time, but also simpler in that – at least as it is

imagined – people had fewer choices so greater numbers would engage in similar things.

Okamura Masayoshi, an ES teacher who at the time was working in Matsuura City, Nagasaki

Prefecture, found a model way of living remembered from his past (b. 1966 or 1967) when he was

transferred from the mainland to Tsushima in the early 1990s. He wrote about "A House Where

People Drop In" for the public opinion pages of the *Nagasaki Shinbun* in October 2004:

> "Hey, you've come over! Good to see you! You have to stay for a drink!" My late
> father-in-law would always say something like this when someone went over for a bit of fun,
> entertaining whomever dropped by. In my father-in-law's house it seemed like there were
> guests over every day, and I remember it had an atmosphere where, if you came over, you
> could always drink delicious sake and you could feel your cares just naturally slipping away.
>
> When I was child, it seems like there were many "houses where people drop by (*hito
> no yoru ie*)." What I often saw were scenes like in the TV shows, where people go out for a
> drink somewhere outside the home, then one person invites his colleagues or friends over to
> his house until late in the evening, and the wife is having a hard time looking after them.
> Under these social conditions (*sesō*), for the husband of that house, his house (*ie*) is a
> precious thing, representing himself, so no matter the cost he wants his close friends to
> come and be his guests.

In Tsushima, where I was previously posted, there were a number of such houses. For the wives who do the entertaining it was probably tough, but they did not show the slightest hint of it. Rather, one was allowed to think that they were happily waiting on their guests. I myself would stay there without restraint, and although I ought to have known better, often without thinking I'd find that I'd stayed there a long time.

At present, it seems that the number of houses where one feels an atmosphere that repels outsiders has increased. Even when someone pays you a visit, you entertain them in the doorway (*genkan*), without inviting them to come inside (*ie ni agaru*), so that you can finish your business. Almost everywhere, nuclear families have become the mainstream, privacy (*puraibashī*) is emphasized, and houses have, alas, become for isolated (*koritsu*) families "the one place where we protect our territory (*ryōiki*)." Am I the only one who feels this way?

A house is the place where the family lives, but at the same time it is also a place where people gather together (*tsudō*). A house that welcomes guests (*kangei*) has an atmosphere that is warm, open, and inviting. It makes others feel, "I want to go there again." We built our house, our heart's desire, last year. I want to try to make it a house with a warm atmosphere, a place like my father-in-law's house, where one can relax (*ochitsukeru*), a place where even children or first-time visitors find it easy to drop by. Of course to do this, the most important things are to polish my human nature and to pile up every day heart-full get-togethers (*tsukiai*) with many people from the area (Okamura 2004).

Why there would be larger number of such houses in Tsushima (and I am lucky enough to have enjoyed the hospitality of such houses during my years in Kamigotō) is related to the relatively fewer alternative spaces for socializing and limitations in transportation.

In the cases Okamura observed – in the past, in rural villages, and on television – the wives of those households were probably full-time homemakers. Now having such a house need not depend on having a wife to work behind the scenes: the lack of a wife did not stop Ichirō from having guests over; indeed, he suggested it actually helped him to be a greater host – although it also propelled him into Toraya and other restaurants. And yet, at Ichirō's, when female teachers were at

the party, they frequently took over the cooking duties. In the case of Rie's head teacher, his wife

retired when he was promoted, and that enabled their home to host the public regularly.

I hazard a guess that the gender division of labor is not stark in Okamura's household.

Nevertheless, Okamura suspects having such a house would meant that his wife would end up doing

most of the cooking and other work in the kitchen that helps make the party run. I wonder if

Okamura's wife would like to have this type of a house. I was reminded here of Osaki, the softball

coach whose desire to be close to the students obliged his *wife's* sacrifice –to live in Tomie, next to

the school, rather than in Fukue, the most convenient place to live.

In order to attain deeper and more time-intensive relationships with their fellows and

neighbors, some recognized they must, like Luddites, divest themselves of new freedoms of time,

association, and mobility, giving up the choices they had not had in the old environment in a

romantic quest to return to a simpler yet richer way of life. I think this idea of gaining through

sacrifice is what fuels the "volunteerism" trend which has proliferated in the wake of the earthquake

which struck the Kobe area in 1994 (Nakano 2005, 2000).

We can see these ideas on a small scale in the case of a local ensemble group which had

experienced a decline in membership, member attendance at practices, and socializing from its

heyday in the 1990s. In the 1990s, commitment to the ensemble was so high that a third practice

night had been added. Even if busy, a member would come for at least a little while – often the

latter half of practice, which is when the performances were worked on, rather than the former half, which was devoted more to warm-up and skill-building exercises. Over time, however, "coming late" became more common, so that instead of having most of the group on hand to help newer members, only a few were, with the other higher talent members coming later. These "latecomers" unintentionally were acting as *primae donnae,* both setting a bad example for the newer members and putting a burden on those who had come on time, who now bore the brunt of the instructing and were less able to practice themselves. The focus shifted from the regular meetings of the ensemble to the occasional performances by the ensemble. On some practice nights when there was no performance scheduled, only two or three members showed. Someone considering joining the ensemble in order to make friends who came on such a night might not think it would be very fun.

