

Modernization and Aging Society: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of *Ikigai*

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(1 *Ikigai* in Japan and the United States)

Going beyond the structural level of modernization, Yang points out in his Hypothesis of Psychological Convergence that certain psychological traits converge with the onset of modernization. He and others have pointed out six main traits: 1) the wide-spread use of information networks through mass-media and technology, 2) the release from constrictions of extended family structure and its norms, 3) the preference for more equal relationships in love and marriage and a smaller, nuclear family, 4) the release from concentrated religious activity, 5) the participation in a social environment in which relocation and change beyond the local community and regional norms are acceptable, and 6) the participation in an economic system based on mass (rather than family) production¹. With the convergence of such psychological traits as modernized countries, one can assume that countries such as Japan and the United States could serve as effective partners in the search for measures to support common problems such as their rapidly aging societies.

In one example, Matthews² discusses the importance of personal factors such as gender, age, and religious belief in shaping the parallel formulations of *ikigai* for pairs of

Japanese and American interviewees, stating that the similarity, "reflects the underlying commonality of Japan and the United States, two societies that are not simply cultural antipodes, but also parallel representations of 'late modernity'³". This paper is an attempt to go beyond geographical borders to find general characteristics of *ikigai*, thus clarifying that which enables seniors in modern society to live a satisfying life.

Through interviews of Americans and Japanese people of similar socio-economic status, Matthews discovered what seems to be two forms of *ikigai*. The first, which he calls *jiko-jitsugen* ('self-development'), seems to be less related to one's social role and expectations than to a satisfaction with an internal self. Concerning 'self-development' *ikigai*, Kamitani says it is "not the satisfaction derived from the results of a certain activity, but the activity itself, and it is a very personal thing". The other type of *ikigai*, *ittaikan* ('sense of community'), seems to develop from a satisfaction received when fulfilling a social role or expectation. Concerning this type of *ikigai*, Niwano states, "whether found in work or the family, [*ikigai*] should be a product of production, responsibility, and self-sacrifice".

Concerning these two types of *ikigai* in Japanese society, Matthews suggests, "Japan may now be undergoing a historic shift in its conceptions of *ikigai* and of how best to live. Apparently, the postwar decades of rebuilding Japan were most conducive to a definition of *ikigai* as a 'sense of community', but as Japan became more affluent, some began to question the ideal of living for the group, and a new conception of *ikigai* emerged, that of *ikigai* as 'self-development'"⁶. However, even with the increase of individualism in Japan, there is still a strong emphasis on group membership in Japanese society, as Freed points out. "In recent years, Japanese have created their own materialistic dream, similar to that of the Americans. However, individualism still remains frowned upon and the group, be it the family, the colleagues at work, or the Japanese society at large, is pivotal in their life course and decisions..."⁷. Matthews also points out Hamaguchi's conception of the Japanese sense of self, *kanjin*, as a person who identifies themselves in terms of their relationships to others, as opposed to the Western *kojin*, the self which is autonomous⁸. Thus, because this self is developed with a strong emphasis on the group, one can say that, in Japan, the search for *ikigai* is a combination of both 'self-development' as well as a 'sense of community'. Matthews discovered this interaction of the two types of *ikigai* in his interviews.

Concerning *ikigai* and the United States, Matthews says, "While 'self-realization' is much discussed in Japanese media at present, it may be difficult to attain within Japanese society. By the same token, 'community' seems much discussed in American media at present but difficult to attain in American

society"⁹. Within American culture, the 'double standard' mixing of 'group-orientation' and 'individualism' is exemplified in the importance placed on philanthropy, charity, and the 'Golden Rule' philosophy set in the Bible coexisting with 'may the best man win' types of moralities which have influenced such things as the high divorce rate, white-collar crime, and increasing class divisions. Matthews points out the manner in which emphasis on the contrasting values shift back and forth, from the 'me generation' between the 60s and 80s to the gradual call for a return to 'community' that has come into focus in the 90s¹⁰.

One example of the stress placed on the 'self-development' aspect of *ikigai* in the United States can be seen in the increase in the number and population of 'retirement communities'. In such communities, seniors spend a great deal of time actively participating in sports and other leisure activities and doing other things which could be seen as 'self-investment' or 'self-development'. There has been a great deal of research done on the importance of activity for 'well-being', and it is often said that the more active one is, the greater sense of well-being one will feel¹¹. However, other researchers point to this 'self-development' type of activity and say that it is one symptom of the over-emphasis on 'individualism' in the United States. Bellah states, "For people who have worked hard all their lives, life in a 'retirement community' composed of highly similar people doing highly similar things may be gratifying"¹², and Kelly points out that values form the basis of meaning and identity in one's later life, and can be 'verified' by the norms in one's particular society or community¹³.

However, "in the pursuit of their individual dreams, people in the United States seem to have lost the ability to connect with others to form a meaningful human community"¹⁴, thus forming what Bellah terms 'the culture of separation'. Drucker also takes up the tradition of 'community', and points out that, with our increasingly mobile society, traditional communities are losing their integrating power. He states that these traditional communities must be replaced by communities of commitment and compassion, such as those being developed in social sector through volunteering¹⁵.

