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「子どもたちのため」：高齢移民女性たちの沖縄への帰還移動

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"*Kodomotachi no Tame* [For the Sake of the Children]": Elderly Okinawan Women's Return Migration to Okinawa[1)]

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Introduction: Elderly Okinawan Women Returnees

While studies on Japanese and Okinawan war brides who migrated to North America and Australia have already been given attention in the academic literature (see works by Nakano Glenn 1986; Shimada (ed.) 2009; Zeiger 2010; and Tamura 2011) studies on Okinawan women migrating to Southeast Asia, particularly to the Philippines—some of whom returned to Okinawa in their late adult years—are scant and are not accorded much recognition by scholars in the realm of Japanese or Okinawan migration. Married to Filipino men who worked on U.S. bases in Okinawa during the early part of the American Occupation, these women went with their husbands to the Philippines upon termination of their husbands' work contracts and settled there.

Recently (albeit some started returning in the 1970s), these women have returned to Okinawa and re-settled in the prefecture. While this return migration may conventionally be linked to issues of ethnic identity and belonging, as well as nostalgia for their home and/or birthplace, one main reason for the return of these women is the fact that their children have decided to go to Okinawa mainly for work and financial stability. To these women, the return is not so much a homecoming but rather more of a desire to be with their family, their children in particular. Although not necessarily living with their children—several of these women live on their own in Okinawa (some in elderly-care facilities)—their familial and maternal duties are seen to extend beyond borders and time.

This paper looks at the return of these Okinawan women as well the factors that are involved in this process. It also looks at the intersection between gender, identity, and religious belonging in the creation of "home." Moreover, it is to be argued that "home" for these women does not necessarily speak of a homecoming, but rather of belongingness and a sense of connectedness to the family, since the Okinawa they once knew is long gone.

Women migrants are usually seen to move or migrate in conjunction with a partner or family member, thus undermining their agency and their individual choices in the

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decision to move or migrate. Studies on Japanese and Okinawan migration are more often than not male-centric; thus, Okinawan migrant women are treated as "faceless bodies" (Shirota 2007, 177). Okinawan women migrants to the Philippines were mostly *shashin hanayome* (picture brides) and *yobiyose* (summoned family members) migrants in the pre-war period and so-called *sensou hanayome,* or war brides, in the post-war period. Needless to say, these Okinawan women's migration in the post-war period is significant due to their migratory processes and experiences, particularly in the context of war and the U.S. occupation of Okinawa. The role of the U.S. Occupation period is significant in these women's migration as it is linked to notions of identity and nationality (many of these women were "stateless") as well as to memory (particularly war memories). These women have been called "*sensou hanayome* (war brides)" (Ohno 1991), "*Okinawa uuman* (Okinawan woman)" (Hosoda 2010), Okinawan *Issei* women (Maehara 2001; Zulueta 2005; Zulueta 2008), and Philippine *Uchinaanchu Issei* (Zulueta 2011). Throughout this paper though, I use the term *Issei* (first generation migrants) to refer to these women as this is also the term used by them to refer to themselves. *Issei* is both an in-group identity marker (in relation to the second [*nisei*] or third [*sansei*] generation) as well as an identity marker to distinguish themselves from other Okinawan women who did not share the same migration experience(s) that they did.

Life stories based on interviews with some of these women are used in this paper to provide the necessary analyses. Ethnographic fieldwork was at Oroku Catholic Church in Naha, where a large number of the *Issei* in Naha attend Sunday morning mass. In September 2009, a nearly three-hour-long interview was carried out on three *Issei,* and they were interviewed as a group, much like a focus-group discussion, where each woman freely talked about her life as well as her thoughts. The interviews were conducted in Japanese. During my subsequent trips to Okinawa in March and July 2010, I was able to talk to other *Issei* who attend mass at Oroku Catholic Church. Some though were unavailable or were indisposed (i.e. sick, suffering from Alzheimer's disease), while others did not want to talk about their lives in the Philippines and Okinawa, thus the small number of women interviewed.[2)]

Okinawan Women's Migration to the Philippines

There was significant migration of Okinawan women "war brides" (*sensou hanayome*) (Ohno 1991, 228) to the Philippines in the post-war period. As a particular category of Japanese migrants, these so-called "war brides" were "associated with the relative poverty and economic deprivation among the Japanese in the post-war years" (Befu, in Hirabayashi et. al., eds. 2002, 11). Most of them worked on or around the U.S. military bases, came into contact with servicemen, ended up marrying them, and eventually settled in their husbands' country (Ibid). Many of these women married and cohabited with American servicemen and Filipino base workers. While the number of intermarriages between Okinawan women and Filipino men could not be clearly established, it was

estimated that up until 1954, there were around 1,004 (recorded) cases of marriage between Filipino men and Okinawan women (Sugii 2009, 45).

It has been said that while the Filipinos' wages were not that high compared to the Americans', it was widely known in Okinawa that the Filipinos received relatively high wages (Ohno 1991, 233). As with mainland Japanese women, it was said that Okinawan women during the post-war years "longed" (*akogareta*) to be with an American soldier (Ibid).