Norimasa, like Ichirō, sacrificed a lot of his own time and money to keep the ensemble running. He had put a lot of thought into what might help it grow again. This involved reflecting on what had made it thrive in the first place. His proposed solution was to promote whole-group interaction. If people got to know each other better and like each other's company more, he reasoned, they would come to practice more, and the entire ensemble experience would be more enjoyable. So one of his ideas was to cut the number of practice nights back down to the original two nights per week, so that each night would be better attended, hence more enjoyable.

Socializing after practice was very important, Norimasa felt. When the ensemble was thriving, it socialized frequently. Once a week, and sometimes more, members went to a bar after practice for snacks and drinks – tea, coffee, juice, or other non-alcoholic drinks because everyone was driving. On a few occasions they just met at someone's apartment for a "home party." Perhaps once every two months the ensemble would have a dinner party, with members getting together at a restaurant for a feast, followed by a trip to sing karaoke at a snack bar. The members spent a lot of time getting to know one another, which made it more enjoyable for them to go to practice.

In the 2000s, however, several events occurred which changed the nature of the socializing. First, many of the public servant members – teachers and other government employees – were transferred off Kamigotō. These transfers kept cutting into the core members until most of the core that remained were islanders not subject to transfer. To keep the numbers up, new members would have to be recruited, and many of those interested in joining were younger, in their twenties, as the original members had been. Second, the number of restaurants had grown, so the ensemble had a greater number of options as to where to socialize. Third, the core group had progressed in their careers and so could afford to hold the parties at nicer but more expensive restaurants.

Norimasa observed that the newer, younger members were not coming to the parties as often as the older members had in the past. He realized that socializing at the better restaurants put a financial burden on the younger members of the group. The large dinner parties used to cost

about 2,000 yen a person, but now were about 5,000. "Is this a bit expensive for you?" he asked one of the younger members, and that member concurred that it was. Norimasa thought the ensemble should return the focus to the drinking and talking – after all, he explained, it's a *nomikai* (literally, "drinking party"), not a *tabekai* ("eating party"). You do not need to have a gorgeous meal every time. Save that for special occasions. For other get-togethers, how about starting later, say at 7 PM, and meeting just for drinks and appetizers? That way, people would have time to eat a meal at home first if they choose, keeping costs down. It's not that he doesn't appreciate good food. But the most important thing is the quantity of time the ensemble spends together, not the quality of food they eat while doing so.

An ensemble party should be about the ensemble. That means doing things in such a way that everyone in it can join in. It also meant prioritizing the whole ensemble, rather than self-centered pursuits. The most "extreme" example of this logic at play was when the ensemble went to the mainland to perform in the 1990s. Although some of the members were romantically involved at the time, when hotel reservations were made, each member was put into a single room. The point was that this was not a romantic getaway, but an ensemble trip, so that should be the main focus. Having the couples "blatantly" romancing would detract from the group ethos, so such internal alignments, which could be fault lines, should be kept out of sight.

The principle that minimizing differences between ensemble members would promote whole-group interaction, leading to greater cohesion and camaraderie, showed itself with respect to teachers too. Although the ensemble has always contained a fair number of teachers, there was an unwritten rule to address all members as –*san* rather than using –*sensei* for the teachers, as otherwise would be common practice, so as to remove any externally-based hierarchies. Likewise, teachers consciously limited their "shop talk" when out with the group, because non-teacher members would not be able to freely join in such conversation. Once in the 1990s I brought up a too-insular topic with my work colleague, also a member, and she quietly suggested we talk about it after practice.

In the 2000s, however, a novel dynamic emerged: some young women joined right after graduation from SHS, having been recruited by one of their SHS teachers who was already a member. Perhaps out of a desire to look after them, as a good teacher would, this SHS teacher allowed his former students to congregate near him during dinner parties. This had the unfortunate effect of undermining the whole-group ethos by allowing insular conversations to flourish, in effect creating a mini-clique within an already diminished group, and one in which it seemed natural to address their former teacher as –*sensei*. Norimasa did not blame the young women. He felt that the SHS teacher, as the older party, had a responsibility to encourage them to mingle with the other members, or rather to discourage them from congregating around him and talking about their fellow

classmates and other very inside matters, for the sake of the group as a whole. Contrast this with

the self-sacrifice and accommodation to others shown by Nagayuki (*q.v.*).

To get back to the "group-first" mentality, Norimasa felt it would help to re-institute some

of the whole-group basic-skill-building activities that members had gotten away from as their talent

had grown and attendance became less regular.

Norimasa made a very shrewd observation about beverages which summed up his approach.