In this paper, using Matthews "self-development" and "sense of community" theories of *ikigai*, I will first attempt to prove, as he suggests, that these two types of *ikigai* exist and are interactive in both America and Japan, thus illustrating the parallel of these two highly modernized countries. Secondly, I will attempt to show that, due to cultural, historical, and societal differences, there is a difference in the emphasis and interaction of these two types of *ikigai* in each culture. For example, when examining social activities of seniors in the two countries, one might expect to find more community-oriented activities (giving seniors a 'sense of community' type of *ikigai*) in the more primary-group oriented Japan, whereas in the United States, one might find that, even though seniors participate in various group activities, these groups are functional groups, and these seniors are also highly active in things which give them a 'self-development' type of *ikigai*. I will attempt to illustrate this difference in the underlying meaning of these social activities and, in addition, explore seniors' feelings towards 'community'

or 'residential area' in order to discover what similarities and differences are found in the way residential community affects one's *ikigai*.

2 Survey "Social Activities and *Ikigai*"

2. 1 Yanai area and Clallam County

In Japan, the Yanai area was chosen because of its high percentage of senior citizens. One of the communities (Towa-cho) just outside of the selected area has the highest percentage of seniors (over 20.0%) in Japan, although it was not included in the original survey and was thus not available for analysis. In the United States, the area including the city of Sequim, Washington, was chosen because of Sequim's similarities to Towa-cho and the overall area's resemblance to the Yanai area.

Clallam County as a whole has a 20.4% senior population¹⁶, and Sequim's senior population can reach roughly 50% at times, depending on the season and the amount of area around the city limits which is surveyed¹⁷. Both areas are quite rural, at least an hour from any large city, and, bordered by mountains and inland seas, have climates which are much milder than surrounding areas. For both Clallam County and the Yanai area, farming and fishing formed the base of the original economic structure, and a variety of heavy industries developed later were the main source of income for many years. However, economic recessions, environmental protection laws, and transportation difficulties are forcing both areas to search for new means of economic stability through service industries such as tourism and silver services. In the Clallam area, this began as early as the 1970s, and there are now over 160 service

organizations in the Sequim city area alone¹⁸.

However, although both areas are very similar geographically, economically, and physically, the cultural and societal differences of the two countries are dramatically illustrated in the manner in which the two areas are aging. The Yanai area is a typical example of the *de facto*¹⁹ aged community found in rural Japan, in that the high percentage of seniors living there is not a result of retirees moving in, but of younger people moving out. In comparison, most seniors in the Clallam area are of middle-to upper-middle class residents who have chosen to move to the area to enjoy a leisurely life of sports, nature, and social activities. One could easily say that Sequim is a typical *de jure*²⁰ American retirement community.

2. 2 Overview of service-provider systems

In both countries, the senior service provider systems seem quite similar, with the same ultimate goal of providing a means in which seniors can live out their lives in a comfortable and familiar place. Specifically, both countries are working towards the improvement of the home helper and visiting nurse systems, the improvement of information accessibility, the promotion of programs to promote activity and well-being among seniors, and the support of NPOs, NGOs, and NFPs to provide more of the services necessary for the increasingly varied needs of seniors. As Drucker points out, "The first conclusion from the experience of the Nanny State is ... for government to stop being a doer and manager in the social sphere and to confine itself to being the policy maker. This means that in the social sphere, as in the economic sphere, there is a need to 'contract

out'... There is an additional reason for contracting out social tasks: the need to raise the productivity of service work.... To foster autonomous community organizations in the social sector is therefore an important step in turning government around and making it perform again"²¹.

In the United States, the turning point for social welfare services came at the 1965 White House Conference on Aging, when the Administration on Aging organization was established, and Agencies on Aging at the local level were called for to work directly with local governments, private sector, and volunteer and not-for-profit organizations to develop a complete menu of services to meet seniors' needs²². In the Clallam County area, the Olympic Area Agency on Aging (O3A) serves as a coordinating body, directing local governments, managing case workers, and sub-contracting care services to local organizations and companies, in addition to publishing a monthly newsletter and sponsoring bi-monthly breakfast meetings for the local service providers to exchange information. In addition to the O3A, which mainly sees to the needs and efficient management of the various service providers, the Senior Information and Assistance (S.I. & A.) organization focuses on the needs of the seniors themselves, particularly those who have special needs requiring the supervision of a case worker. S.I.& A. also serves as a information distribution organization, providing information on health care, insurance, and local volunteer organizations.

In comparison, Japan's decentralization process is a fairly recent trend. In the 1980s, the shift from a 'total welfare state' towards 'normalization' became a necessity

with the increased disintegration of the family structure and functions of the community. This led to the adoption of a policy of 'help yourself/help others', proclaimed in the official 'New Japanese-style Welfare Society' Plan²³. In the 1990s, with economic crises further weakening the structure of centralized government, more control was shifted to the local government level, and after the announcement of the 'Gold Plan' in December of 1989, official policy was changed "to create a system in which citizens can receive the benefits of home and institutional care in a well-planned and original manner provided by the local government"²⁴. With the adoption of the Home Health Care Bill in 2000, the responsibility for providing the majority of senior services will be turned over to local governments, however, providing adequate manpower and facilities, developing a system for measuring or qualifying those in need of care, as well as many other aspects are still formidable obstacles for these local governments²⁵. This national picture of publicly managed health care in Japan is reflected quite accurately in the Yanai area. The vast majority of services on the area are provided through the local city offices and social welfare departments, and information is channeled down to seniors through the local ombudsman or the local Association of Social Welfare. In recent years, information centers have been established in Home Care Support Centers in each local area, however, a glance at locally published pamphlets shows that information for different services can only be obtained by calling various different organizations, and there seems to be little cooperation or interaction between the organizations and/or the towns in each area.

