Demographic Change and the Family in Japan's Aging Society (review)

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movement would have provided much-needed context for the book's concluding chapter and perhaps even affected its conclusions.

Demographic Change and the Family in Japan's Aging Society.
Edited by John W. Traphagan and John Knight. State University of New York Press, 2003. 248 pp. Cloth, $71.50; paper, $23.95.

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Traphagan and Knight have edited a timely and interesting book about Japan's aging population and its impact on the family and rural depopulation. It attempts to synthesize demographic and anthropological approaches and documents changes in the *ie* (Japanese stem family) and small-town struggles for survival. Two chapters by demographers identify trends and variables associated with coresidence and functional limitations of older persons using a 1987 national survey. Eight chapters of field studies conducted in the 1990s complement the statistical analyses and reveal how, where, and why problems arise and how people and towns cope. In chapter 1, Traphagan and Knight review the issues (family, population, and aging) addressed in the book. In chapter 11, Long and Littleton evaluate the accomplishments of the book for three themes (depopulation, caregiving, and family relations).

A key theme is the decline in traditional living arrangements and the weakening of obligatory family caregiving. Chapter 2 by Raymo and Kaneda shows that coresidence (multigenerational living arrangements) is more likely when older persons are widowed/divorced/separated, own businesses, have three or more children, own their own homes, and are nonurban. In contrast, in chapter 10 Traphagan points out that coresidence as a variable does not necessarily mean two (or three) generations living under one roof. Increasingly it represents two households on the same family compound (they are not recognized as coresident in the census). Whether residents perceive their arrangements as coresidence or separate units, and how they interact, is more complex than their numerical representation. For example, he describes resistance by daughters-in-law to traditional coresidence and suggests that this is why eldest sons are handicapped on today's marriage market.

As the family system changes, traditional obligations and expectations are often reinvented or revived by people, industries, and government policies, albeit with different outcomes. Brown's study of *nisetai jutaku* (new prefabricated two-family households under one roof) in chapter 3 shows how reality deviates from the ideal as a result of different expectations by the two generations. Thang, in chapter 4, examines an unsuccessful attempt at reviving contact between older persons and children at an age-integrated facility (a nursing home combined with a nursery). Problems result from the lack of

commitment from government officials, lack of training among facility managers, and opposition from middle-aged parents who question the hygiene of the elderly. Chapter 7 by Kawano describes alternative locations of burial for those outside the traditional *ie* system and for those who reject traditional family grave sites. While these chapters demonstrate conflicts and strains between generations over the succession of the *ie* and caregiving issues, chapter 9 by Jenike shows how families adapt to professional care as Japan shifts to a new model of welfare with the introduction of National Long-Term Care Insurance (*kaigohoken)* in 2000. Chapters 5 and 6 on depopulation, by Thompson and Knight, illustrate how towns struggle with revitalization projects and their politics.

The book sometimes falls short of its goal of strengthening complementarities of demographic and anthropological studies. The issue of when and how two generations coreside centers on the daughter-in-law's point of view, even though family succession by daughters (rather than sons) is increasing. Similarly, the question of who provides care is largely presented from a daughter-in-law's point of view despite the fact that elderly wives are the largest group of caregivers to bedridden elderly. In other words, the authors do not sample other participants in these conflicts. A more balanced picture would be provided by including older persons living alone, older couples helping each other, and daughters as caregivers.

As Traphagan and Knight acknowledge, these two disciplines differ in methodology, and the fit between them is not perfect. Statistical analyses by demographers do not offer substantive interpretation of why certain variables are associated with coresidence. Ethnographic studies by anthropologists do not provide fuller answers because they rely on small convenience samples that do not represent the models provided by demographers. Rich in detail, these cases show the variance rather than the means.

Despite these problems, the book offers a rich understanding about family changes and how people cope. It generates interesting questions and serves as a good reader for discussion in undergraduate and graduate courses on comparative cultures, on Japan or East Asia. For those teaching family and gerontology courses, the book offers a wonderful cross-cultural perspective. I highly recommend it.