In the 1990s, the restaurant where the ensemble held its parties served its guests crates of bottled

beer, bottles of juice and tea, and large bottles of *sake* and *shōchū,* a clear liquor similar to vodka. In

the 2000s, the better restaurant served mugs of draft beer and glasses of soft drinks or juice. Bottles

of *shōchū* and *sake* were still served, but they were of finer quality and smaller; and one could even

order an individual-sized bottle of *sake.* In the 1990s, there were few options, and once a decision

was made on, for example, what brand of beer to order, the whole group would basically be

committed, at least until that crate had been finished.   One did not drink from one's own personal

bottle, but, in typical fashion, took turns pouring drinks from one of the common bottles into the

glasses of one's fellows and receiving pours. A thoughtful person would be aware of the state of

one's fellows' glasses, offering to fill it up if it grew too low. Each pour was an occasion to initiate a

conversation, to express gratitude, and so on. By contrast, in the 2000s individuals had many

options and were free to choose the beverage that suited their fancy, as mugs and glasses and so on

were personal. But, Norimasa noted, this meant that one interacted more with the Mama or the

Master, the person one was ordering from, than with one's fellows. So even a small thing like

returning to bottled beer might help bring the members closer, he thought.

If affluence, technological and infrastructural developments, and more extensive connections

with the rest of the world had created more options, leading to a weakening of social relationships

and less convergence, one way for people to regain those strong relationships is to divest themselves

of the options those advances had brought – drink bottled rather than draft beer; feast on the

budget of a 20-year-old rather than that of a 40-year-old; give up privacy to act as a generous host –

sacrificing individual comfort and preferences in order to lead a "common" life.

Having an active group was one part of his solution to the problem of falling membership.

Norimasa also actively recruited any and all comers. He enjoyed bringing in beginners and helping

them learn, but was sad to see so many members leave just as their level of skill had risen. As these

skilled members were replaced by another crop of beginners, the overall level of the ensemble failed

to blossom. Norimasa worried that if the overall competence of the ensemble remained at the same

level, even the locals would grow tired of attending practice and might decide to leave.

So he told me that he was particularly hoping that islander men would join the band: *men*,

because many of the good women members in the past had been single and after they got married

or started a family they would quit; *islanders*, because many of the good men and women members in

the past – which included many teachers – had been transferred off the island, likely never to return

on a regular basis. Of the current membership, the most dependable attendees were mostly islander

men – two of whom commuted for about forty minutes to get to practice. So he thought that with

islander men he could have a larger, more dependable core membership.

This points to a problem public school teachers face. They are professionally expected to

dive into community life and may even be asked by the government to play a major role in these

civil society or volunteer group activities (Nakano 2005). And they may be eager to be involved.

Yet the revitalization movements emphasize localism: neighborhoods, the home. These forms of

sociality entail the sort of socializing that stands in contrast to the transience required of the public

school teacher transferee. The transient teacher is pushed and pulled by these competing ideologies

in a continuation of the debate between the unions and the Pref. BOE summarized in Chapter 5, to

be committed but flexible and mobile, to be unselfishly willing to sacrifice the private for the public.

11.7 Summary

Public school teachers are expected as public servants to sacrifice their personal lives for the

sake of the public they serve. Teachers have a strong sense of professionalism but separating from

family for the sake of work is not a decision they make painlessly. Teachers increasingly can avoid

or minimize separations by commuting from or frequently returning home, but doing so leaves them

vulnerable to criticism from parents and others who expect a greater amount of involvement from

them. Criticism of their decisions related to the public/private and work/family balance is part of a

broader debate within Japan about the health and future of the nation.

In the mid-2000s, the nation was still reeling from a decade-long recession which had

tarnished Japan's international image, revealed long-term economic weaknesses, and raised alarm

internally. That decade had witnessed a terrorist attack on a crowded subway car by a religious cult;

a devastating earthquake in one of the most populated areas of the country; and a seeming wave of

child-child or school-centered violence.

As Japan struggles to regain its footing, various trends have appeared which are animated by

a desire to "return" to "older" forms of sociality, when affluence and technological developments

did not (apparently) get in the way of forming deep human relationships with one's neighbors,

friends, and family. The terms of the debate about how to keep Japan vital have remained

consistent: on the question of the place of the individual and the group, pro-individual values still

have a strong negative connotation, akin to selfishness, whereas pro-group values still receive praise,

even as teachers and average citizens alike do not always live up to these values. The same ideas that

feed the "voluntarism" movement (and motivated the government to become involved in

volunteering and in civil society generally) and the "slow food" movement are ones which lead those

involved in education to seek to have teachers sacrifice their personal and private comforts and

return to the role of "neighbor extraordinaire," leading the way to a future where children grow up

strong, healthy, academically prepared, socially well-adjusted (non-violent), able to hold their own in

a competitive world, and ready to contribute to the work of nation-building at home.

Part IV: Conclusion

12. Conclusion

In postwar Japan, men and women public school teachers have long been asked to perform the same duties in terms of teaching courses, leading homerooms, serving on committees, interacting with parents, and accepting transfers and relocations. But they respond to this "on-paper" gender-blind work environment in a way which reflects what I have been calling "traditional" gender concepts: that women are primarily responsible for homemaking and men for breadwinning.

This is revealed in a number of ways. At the schools men are expected to take on greater work responsibilities, particularly those requiring after-hours commitments, whereas women are permitted and expected to leave "on time" so as to allow them to take up their "second shift" of homemaking responsibilities. Although both choose to relocate alone rather than disrupt a child's education or a parent's elder care, women feel their absence from the home is a burden on others, so tend to race home often, whereas men feel their presence in the home is disruptive to others, so tend to "tough it out" without returning much. And if the family is threatened by the parents' absence from home due to work, the woman is the one expected to quit. "Gender-blind" policies

permit men and women to combine work and family, but men's and women's gender concepts

continue to shape how they balance these sometimes competing commitments and goals.