2. 3 About the respondents

In Japan, the original survey²⁶ was distributed and collected directly by local ombudsmen from 6000 seniors between the ages of 55 and 79 who had been randomly selected from the residence registration rosters. From this data, the area around Yanai City was chosen as the basis for comparison, for reasons previously specified. The survey was then translated into English and distributed among seniors in senior centers, retirement homes and communities, and local clubs and organizations. The response rate was 90.2% (359/398) in the Yanai area and 42.3% (310/700) in the Clallam area.

Some of the Social Status Indicators may have an effect on the results of the survey and thus are worth noting. There was a much greater percentage of 'pre-retirement' respondents (55-64) in Yanai (47%, Clallam 14%), and a greater percentage of 'young to middle old' (65-79) seniors in Clallam (64%, Yanai 47%). 'Old old' seniors (over 80) made up 15% of respondents in the Clallam area, whereas the Yamaguchi survey did not choose subjects over 79 years of age. This great discrepancy in age is something which should be noted in the consideration of results.

In both areas, married respondents made up the majority (Yanai 73%, Clallam 60%), however a full 30% of Clallam respondents were widows or widowers, which was not as high as Yanai, a response which is mostly likely affected by the difference in ages of the respondents. 44% of respondents in Yanai live only with their spouse as compared to 60% of the respondents in Clallam. Of the remainder, 30% of Clallam residents live alone, while 28% of the Yanai area respondents live with another generation, both of which seem

to reflect common social characteristics of each country. A great difference in educational levels of the two areas is also evident - 48% of Clallam respondents had received education beyond the high school level, while only 8% of those in the Yanai area had.

While 48% of Yanai area respondents were originally from the area, only 4% of those in Clallam were hometown residents. In contrast, 86% of respondents from the Clallam area had moved into the area (44% in Yanai), a reflection of their respective *de facto* and *de jure* characteristics. It is interesting to note however, that in both communities, over 80% of respondents want to remain in their area permanently (Yanai 83%, Clallam 84%).

As for work experience, the higher number of respondents in the Yanai area who had never worked (25% versus 14% in Clallam) might be attributed to the great number of women who were homemakers during the period of high economic growth in Japan. The higher number of self-employed persons in the Yanai area (21% versus 6% in Clallam) could be attributed to the large number of people involved in farming, as compared to the fact that over 90% of those in Clallam, a 'retirement community', are no longer working. In Yanai, over 40% of respondents were involved in farming, while in the Clallam area, the majority (45%) had been involved in management and service sector jobs, again typical of a 'retirement community'.

2. 4 Difficulties in conducting the survey

There were a number of difficulties which should be mentioned and taken into consideration in analyzing the results from the survey, namely structural difficulties, translation difficulties, difficulties arising from

differing methods of conducting the survey, and cultural differences in responses. As for structural difficulties, the structure of many questions made factor analysis unfeasible, and should be changed in later surveys. In addition, the length of the survey made it difficult for respondents - not only did some questions have over 20 items, but there were a total of 21 questions and 16 SSI (face sheet) questions, all of which took most respondents between 20-30 minutes to answer.

In translation, questions concerning social activities were difficult to translate, and may have led to discrepancies in analysis. For example, the social activity in which members of a Japanese community support each other by putting money into a pooled fund (a kind of 'in-group' pyramid) is virtually non-existent in the United States and had to be taken out of the translated survey, and an item asking about an activity in Japan which is similar to the ombudsman position in the U.S. was translated as 'authorized volunteer activities', which seemed to lead to discrepancies in responses. There were other examples of activities and ADLs which are uncommon in the United States and lead to confusion and occasional criticism from the Clallam respondents. In order to preserve the survey conditions, the translation was kept as close to the Japanese survey as possible, however one must question whether that in itself lead to construed results in the different cultural and social setting of the United States.

Concerning the manner in which the survey was conducted, the most obvious difference was their distribution and collection, which lead to a large disparity in the percentage of respondents. Furthermore, the fact that the

surveys in the Clallam area were mostly distributed through organizations and facilities outside the home may have lead to a natural difference in the amount of social activities the seniors had, even though care was taken to distribute surveys through assisted living facilities and retirement developments.

Finally, in analyzing the results of the survey, one must take into consideration what Iwata described as 'Cultural Response Differences'²⁷. He points out that in a 5-point scale Japanese tend to prefer to take a more neutral response position than Americans, thus leading to natural difference in analysis.

3 Factors affecting *Ikigai*

3. 1 Statistical analysis of factors

The factors which seemed most likely to have the greatest affect on the *ikigai* of seniors in both areas were chosen and a cross-

tabulation was done for significance (Fig. 1). The factors which displayed the greatest significance across both cultures were those pertaining to feelings towards one's town and health status. With regards to social activities, Clallam showed significance, but Yanai did not. Factors which proved to have no significance in either country were age, years of residence, and work history. One can assume that the lack of significance in age could be due to the age disparity of the respondents in both areas. As for work history, the structure of the question made analysis difficult. Finally, years of residence was heavily affected by the fact that over 80% of respondents in the Yanai area had lived there for over 20 years. Thus, these three factors were disregarded in the final analysis.

