

Preface

A BOOK ABOUT JAPANESE AMERICANS cannot help but immediately hint of the particular cultural and historical context in which it was written. This is perhaps nowhere more succinctly displayed than in the decisions its author has made about a couple of editorial issues. The first issue was whether or not to place a hyphen between “Japanese American.” I have chosen not to because hyphenated ethnic categories continue to be associated in some minds with divided national identities and loyalties. The absence of the hyphen, on the other hand, leaves no ambiguity that the subject of my book is Americans of Japanese ancestry. In citing or quoting from published works in which “Japanese-American” is hyphenated, however, I have been true to the original. The second issue was whether to state Japanese names in American order (surname last) or Japanese order (surname first). I have chosen to consistently use an American order because, although the first generation of Japanese Americans uses both orders (which one depends on the cultural context), the second generation uses an American order almost exclusively. To avoid any confusion, I use an American order even when giving the names of Japanese nationals who have never emigrated to the United States.

All the names of the persons interviewed, however, are pseudonyms, and in a few instances I have altered minor details about their individual or family characteristics that might have revealed their identities. My hope has always been that the people I interviewed would read this book; if they do they will have no difficulty recognizing themselves. In assigning pseudonyms, I have tried to convey the time period and cultural context in which people were born, while concealing their personal identities. Thus, persons with a Japanese surname and an Amer-

ican given name have similar pseudonyms, and when Japanese given names are used they are appropriate to the time period in which those so designated were born. To help readers keep track of the individuals, married couples, and families who appear in the case materials set off from the main text throughout the book, I have assigned each married couple an identifying number. Each number begins with a generation marker (I for the first generation and N for the second generation), followed by the couple's case number (1 through 24 for the first generation and 1 through 48 for the second generation), and finally a lower-case letter that indicates whether this is the first instance (a), second instance (b), and so on, on which the case has been cited.

I began the research for this book as the fieldwork for my dissertation in 1973-74 and continued it as postdoctoral fieldwork in 1974-75. The writing of my dissertation was supported by a grant from the University of Washington Graduate School, and my postdoctoral research was funded by a grant from the Rockefeller and Ford foundations' Program for Population Policy Research in the Social Sciences. I am grateful to the members of my dissertation committee who guided my fieldwork and the writing of my dissertation. I am particularly indebted to Professor Michael Lieber for introducing me to David M. Schneider's writings on American kinship, which inspired in me an interest in kinship studies that I had not thought possible, and to Professor Laura Newell-Morris for suggesting that I study Japanese Americans rather than a more conventional, exotic Other. Professors James A. Watson and Jay Miller also provided helpful comments on my dissertation, which pushed me toward some of the different tacks I have taken in this book.

My research benefited greatly from my association with Donna Leonetti, who conducted her dissertation research on fertility change in the same community, and with whom I later collaborated on a study of the interrelationship between kinship change and demographic change. I am also grateful to the many people who worked with us during different phases of our projects. In particular, I thank Mary Aoki for her invaluable work as an interpreter and interviewer, and Jeffrey Dann and Anne Roda for their skillful interviewing and the insights I acquired from our many discussions.

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S.J.Y.