These findings show that equalizing workforce participation does not lead to changes in

concepts of work and gender, nor to a diminishment of gender's significance, even when work

policies are "gender-blind." Culture can persist despite social and legal changes. Hence, culture

must be taken into account when designing policy, whether for the workplace or for society at large.

12.1   Final thoughts on transferring and an avenue for future study

I am often asked my personal opinion about the Wide Area policy. From the perspective of

the students, I like that rural and urban school districts alike have a chance at good teachers. I also

like that teachers are not stuck in the most difficult schools in terms of behavior problems or

academic achievement for their entire careers. And I recognize that a system of voluntary transfers

cannot achieve these goals. To equalize opportunity for students by circulating talent among

districts, and to equalize opportunity for staff by circulating challenges and hardships among

teachers, the transfer policy must be structured and someone must have to have the authority to

move teachers.

My initial concern was that a mandatory transfer system would be too hard on the teachers, too large a sacrifice to ask of them and their families. Prior to my research, I did not see how it could be in their interests to have such a momentous and disruptive decision ultimately out of their hands. That is to say, I thought that having a compulsory system could not be in their "true interests" as employees, even if they benefitted from it as citizens.

When I found that men and women teachers alike said they preferred having transfers to eliminating them, I was surprised they cast its benefits in personal (including professional) terms, rather than in terms of the benefits to society. The benefits they spoke of – becoming refreshed, not working with unpleasant people, avoiding ruts – struck me as so trivial that I wondered if they were just being polite, were trying to cast a favorable impression based on what they thought I or the general public expected of teachers (*cf.* Hammel 1990; Ochs and Capps 1990; Strauss 1992, 2005), or had a cultural bias against conflict after all (*cf.* Turner 1995:124 where a Japanese protester says that giving up gracefully is a national trait). Another possibility I considered was that they were afraid to complain about the transfer system, let alone oppose it, because the consequences of blatant defiance are too severe; if I were observant, however, I might find expressions of *resistance* which proved this (Scott 2005).

The problem with these interpretations is that they do not account for what teachers do when it is hard to live outside the school district, as it is for teachers transferred to an island. In

those circumstances, teachers devote themselves more to after-hours work and work-related socializing in the school district, and report pride and self-satisfaction at doing so – just as those who do not report feeling guilt (in the 1980s, even self-loathing). This suggests that the professional ideals and other concepts which undergird the acceptance of compulsory transfers are internalized and motivational, although they do not always rank first among all a teacher's goals.

That teachers had internalized concepts which made acceptable such negatives as living apart from family for four years or more at all made me wonder if I was witnessing a case of hegemony, with their very thoughts and motivations having been coerced and shaped – in this case, by administrators, the Pref. BOE, the Ministry of Education, the ruling class, or even men who hold "traditional" gender concepts – all of whom benefit in some way from teacher acceptance and quiescence of the compulsory transfer system and the ideas about teachers, public servants, prefectural employees, and professionals which undergird that acceptance and quiescence (Gaventa 1980, Kurtz 1996, Lears 1985). The evidence for this interpretation grew as I learned that in the past, when teachers had more political clout, they fought hard to preserve a system based on consent and an understanding of their profession that celebrated the development of deep local ties, not mobility. This shows that it would be wrong to attribute their quiescence to some "natural" or "ethnic" propensity toward "groupism," "a preference for conformity," "a desire to endure problems and to accept failure gracefully." New teachers frequently did not enjoy their first

transfers or relocations, although they eventually became acclimated to this level of mobility through repeated (successfully managed) experiences with transfers (*cf.* Turner 1995 on worker consciousness and Strauss 1992, 2005 on personal semantic networks).

The problem with this interpretation is that teachers' support of the Wide Area transfer system was and is not based on obfuscation or the masking of the Pref. BOE's plans or means of control from teachers. Teachers already know the problems associated with transfers and relocation and veteran teachers often had experienced an untimely transfer firsthand. When I asked, teachers freely discussed in negative terms the problems untimely transfers caused them, and they knew of others who had experienced bad transfers, so clearly they discussed them with other teachers. Though the actual decision-making was hidden to them, teachers know that ultimately the Pref. BOE is responsible for transfer decisions and policy, so had at least one clear political target. The point is that they do not choose to fight the policy nor resist the definitions of what a teacher or a professional is.

Now I see that my original framework – based on an assumption of teachers' "true interests," hegemony, and fearing the worst transfer outcome more than hoping for the best – was too simple, presumptuous, and downbeat. I came to accept that teachers find nontrivial benefits in transferring, in having the transfer system be compulsory, and in following professional standards even when they are onerous.