In an analysis of the same factors in regards to their relationship to *ikigai* (Fig. 2),

Fig. 1 Significance of items thought to affect *Ikigai*

Item	Yanai				Clallam			
	x ²	df	p		x ²	df	p	
Sex	10.50788	4	0.0327	**	16.65155	10	0.0824	*
Age	9.3845	16	0.8967		46.64859	45	0.4045	
Number of Social activities	35.23837	44	0.8243		94.29663	60	0.0031	***
Number of Leadership role activities	18.86946	20	0.5303		73.36481	50	0.0173	**
Number of Particularity satisfying activities	23.04415	32	0.8769		77.28752	45	0.002	***
Number of Continuing/future activities	53.57559	40	0.074	*	51.21239	65	0.8939	
Number of Obstacles to activities	38.97153	28	0.0814	*	36.43547	20	0.0137	**
Feelings about town development	43.3041	16	0.0003	***	81.00661	25	0	***
Fondness toward town	80.6803	8	0	***	96.82425	15	0	***
Desire to serve town	22.53943	8	0.004	***	48.044	15	0	***
Desire for permanent residency	48.24345	8	0	***	100.28543	15	0	***
Number of ADLs	64.29507	64	0.4661		164.13087	80	0	***
Number of satisfying ADLs	76.19062	64	0.1414		99.69863	75	0.0298	**
Volunteer experience	12.74925	8	0.1208		40.78407	15	0.0003	***
Education	26.05085	20	0.1641		43.73757	25	0.0116	**
Birthplace	9.30527	16	0.9003		42.10836	25	0.0175	**
Number of years residency	15.07618	16	0.5191		22.06591	25	0.6319	
Fondness towards town	78.38736	16	0	***	129.81264	25	0	***
Work experience	39.99353	32	0.1567		53.27987	45	0.1858	
Health Status	103.77951	16	0	***	82.36921	25	0	***
Driving ability	11.72912	8	0.1637		28.13363	10	0.0017	***

(p<0.1=*, p<0.05=**, p<0.01=***)

Fig. 2 Correlation ratio of items to *ikigai*

Item	Y/C Joint Data	Yanai	Clallam
Sex	-0.3352***	-0.2098***	-0.269***
Age	-0.3011***	-0.1667***	-0.2294***
Number of Social activities	-0.3139***	-0.201***	-0.2358***
Number of Leadership role activities	-0.2474***	-0.1782***	-0.1764***
Number of Particularly satisfying activities	0.0861***	0.0494	0.1222***
Number of Continuing/future activities	0.3290***	0.2411***	0.3183***
Number of Obstacles to activities	0.3844***	0.3717***	0.3453***
Feelings about town development	0.1848***	0.1619***	0.2411***
Fondness toward town	0.2599***	0.2297***	0.2807***
Desire to serve town	-0.1566***	-0.1523***	-0.2748***
Desire for permanent residency	-0.2097***	-0.2549***	-0.2078***
Number of ADLs	0.2871***	0.1625***	0.1817***
Number of satisfying ADLs	-0.1330***	-0.1043*	-0.1638***
Volunteer experience	-0.2073***	-0.0936*	-0.0563
Education	-0.0735*	0.0228	-0.0670
Birthplace	-0.0659*	-0.0220	0.1627***
Number of years residency	0.0733*	-0.0317	-0.0712
Fondness towards town	0.3284***	0.2601***	0.3463***
Work experience	0.0229	0.1272**	0.1329**
Health Status	0.3851***	0.3280***	0.3002***
Driving ability	0.1642***	0.0920*	0.0213

($p < 0.1 = *$, $p < 0.05 = **$, $p < 0.01 = ***$)

items pertaining to social activities and feelings towards community, as well as health status proved to have the greatest relationship to *ikigai* in both the composite data and the individual data of the two areas.

However, when looking at results for the two areas separately in regards to these three factors, it is interesting to note that while in Clallam, factors regarding social activities, positive outlook towards the future of their town, and desire to reside in their town permanently had the greatest relationship to *ikigai*, in the Yanai area, a feeling of fondness towards their town and health status most effected the Yanai seniors *ikigai*. Already, an impression of active involvement versus more passive participation seems evident when comparing the two countries. With regards to the 16 factors which showed a

strong significance in their relationship to *ikigai* ($p < 0.01$), gender and driving ability were disregarded from further analysis as they could not be appropriately scaled.

Finally, using the significant items from previous analysis as well as 'number of particularly satisfying activities', factor analysis was performed. From factor analysis of the composite data of the two areas, a total of 14 factors with a factor burden of greater than ± 0.60 were found (Fig. 3). Factor One was the social activities group, Factor Two was made up of items pertaining to feelings towards their town, and Factor Three was ADLs.

In looking at the factor analyses for the two areas separately (Figs. 4 and 5), the order of the top three factors does not change, however Yanai's Factor Two group

Fig. 3 Compiled Factor Analysis (Yanai and Sequim)