Teachers' motivation for accepting the professional identity which obliges them to accept

transfers, long hours, and time-consuming social obligations is the same as other professionals: to

gain benefits like pride, pleasure, self-worth, legitimate authority over parents and students, and an

exclusive right to make money from the given activity (Wilensky 1964, Foucault 1980, Kondo 1990,

Bartlett 2004). Paying these costs is what distinguishes professionals from non-professionals and

shows commitment and dedication to clients, customers, and the organization. In a sense, for

professionals, being exploited by work (in a certain way) is a mark of distinction (Lewis 2007:6-7, 10;

Kondo 1990:199-224). Beyond this, I found that transferring conferred specific benefits. In the

1970s, the main benefit was that it gave dispatch and other island teachers a guaranteed exit. In the

2000s, the benefits were that it promoted professional development, helped teachers escape

professionally and personally unwelcome social settings, and allowed teachers to modulate their

amount of after-hours work and work-related socializing. Teachers justified curtailing such after-

hours work with reference to compulsory transfers, sheltering them from criticism that by curtailing

that work they are shirking their professional duty. Each new transfer gives them an opportunity to

reset the amount to one which better suits their work and family goals and commitments at the time.

The larger point here is this: the mere fact that the Pref. BOE gains a benefit from teachers'

beliefs does not make this a case of subjugation. Rather than see power as *power over* another, as

proponents of the *hegemony* and *resistance* frameworks do, other theorists such as Parsons, Arendt,

335

Foucault, and Bourdieu see power as *power to* do something, a capacity, a resource, a type of capital (Bourdieu 1977, 1990; Foucault 1980; Brown 1996; Haugaard 2009:242-244; Jenkins 2009). Foucault (1980) said that if people allow ideas to motivate them, then they must find those ideas attractive, useful, pleasurable. Abu-Lughod (1990) built on this insight to reinvigorate the study of power and ideology (the subject matter of the hegemony and resistance literature) by showing how people adopt ideas and practices to help them fight a given political adversary but as a result end up in a weak relationship with a third party. So a principal virtue of this framework is that it rightly forces us to study on-the-ground meaning when trying to analyze motivations and actions with "political-economic" implications – an area of inquiry to which resistance theory in particular has been accused of giving short-shrift (Brown 1996; Fletcher 2001; Mitchell 1990; Ortner 1995, 1997). It is the meaning that we need, because purely social or psychological explanations of motivations – such as desires or drives to please one's reference group, be in alignment with peers, or create and maintain a good reputation – are too general to explain motivation in a given situation (Bartlett 2004; Hammel 1990; Strauss 1992, 2005).

I would like the transfer system to keep its advantages while becoming less disruptive to teachers' lives. One way would be for it to become less structured, but I believe a heavily structured policy is less prone to abuse than one where the authority's power is unfettered. That leaves changing the requirements and the way they are implemented. I believe the BOE's recategorization

of SHSs by desirability and limiting of the number of required cross-category transfers will help, and

I hope they do something similar in with ESs and JHSs. The redrawing of the "main work areas" as

a result of the municipal amalgamations should help, too. One action they have not tried is earlier

notification of transfers. I think that would ease the disruption to teachers' lives still further, but

there are many who feel doing so would prove too distracting for teachers, students, and parents.

As for the work environment being structured by "traditional" gender concepts, needless to

say not everyone finds this advantageous, because neither "women teachers" nor "men teachers" is

a monolithic category with a single common "gender interest" with respect to transfers or work

identities generally. It helps women teachers who accept primary responsibility for family more

easily meet both work and family obligations, making it easier overall for women to combine work

and family. It helps men interested in advancement by giving them greater access to prestige and

pay. It helps administrators by giving them a clear principle to use in assigning posts and teachers a

clear argument to make as to why women should receive merciful assignments. But it disadvantages

women who have higher work ambitions and men who wish to spend more time with their families

or in their own pursuits. Working for a supportive principal or head teacher or finding a supportive

mentor can help these teachers reach their goals. Change in this area can be helped along by

"outside" shifts (demographic, technological, political, economic, etc.) which make it easier for

professionals to reach a higher priority goal (such as having both career and family, which grew in

popularity alongside improvements in transportation, pay, and an increase in transfers creating a new pattern). For example, it seems that in the 2000s, as the transportation to the outer islands has improved, more men teachers are making "heroic" returns – not just women.

I am also asked whether it would be possible to implement such a policy in America. First, there might have to be a re-appraisal of the merits of transferring. Rochelle Koop, a consultant to Japanese companies in America, gives logical reasons why transferring can be bad for business. But my study shows that transfers can be good for workers and organizations. They can be structured so as to maintain social capital and local knowledge. Employees' productivity and job satisfaction can improve with a transfer, even when it is not accompanied with a promotion. Having clearly stated policies with fixed terms makes it easier for employees to endure relocations and to fit transfers into their lives, as does good transportation and enhanced communication technologies.

A major factor in teachers' acceptance of transfers and relocations is their work concept: they think it their duty as public servants and prefectural employees. Having a sense of professional duty requiring sacrifice of one's personal life is not limited to public servants, though. This raises the question: Given that the professional identity in many fields is tied to a service-ethic and overwork ideal which makes it hard to set a work-family boundary as desired and maintain private time and space, would all transferees, public and private sector, Japanese and non-Japanese, find similar advantages in such a system?

Comparing transfers in Japan and another country would reveal whether the policy could have such advantages even with different ideological and social supports. I would examine this through study of the health care industry in Japan, the U.S., and another country. The health care industry has many features which make it useful for comparative study. Like teaching, it is attractive to men and women, has a broad public service component, and provides services which in principal should be available to every citizen. Like the Nagasaki school system, some locations are more desirable than others. And like the private sector, the profit motive is involved, albeit in different ways in different countries. Such differences are well-documented in the large secondary literature.

If such a study confirmed that transfers in general had these advantages and that the disadvantages of transferring could be minimized, it would help government and other entities successfully provide public services in such fields as education and health care more equitably across a variegated landscape. We might learn that in the United States a mandatory transfer scheme might help teachers in the worst-performing schools avoid burning out or bring medical services to rural communities desperately in need of them.

End Matter

APPENDIX A: Research Methods

Primary data for this dissertation was collected in 2003-2005 from interviews, field

observations, and surveys, plus Japanese fiction and non-fiction books, newspapers, newsletters,

academic journals, policy statements, pamphlets, government records and statistical reports, and web

sites. I also relied on materials gathered and contacts and memories made during 1994-1997, when I

worked as an Assistant Language Teacher on the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program in

the public schools of the Kamigotō Islands of Nagasaki Prefecture.

Field site and sampling. Given the nature of Nagasaki's policy, transferring and transfers

involving relocation are most common on the outer islands. So in order to listen to teachers talk

about their transfers and observe them at times and events related to transferring, so as to learn how

transferring had affected and was affecting their work and private lives, I returned to Kamigotō,

which I knew well and had friends, family, and professional contacts.

Kamigotō, like the other larger islands in Nagasaki, has multiple elementary, junior, and

senior high schools, which gave some diversity to the teachers' experience. Elementary and junior

high school teachers had "main work areas" within which they could expect to spend most of their careers, whereas senior high school teachers do not. Junior and senior high school teachers are differentiated by academic subject, whereas elementary school teachers are not. Elementary schools can be found in some of the most remote areas, whereas the larger schools tend to be in the most central and convenient locations. From prior experience I knew that the size, location, academic intensity, and amount of disciplinary problems influenced a teachers' experience at a school. Having multiple schools also increased the likelihood that I could meet a teacher-teacher couple. Most teachers are not natives, so they did not have kin present.

Like the rest of Nagasaki's outer islands, staff turnover in the public schools is heavy and constant. For example: by September 2003, when I began my fieldwork, 67 of the 70 SHS teachers and staff with whom I had worked in the 1997-98 school year had either retired or left Kamigotō and were working on the mainland – a 96% turnover in just six years. Two years later, there would be only the custodian, born and raised on the island and the only person who had been on the staff when I started in August 1994. Basing myself in Kamigotō, with its greater number of schools, increased the number of transfers I would have a chance to witness, discuss, and hear discussed.

Because my goal was to understand how transfers revealed the work-private life dilemma teachers faced, and how that would reveal concepts of gender and work, I looked for teachers in certain circumstances. Interviewing female transferees was a priority, because the story of female

342

transferees is relatively less known. I also aimed for variety in age and marital status. I sought out

union members, those who were administrators or administrator-track, those who were from the

town in which they worked and those from elsewhere (urban, suburban, and rural areas). I wanted

teachers whose spouses were full-time homemakers, teachers, other type of local public servants,

and in the private sector. I searched for individuals who had left teaching on account of transfers,

but I only could interview a few such individuals. I therefore supplemented my firsthand research

by using information on those who quit from various printed sources. Finally, because I thought

having a finite cast of characters and a controlled context would help me interpret my interview and

observation-based data, I collected a 100% sample from one medium-sized island elementary

school. Mainly what this showed me was how diverse a staff is and how fleeting a given

configuration of staff is.

In the end, I interviewed more than fifty public school staff: over forty from ESs and JHSs

and over a dozen from SHSs, roughly half men and half women. Most were from Kamigotō.

Because I did not take a random sample, I cannot argue on statistical grounds that what I learned

represents what I might have learned a random collection of teachers, but I feel, based on six years

of living in Japan – most of it in Nagasaki among teachers – and on overlap with other findings (*e.g.*

Kinney 1998) that my findings can be generalized.

Interviews. The interviews were semi-structured. I had a list of eight questions or themes

that I wanted to cover with each person, but once a topic was opened I generally followed their lead.

I began with a life history approach common in studies of migrants and mobility (*e.g.* Gmelch 1992,

Gmelch 1986, Grasmuck and Pessar 1991), asking about their (1) birthdate; (2) birthplace; (3) birth

order / number of siblings; (4) parents (job, residence); (5) "When and why did you wish to become

a teacher / work in education?"; (6) a discussion of their posts, generally in order – and for each, (a)

dates and length of stay, (b) type(s) of residence during stay, (c) features of and feelings about the

post and surrounding area (geographical, social, etc.), (d) notable events in their lives at the time (e.g.

marriage, childbirth, health-related), and (e) requested transfers and attitude toward transfer (timing,

destination). After the abbreviated life history portion, I asked them to evaluate the transfer policy,

(7) gathering a free list of good and bad points associated with transfers and (8) asking them whether

they thought it was better to have transfers or not. Besides those eight topics, which I asked of all

interviewees, there were other topics or themes which I hoped to have discussed. These changed

over the course of the project as I learned more. If that particular theme did not emerge "naturally"

during the interview, I sometimes brought it up at the end.