(Y/S) Variables	Factor loading (Varimax rotation)				
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Number of Social activities	-0.877497	0.106203	-0.055506	-0.023830	-0.085974
Number of Leadership role activities	-0.791746	0.130810	0.039824	-0.037397	-0.178708
Number of Particular satisfying activities	-0.850494	0.104649	-0.063315	-0.026020	-0.133670
Number of Continuing/future activities	-0.747362	0.055632	-0.131224	-0.263098	0.082510
Volunteer experience	0.737760	-0.145165	-0.038641	-0.151779	0.055974
Feelings about town development	0.218204	-0.603040	0.019002	0.096711	0.147126
Fondness toward town	0.205774	-0.729052	0.032345	0.032424	-0.235513
Desire for permanent residency(#1)	-0.029865	-0.845539	0.015157	-0.041671	-0.148218
Desire for permanent residency(#2)	0.001661	-0.760070	0.050655	-0.152893	0.108466
Number of ADLs	-0.051540	-0.017011	-0.907691	0.015532	0.114680
Number of satisfying ADLs	-0.054410	0.147199	-0.896452	-0.059607	0.025326
Number of Obstacles to activities	-0.000482	-0.056925	-0.047666	-0.874844	-0.004153
Desire to serve town	0.326179	-0.359535	-0.052582	0.089769	-0.634456
Age	-0.291298	0.267136	0.167265	0.126689	-0.639749
Health Status	0.566534	-0.066994	0.040155	-0.339987	-0.064476
Number of years residency	0.278491	0.053113	-0.074078	0.204002	0.491879
Feeling of well-being	0.372336	-0.464591	0.256082	-0.251969	0.083175
Contribution rate (total 64.2%)	27.8	13.4	10.4	6.7	5.9

does not contain the item pertaining to the future of one's town. This might be suggestive of the *geminshaft* aspect of the *de facto* senior community in rural areas of Japan, namely that many seniors might hold a feeling of 'fate' towards their community because they were born and raised there, and feel compelled to stay there indefinitely, regardless of the future they see for the community. Factor One of the Clallam area does not include the item pertaining to volunteer experience, which might indicate that more weight (or significance) is placed upon self-development activities rather than community-development activities in the *de jure* retirement community in the U.S.. These factors will be considered in greater detail in the following section.

The combined data revealed that Factor One (pertaining to the respondents social activities) and Factor Two (pertaining to their relationship to the town) showed the strongest relationship (over 0.3) to 'feeling of well

-being', or *ikigai*, thus it was determined that these factors should be further analyzed for similarities and differences between the two areas.

3. 2 Social activities, community and *ikigai*

From the previous analyses, it is evident that factors pertaining to the number of social activities a senior is involved in are heavily related to *ikigai*, and that, in general, seniors in Clallam are involved in more activities and feel a greater sense of *ikigai* in their lives. However, it is also necessary to evaluate these activities by type and to investigate the various types of activities to determine what type of *ikigai* they provide. While the most effective method of measuring this would be to conduct a factor analysis of the social activities of each group, this was not feasible due to the method of data input, therefore a simple tabulation of the activities was used (Fig. 6).

From these results, it would again seem

Fig. 4 Yanai Factor Analysis

(Y)	Variables	Factor loading (Varimax rotation)				
		Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Number of Social activities	0.886552	0.058720	0.054811	0.018465	0.064614	
Number of Leadership role activities	0.734830	0.085640	-0.134286	-0.022572	0.079334	
Number of Particular satisfying activities	0.875479	0.074385	0.102704	0.046921	0.113338	
Number of Continuing/future activities	0.639301	0.080874	0.143154	-0.307025	-0.219694	
Volunteer experience	-0.719986	-0.041719	-0.052977	-0.054410	0.140511	
Fondness toward town	-0.134965	-0.843326	-0.035009	0.073960	0.094286	
Desire for permanent residency(#1)	-0.03156	-0.857647	-0.040017	-0.026877	-0.097887	
Desire for permanent residency(#2)	0.008508	-0.696485	-0.087662	-0.168469	-0.084654	
Number of ADLs	0.009495	-0.016704	0.912142	-0.031350	-0.013890	
Number of satisfying ADLs	0.075252	0.166514	0.887524	-0.007082	0.036158	
Number of Obstacles to activities	0.027792	-0.044852	0.041815	-0.865631	0.035976	
Age	0.224123	0.191999	0.077333	0.150567	0.757773	
Health Status	-0.251616	-0.158112	-0.061415	-0.237265	0.640221	
Number of years residency	0.050324	0.337827	0.072296	0.014698	-0.012137	
Feeling of well-being	-0.248593	-0.432404	-0.281474	-0.300057	0.289985	
Feelings about town development	-0.079377	-0.471611	-0.111349	0.011505	-0.138701	
Desire to serve town	-0.349201	-0.457025	0.057286	0.335086	0.233139	
Contribution rate (total 61.9%)	24.0	13.6	9.5	7.5	7.3	

Fig. 5 Sequim Factor Analysis

(S)	Variables	Factor loading (Varimax rotation)				
		Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Number of Social activities	-0.834063	0.069007	-0.166207	0.014792	-0.133897	
Number of Leadership role activities	-0.79676	0.093639	-0.031206	-0.12713	-0.055355	
Number of Particular satisfying activities	-0.838336	0.051853	-0.086595	-0.004823	-0.07061	
Number of Continuing/future activities	-0.750525	0.061348	-0.160549	0.244692	0.007228	
Feelings about town development	0.084887	-0.665129	-0.003019	0.003795	0.119132	
Fondness toward town	0.135519	-0.647391	0.127128	0.066051	0.114118	
Desire for permanent residency(#1)	-0.036202	-0.855007	-0.010338	-0.010282	-0.027622	
Desire for permanent residency(#2)	-0.030533	-0.787562	-0.001203	0.011197	-0.038098	
Number of ADLs	-0.20274	0.023256	-0.883744	0.071645	-0.132854	
Number of satisfying ADLs	-0.123975	0.117002	-0.897391	0.028677	0.082218	
Age	-0.011117	0.07578	0.236432	-0.761117	0.171677	
Number of years residency	0.031003	0.001735	-0.115422	-0.742912	-0.168231	
Number of Obstacles to activities	-0.269686	-0.096208	-0.092196	0.152108	0.637426	
Health Status	0.256423	0.006693	0.121262	-0.203286	0.615142	
Desire to serve town	0.278379	-0.425741	-0.006432	-0.074373	0.460253	
Feeling of well-being	0.18996	-0.472246	0.278121	0.122993	0.304699	
Volunteer experience	0.413561	-0.116603	0.063281	0.154325	0.491621	
Contribution rate (total 61.3%)	24.3	14.1	9	7.2	6.7	