In most cases I interviewed each subject once. In a few cases I had multiple interviews, but

more often subsequent conversations were spur-of-the-moment. Each interview lasted anywhere

from twenty minutes to over three hours, but typically they ran about an hour to an hour and a half

in length. All interviewees were told that the interviews were for research purposes; that I would use

a pseudonym rather than their real name; and that they could end the interview at any time and skip

any question or topic. When permission was granted, I recorded the interviews on cassette tape; all

recorded interviews were subsequently digitized (using CoolEdit Pro, now part of Adobe); full

transcriptions were made of about a quarter of these, either by my wife or me. Those that were not

recorded were entered into fieldnotes as soon as possible after the interview.

Aside from my interviews with those in Nagasaki's public school system, I interviewed or

spoke with staff at private schools in Nagasaki; public servants in Nagasaki who were not teachers

(nor married to one); private sector transferees; and parents, guardians, proprietors of restaurants

and other businesses serving transferees.

Observation. Observations were made difficult by my living arrangements. During 1994-

1997, I had lived in school staff housing in one of the town's central settlements, but during 2003-

2005 I lived in a rented house in a smaller, sleepier fishing village somewhat removed from the

central settlements. The house I rented was a tile-roofed, two-storey building with an earthen

potato cellar under the first floor tatami mats, a pit toilet, concrete flooring in the bathroom and

kitchen, two small external gas tanks to heat water for bathing and cooking, red-eyed spiders the size

of a child's hand, and fanged centipedes 8 inches long. But it also had a broadband connection.

In this village there is no school and only a few current and former local-born teachers, so I often travelled to other parts of the island – by bus (which ran roughly once or twice an hour between the hours of 5:30 AM and 7 PM), taxi (a one-way trip to the central settlements cost roughly $25), car, or on foot (for an hour or more). To compensate for not having a home to anchor my perambulations in the central settlements, I became a regular at coffee shops and the public library. I got to hear local gossip this way, as others got to learn about me and my research.

Because of those living arrangements and a lack of a local institutional affiliation, chances to casually observe and meet teachers and their families were more limited than what I had hoped for, which meant that interviewing became a larger component of my research. I became a regular member of a local cultural circle and did some tutoring to broaden my reach. I also gave some guest lessons and lectures in the community, and I attended school events that were open to the public. My best luck came at the end of my fieldwork, in mid-2005, when I was hired as a temporary non-JET Assistant Language Teacher. I worked in five different schools, in the process making important contacts and valued friendships.

Having family, friends, and other contacts on the island was at times a blessing and at times a curse. It was a blessing in that people set up introductions for me, vouched for me, remembered things to tell me, and so on. It was a curse in that I could rarely observe surreptitiously. For example, one March day after the transfers had been announced I went to a major port to observe

teachers arriving or departing to meet their new principals or head teachers, scout for housing, and

so on. I planned to act like a fly on the wall, watching people, counting the number of passengers,

listening in on conversations if possible. It was a disaster! Fifteen minutes before each arrival,

someone I knew – not a teacher – would show up (waiting to take the ship to the mainland), spot

me, and then (politely) engage me in conversation until the ship departed. Realizing I was too

concerned about my relationships with them to chase them off, I eventually gave up.

Positionality. If the anthropologist is the research instrument, then there is much to be

said for engaging a problem over a long period of time. My thinking about transfers grew more

complex as different things happened in my own life.

I was drawn to this project during my time working in the Kamigotō islands on the JET

Program. I had not studied Japanese language or society prior to my arrival in August 1994, so

things were still sketchy when one March day I learned that over a dozen of my co-workers were to

leave the school at the end of the year. Since some had come to the staff room in tears, I presumed

that they could only have been fired, which was utterly shocking: that group included some of the

most dedicated members of the staff. It was soon explained to me that they had only been

transferred, and that this happens every year. But if my co-workers treated it as an un-extraordinary

occurrence, it was nothing of the kind for me. The farewell parties, private goodbyes, exchange of

gifts, tears, grand seeing-off at the port – these made a terrible impression on me. And that it was all

compacted into a two-week period, in which teachers had to move out of their apartments and homes and find new ones, all the while preparing to meet a whole new set of students and co-workers, seemed nothing short of cruel. I have always thought I would be a teacher of some kind. If I had been a teacher in Nagasaki, this would be my life. What kind of life would that be?