evident that the seniors in Clallam participate in more activities and that these activities seem to lean more towards self-development activities or personal interests such as religious activities, gambling,

volunteer activities, writing activities, hobbies, and sports. In comparison, the seniors in Yanai are not as involved in such activities, thus it is difficult to say that they are as focused on their personal self-development

Fig. 6 Comparison of social activities of seniors in Yanai area and Clallam

Yanai		Clallam		Item
#	%	#	%	
45	13%	154	50%	Senior citizen's club
30	8%	23	7%	Company retirement group
9	3%	31	10%	Senior citizen's work support organization/network
18	5%	n.a.	n.a.	community 'pyramid' support groups
n.a.	n.a.	29	9%	Gambling activities (casinos, poker, etc.)
37	10%	138	45%	Religious organization
81	23%	71	23%	Neighborhood/residence group
39	11%	139	45%	Volunteer group activities
13	4%	32	10%	Chamber of Commerce/business group
13	4%	7	2%	Food purchasing co-op
45	13%	19	6%	Women's support group
13	4%	11	4%	Environmental protection group
11	3%	37	12%	Political organization
6	2%	9	3%	PTA/educational organization
39	11%	4	1%	Farming Co-op retirement group
46	13%	25	8%	Farming/gardening club
4	1%	10	3%	Host family/international exchange activities
13	4%	73	24%	Bazaar/flea market participation
6	2%	38	12%	Writing opinion letters to media or government organizations
18	5%	69	22%	Authorized volunteer activities
9	3%	38	12%	Cultural/traditional arts promotion group
47	13%	159	51%	Personal hobbies (chess, bridge, social dance, etc)
28	8%	121	39%	Sports/Outdoor activities
27	8%	95	31%	Cultural, historical, education, self-development activities
16	4%	104	34%	Other
0	0%	2	1%	None
131	36%	0	0%	n.a.
359	100%	310	100%	Total

and interests. However, it is also important to consider what amount of *ikigai* is felt by the citizens of both areas in order to come to a conclusion of any sort. The results of the relationship of social activities to *ikigai* are shown in Figure 7.

The four activities in which there was a significant difference in the amount of *ikigai* derived by the seniors in each area are 'neighborhood/residence group', 'women's group', 'sports activities', and 'cultural activities'. Of these four, two (neighborhood group, women's group) hold a special position within Japanese society as having almost obligatory participation, whereas in the

United States, although the neighborhood group might be slightly more obligatory in than other activities in general, it is certainly not mandatory, and quite often consists of doing little more than paying one's yearly dues, and a women's group is purely voluntary. The difference in the degree of freedom of participation may be the reason for the difference in the amount of *ikigai* derived from the activity, thus suggesting that, if seniors in the Yanai area were allowed to participate in activities on a more voluntary basis, they might derive more *ikigai* from the activity.

Fig. 7 Comparison of social activities and *Ikigai* levels

Item	Yanai				Clallam				
	#	%	ikigai		#	%	ikigai		
			avg.	s.d.			avg.	s.d.	
Senior citizen club	45	13%	1.71	0.626	154	50%	1.49	0.937	(t=1.51, df=197, p=.133)
Company retirement group	29	8%	1.68	0.541	23	7%	1.43	0.945	(t=1.22, df=50, p=.227)
Senior citizen's work support organization/network	9	3%	1.67	0.707	31	10%	1.39	0.844	(t=.90, df=38, p=.372)
Community 'pyramid' support groups	17	5%	1.71	0.686	n.a.				n.a.
Gambling activities (casinos, poker, etc.)	n.a.				29	9%	1.34	0.721	n.a.
Religious organization	37	10%	1.73	0.769	138	45%	1.38	0.768	(t=2.46, df=172, p=.015)**
Neighborhood/residence group	81	23%	1.94	0.764	71	23%	1.28	0.614	(t=5.79, df=150, p=.000)***
Volunteer group activities	39	11%	1.59	0.637	139	45%	1.38	0.736	(t=1.61, df=176, p=.110)
Chamber of commerce/business group	13	4%	1.46	0.66	32	10%	1.41	0.712	(t=.24, df=43, p=.811)
Food purchasing co-op	13	4%	1.92	0.954	7	2%	1.86	0.9	(t=.15, df=18, p=.882)
Women's support group	45	13%	1.71	0.626	19	6%	1.21	0.631	(t=2.92, df=62, p=.005)***
Environmental protection group	13	4%	1.62	0.768	11	4%	1.27	0.467	(t=1.29, df=22, p=.211)
Political organization	11	3%	1.55	0.522	37	12%	1.22	0.479	(t=1.96, df=46, p=.056)*
PTA/educational organization	6	2%	2.17	0.983	9	3%	1.56	0.726	(t=1.39, df=13, p=.188)
Farming co-op retirement group	39	11%	1.67	0.737	4	1%	2	1.155	(t=-.82, df=41, p=.418)
Farming/gardening club	46	13%	2	0.869	25	8%	1.48	0.653	(t=2.61, df=69, p=.011)**
Host family/international exchange activities	4	1%	1.25	0.5	10	3%	1.3	0.483	(t=-.17, df=12, p=.865)
Bazaar/flea market participation	13	4%	1.62	0.506	73	24%	1.25	0.76	(t=1.68, df=84, p=.097)*
Writing opinion letters to media or government organizations	6	2%	1.5	0.548	38	12%	1.34	0.745	(t=.50, df=42, p=.622)
Authorized volunteer activities	18	5%	1.72	0.895	69	22%	1.26	0.585	(t=2.65, df=85, p=.010)**
Cultural/traditional arts promotion group	9	3%	1.44	0.726	38	12%	1.34	0.481	(t=.52, df=45, p=.607)
Personal hobbies (chess, bridge, social dance, etc.)	47	13%	1.74	0.736	159	51%	1.47	0.736	(t=2.29, df=204, p=.023)**
Sports/Outdoor activities	28	8%	2	0.77	121	39%	1.44	0.682	(t=3.83, df=147, p=.000)***
Cultural, historical, educational, self-development activities	27	8%	1.78	0.751	95	31%	1.4	0.591	(t=2.75, df=120, p=.007)***
Other	16	4%	1.75	0.577	104	34%	1.38	0.885	(t=1.60, df=118, p=.113)
None	n.a.				2	1%	n.a.		n.a.
n.a.	131	36%	n.a.		0	0%	n.a.		n.a.
Total	359	100%			310	100%			(t=1.51, df=197, p=.133)