I could see that teachers were affected emotionally by transfers. So I presumed that teachers hated being forced to leave a place and a set of friends they had grown to love and that they would therefore scorn the policy which forced them to do so. That my parents had divorced when I was young undoubtedly contributed to this perception. So too did my own situation at the time. As a single person on the JET Program, faced with a three-year maximum rule that forced me to leave behind a job and a town I had come to love – not to mention my fiancée – for the uncertainties of the job market, I viewed transfers with those eyes: transfers pull you away from safety and warmth and happiness, into a chancy vortex, regardless of how well or how poorly you performed your job. Later on, I came to appreciate that transferees were not moving into a financially precarious position as I had been at the end of the JET Program, and that soft landing could make the moves less fraught. But I soon experienced how what might be a career neutral or positive move for me could entail problems for my wife's career. By the time I got to the field to begin data collection, I had already seen how moving for my career had obliged my wife to abandon her job – three times over. When my fieldwork was coming to a close, I had to consider the potential effects of a move on our

daughter, who had grown up in Kamigotō among family and friends, breathing fresh air, eating

healthy Japanese food, and enjoying the fantastic education at Nama Preschool. One school

counselor advised Sachiyo and me that our daughter was at a critical age and moving her would

cause her psychological harm. (Thanks!) Once we decided to risk it and return, we had the

administrative and economic headaches of the visa paperwork and moving costs – all things that

public servant transferees have to deal with throughout their careers. Returning to Pittsburgh for

the writing, we first lived in an apartment. We thought about buying a house, but wondered if my

next job would cause us to have to move.

On it has gone, with each new major life event I experienced helping me to appreciate more

keenly how many domains a job transfer can impact. I have grown up with this project, and I hope

the result is a more mature and thoughtful work.

APPENDIX B: Glossary of Select Japanese Terms

dōkyūsei
(同級生)
workmate, classmate, schoolmate, or playmate in the same grade/year

chiiki
(地域)
locality

chiku
(地区)
area

eiten
(栄転)
a transfer involving improved pay, status, location, or all of the above; a promotion (literally, "a glorious transfer")

hekichi teate
(僻地手当)
remote area allowance, a pay stipend awarded to those serving in designated remote areas (also, へき地手当)

Ikō Chōsho
(意向調書)
Request Form
(also, *Ikō Chōsa-sho* (意向調査書))

kangeikai
(歓迎会)
a party held to welcome one or more new members into a group

kibō-dōri
(希望通り)
according to one's wishes – as in getting a requested transfer outcome

kobun
(子分)
client, vassal, or dependent of a network, faction, or group
(literally, "child part/role")

kōhai
(後輩)
younger, junior (workmate, classmate, schoolmate, playmate)
(literally, the group or person who came after)

kōtō gakkō
(高等学校)
senior high school (SHS); apart from academic or college-prep, other curricula include technical (*kōgyō,* 工業), commercial (*shōgyō,* 商業), agricultural (*nōgyō,* 農業), and commercial marine (*gyogyō,* 魚業)

kyōtō-sensei
(教頭先生)
head teacher (the role is closer to that of a master teacher than that of a vice-principal)

350

kyōmu-shunin (教務主任)	manager of academic affairs / academic affairs manager; a teacher who works closely with the principal and head teacher on school administration – many go on from this to become head teachers
Kyōiku Iinkai (教育委員会)	Board of Education (BOE)
mai hōmu-shugi (マイホーム主義)	"my home-ism"; a policy or principle of putting one's own home or family first (above work, *e.g.*)
miokuri (見送り)	seeing a person off as they depart on a journey; involves going to the train station, airport, sea port, or other departure point and bidding farewell to the person until they have passed from sight
o-senbetsu (お餞別)	a gift of money given to someone departing, such as a transferee
oyabun (親分)	patron, head, or leader of a network, faction, or group (literally, "parent part/role")
ritō (離島)	outer island – an island separated from the mainland or main island
sankin kōtai (参勤交代)	the Edo era (1603-1868) system which obliged provincial lords to alternate attendance and residence in the provinces they ruled with attendance and residence at Court
sasen (左遷)	a transfer involving a reduction in pay, status, location, or all of the above; a demotion (origin: in the Han Dynasty, unlike in Japan, those on the "left" were of lesser rank than those on the "right")
sempai (先輩)	elder, senior (workmate, classmate, schoolmate, playmate) (literally, the group or person who came before)
shaonkai (謝恩会)	a party of thanks held for a teacher by his or her graduating students (or, in lieu of the students, their parents)
sōbetsukai (送別会)	a party held to bid farewell to one or more members leaving a group
tanshin fu'nin (単身赴任)	an employee who relocates to take up his or her post alone, by himself or herself, leaving behind family
tsukiai (付き合い)	socializing, meeting, going out with (often for work, business, or some such enterprise, with individuals connected to that purpose)

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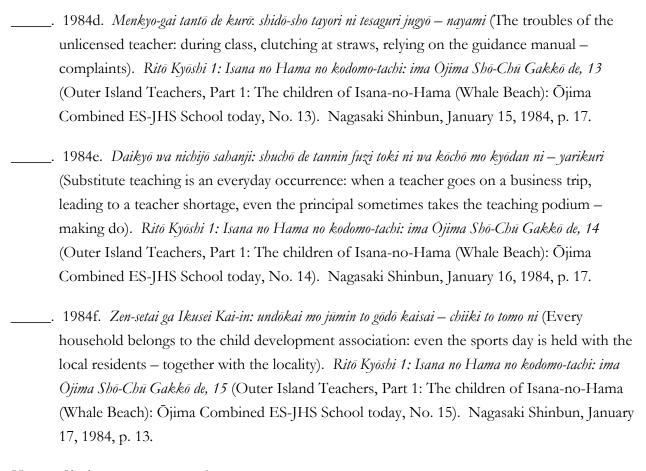
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