The fact that 4 to 5 times the number of seniors in the Clallam area are involved in 'sports' and 'cultural activities' as compared to Japan also suggests that American seniors become more involved in activities of 'self-development', in addition to supporting the assertion that seniors in Japan to feel that sports and leisure activities are a waste of time and money (although this disposition seems to be slowly changing).

In regards to the relationship to one's community and *ikigai*, a simple tabulation of the responses to the two items in Factor Two were conducted (Figs. 8 and 9). Regarding

'fondness' towards their community, Figure 8 shows that 68% of seniors in the Yanai area feel fondness towards their community, a great difference from the 84% of seniors in the Clallam area. In regards to their desire to reside in the area permanently (Fig. 9), although the difference was much smaller, the seniors in Clallam again felt more positively about permanent residence than those in the Yanai area.

These results seem to point to the same tendency as the results concerning social activities, namely that the feelings of the Clallam area residents towards their

Fig. 8 Comparison of feelings of fondness towards residential area

Do you feel fondness towards your town?

	Yanai		Clallam	
Yes, I do	243	68%	260	84%
I'm not sure	91	25%	27	9%
No, I don't	17	5%	17	5%
n.a.	8	2%	6	2%
Total				

Fig. 9 Comparison of desire to remain permanently in residential area

Do you feel fondness towards your town?

	Yanai		Clallam	
Yes, I would like to live here indefinitely	265	74%	245	79%
I'm not sure	72	20%	46	15%
No, I would like to move elsewhere	14	4%	14	5%
n.a.	8	2%	5	2%
Total				

community could be strengthened by the fact that their decision to move there was a conscious one (i.e. 'self-expression' or 'self-development'), whereas for the seniors in the Yanai area, of which nearly half are hometown residents and over 80% have lived in the area for over 20 years, their decision was less a conscious one than one of fate, of being born there or of marrying into the community (i.e. 'sense of community'). This could also be one of the factors which affected the number of ambivalent responses given by the Yanai seniors as well, as many of the seniors in the Yanai area may feel that they have little or no control over where they are living, thus leading to a more passive interest. The same difference between personal choice and fate seems to be evident in the difference in their desire to reside permanently in the community, however, the survey does not provide the means for delving into what it is that the respondents feel fondness about and makes them want to reside permanently.

An investigation of the relationship between the people who feel fondness and permanency towards their community and the amount of *ikigai* they feel seems to confirm these results. (see Fig 10)

A simple analysis of the relationship between community and *ikigai* shows that there is a significant relationship between *ikigai* and their feelings of fondness towards the area in which they are living, as well as *ikigai* and their desire for permanent residence in the area.

However, the question remains as to what 'community' actually means to these seniors. What do they like about where they live? Is it the fact that they have lived there all their lives and are familiar with the area, that their families come from the area, that their friends and acquaintances live there? Do they feel fondness towards the climate or natural environment, the social networks and relationships that they have formed in the area, or the services and facilities provided by the local government? This was not made clear

Fig. 10 Relationship between community and *ikigai*

Item	Yanai				Clallam				t	df	p
	#	%	Ikigai		#	%	Ikigai				
			avg.	s.d.			avg.	s.d.			
Fondness	243	67.7%	1.77	0.806	260	83.9%	1.41	0.732	-5.232	501	<.005***
Permanency	265	73.8%	1.83	0.844	245	79.0%	1.38	0.701	-6.568	508	<.005***

by this analysis, thus it is difficult to determine whether it is the desire for 'self-expression' or 'self-development' or the desire for a 'sense of community' that affects the senior's feelings.

4 *Ikigai* across cultures

4. 1 From the survey

Through the analysis of the two surveys done in the United States and Japan, Matthews' assertion regarding the coexistence of 'self-development' and 'sense of community' types of *ikigai* in both countries was confirmed. In both the Yanai area and the Clallam area, seniors who had more social activities showed higher levels of *ikigai* than those who did not, and those that felt a greater fondness for their community also felt more *ikigai* than those who did not. Social activities included both activities for self-development and those which promoted a sense of community, and variables affecting feelings towards one's place of residence could be such things as relationships with others as well as the natural environment, although this was undetermined in this analysis. Thus it can be said that the results of the analysis of these two surveys seems to support the universal human need to have both an 'identity', which is expressed through self-development activities, as well as a feeling of security derived from interaction with others, or a 'sense of community'.

In addition, the results seem to suggest

that beyond these basic needs which lead to the pursuit of a balance in *ikigai*, there is a difference in the way these needs are fulfilled due to cultural, historical, and societal differences in the two countries. For example, although we found that social activity seems to heavily affect *ikigai*, the types of activities in which seniors in both areas participated in are different. In Yanai, seniors seem to participate more in group-building activities or group-related activities, whereas in the Clallam area, functional groups or individual activities seemed to be more common. However, without more qualitative research on the actual nature of each activity and the reason for the seniors' participation in those activities, it is difficult to ascertain whether an activity is truly for self-development or for companionship.

In regards to seniors' feelings about their geographical location, we again discovered that those who feel a greater fondness towards their town were more likely to feel *ikigai* than those who did not. When one considers the fact that over half of the respondents in Yanai were originally from the area, while almost 90% of those in the Clallam area had moved into the area, one might say that the fondness which those in Yanai feel could be more due to the relationships that they have built since their childhood, while their reason for being there is more due to 'fate' (such as being born into the area, or marrying someone from the area) than a self

conscious decision which brought them to move to the area for reasons of self-development. In contrast, the great number of those moving into the Clallam area from varied locations and backgrounds would seem to suggest that their move was an act of self-development, a conscious decision to 'enjoy' or 'to make something' of their retired years by moving into what Bellah terms a 'community of interest' or a 'lifestyle enclave'. However, this also needs to be researched in greater depth, to find out what exactly were the seniors' reasons for living where they chose, what exactly do they feel a sense of fondness for, and what exactly does 'community' mean to them.

4. 2 In conclusion

In the modernization of the United States and Japan, the two cultures have developed many similar characteristics, among which are specific functional characteristics such as changes in family size and structure, a greater number of women choosing to join the workforce, the lengthening of the average lifespan, etc.. These characteristics are making it necessary for both countries to find a more comprehensive method of drawing the older generation into a more active and satisfying role in society.

"...Excessive Japanese groupism and excessive American individualism have led to social disease, whose cure is to emphasize the other, unmarked pole in the cultural dialectic: Japanese individualism and American groupism"²⁸. Regarding the 'social disease' in the older generation, we might find that older Americans who do not have the means to be independent or the initiative to be active on their own are in danger of being

ignored by society as a whole, their existence forgotten, while in those Japanese elders who find it difficult to fit into a group are in danger of being left out of activities all together, again lost to those people that want to help them. By looking at each others successes and failures, both countries should be able to develop more comprehensive methods for ensuring the *ikigai* and social participation of their seniors. There is already evidence of this happening - in the Japanese Ministry of Welfare's "Ikigai-zukuri" initiative, keywords such as 'active participation', 'free participation', 'self-initiated' appear in a great variety of programs being supported²⁹. In the United States, the call for the promotion of 'corporate citizenship' and 'philanthropy'³⁰ show that there is an increasing awareness of Americans in regards to the necessity for mutual support and societal responsibility.

Thus, in the goal to create a balance of familial, private and public support of social welfare in the two countries, the two countries have a great deal which they can learn from each other. In the United States, in order to return from 'communities of interest' based on class, lifestyle and common interests to the more traditional form of 'communities of memory' or 'communities of commitment' that Bellah discusses, the strong emphasis on group that is found in rural Japan could be a good source of information. Likewise, in Japan, where efforts to promote self-development through sports and hobbies often lead to a formalized group structure or activity, 'elderhostel' programs and 'voluntary associations' common in the United States could provide seniors with 'self-development' activities. In using each

other as a source of reference, however, differences in societal structures must not be overlooked, and programs should be adapted to each culture.

Harada points out, "in the past, the social activities provided for seniors were mainly activities built solely for the purpose of getting the elderly out of their homes and helping them to make friends. Hobby groups, travel groups, study groups, these were activities which were considered to be beneficial for promoting health and interaction, and from these, a sense of *ikigai*. However, simply getting seniors out of their houses cannot be called 'social participation'. Thus 'social participation' is made up of (1) building social networks in the community, and (2) social activities, of which these first is passive social participation and the second is active social participation"²¹. The former is an example of 'sense of community', the latter of 'self-development'. This balance is what service providers in both countries must strive for.

The main objective is not to provide activities which encourage passive participation of seniors ('for seniors'), but to give opportunities for seniors to develop their own programs ('by seniors') and to encourage an inter-generational exchange of ideas and activities, thus enabling them to maintain dignity and respect by being responsible for themselves and those around them. "Sharing practices of commitment rooted in religious life and civic organization helps us to identify with others different from ourselves, yet joined with us not only in interdependence and a common destiny, but by common ends as well. Because we share a common tradition, certain habits of the heart, we can work

together to construct a common future"²². This holds true not only within a society, culture, or communities, but also between societies, cultures, and communities²³.

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