Among those Okinawan women who married Filipinos, many of them went with their husbands to the Philippines upon the termination of their husbands' work contracts. These women crossed the seas to travel to the Philippines with only a travel document issued by the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyus (USCAR) in hand. They are considered to be the first generation Okinawans or *Issei* who settled in the Philippines during the post-war years. In some cases, going with their husbands to the Philippines was almost a "given choice" for these Okinawan women to live a comfortable life (Zulueta 2005, 54). For a few, emigration meant avoiding further conflicts with their parents and relatives who disowned them for marrying a foreigner (Ibid, 59). Nevertheless, those who went and settled in the Philippines were faced with numerous difficulties as expected for those taking up residence in a foreign land. Some of these women, however, were unfortunate to be separated from their Filipino husbands and were left behind in Okinawa with their children (Ohno 1991, 243).

For those women who went with their husbands to the Philippines, leaving Okinawa may have been an escape from the post-war hardships they had faced only to find out that moving to the Philippines was not at all a walk in the park for them. For one thing, the culture and the language were foreign to these women. The prejudices and discrimination against them by Filipinos who still had fresh memories of the war and had strong sentiments against the Japanese also added to these women's plight (Maehara 2001, 72; Zulueta 2005; Zulueta 2011). Though they were Okinawans, they were considered Japanese by the Filipinos, who at that time rarely made a distinction as to who was Japanese or Okinawan. Hence, for most of these women, hiding their Okinawan identity through the learning of the local language and avoiding speaking in Japanese or Okinawan was the only option for them, as necessitated by post-war Philippine conditions (Maehara 2001; Zulueta 2005). They had to "consciously assimilate" into Philippine society (Maehara 2001, 16), and during the immediate post-war years, these women adopted a Filipino identity (Ibid, 72). A large number of these women even acquired Philippine nationality (Suzuki and Tamaki 1996, 71; Ohno 1991, 240). However, a community of Okinawan women was non-existent during this time since these women lived far apart from each other. Thus, assimilation was a given for most of them.

Moreover, not all of the Filipinos whom these women married were well off in their home country. Many of these men were financially hard up, with some left jobless upon returning to the Philippines (Sekai no Uchinaanchu 1986, 133) and some opting to go abroad to look for greener pastures even if it meant going to Vietnam during the Vietnam

War (Ohno 1991, 236–238; Zulueta 2005; Zulueta 2011). There were also cases of separation between the Okinawan wife and her Filipino husband upon emigration. These women had a difficult time in the Philippines, particularly at the time when their husbands were deemed jobless upon returning to their home country. They then left their husbands and went back to Okinawa (Sekai no Uchinaanchu 1986, 145).

While the hardships endured by these *Issei* women cannot be denied, many of them reportedly had fond memories of their stay in the Philippines, and not a few of them chose to continue living in the country. The women also converted to Catholicism so that their children could be baptized as Catholics. At that time, the Catholic Church in the Philippines required both parents to be Catholic in order for their child to be baptized into the faith. Many of these women are steadfast believers and regularly go to church (even those who returned to Okinawa). As with other converts to the faith, they also have Christian names of their own.

The exact number of Okinawan female migrants to the Philippines cannot be given,[3] but it is estimated that around two to three thousand women went to the Philippines with their Filipino husbands (Suzuki and Tamaki 1996, 71). The number of these women currently residing in the Philippines, particularly in Manila and its surrounding areas, is said to number more than a thousand (Ohno 1991, 228). A reason for the lack of documentation of these Okinawan migrants may be that the migration of Okinawans was not considered a prominent event in Philippine history, since there is no Okinawan enclave to speak of due to the fact that the women settled in various towns and provinces, which were often far apart. Hence, being the only Okinawan in the area of settlement was not at all rare for these women (Maehara 2001). Furthermore, these post-war migrations to the Philippines seem to lack proper documentation on the Okinawan side as well, since data pertaining to post-war Okinawan migrations entered on the Okinawa Prefectural Government Website only listed what can be assumed to be destinations of official Okinawan migrants, i.e., those sanctioned by the government during this period.[4] Hence, destination countries point to those in Latin America. Moreover, there are also cases where the women left Okinawa with fake passports, and some did not even have passports during that time when they emigrated to the Philippines with their husbands (Zulueta 2008, 38). Hence, there is a great possibility that most of these out-migrations were not properly documented.

A significant number of these women still live in the Philippines with their families, with many of them living there comfortably. Some of them often visit their children living and working in Okinawa (and/or mainland Japan) whereas others have decided to return to Okinawa.

The following section provides an overview of three Okinawan *Issei* women's lives in the Philippines based on interviews (all names appearing are pseudonyms).

From Okinawa to the Philippines: Stories of the *Obaas*[5)]

Arakaki Katsuko-san, Shiroma Chieko-san, and Shimoji Kikue-san[6)] are three good friends who usually attend Sunday morning mass at Oroku Catholic Church.[7)] They were never acquainted with each other back in the Philippines and only met each other in Okinawa at Oroku Catholic Church a few years back. Arakaki-san has been a regular parishioner in the church since returning to Okinawa in 1989, while Shimoji-san started attending mass at Oroku much more recently (some two to three years before the interview in 2009). Meanwhile, Shiroma-san said that it was only upon her son's return to Okinawa that she started going to Church in Oroku since her son had bought a car upon settling in Okinawa. Shiroma-san has a little difficulty in walking.

All three of them are from Naha City, with Arakaki-san emphasizing that while she is from Naha, she is actually from a district called Uebaru, also in Naha. Okinawans are very particular about their place of birth; hence, districts within a city such as Naha are seen to have their distinct differences.

During the American Occupation, it was not rare for an Okinawan woman to marry a Filipino. Especially during that time, Filipinos ranked only second to the Americans in the pay-scale hierarchy, and many women saw Filipino men as "rich." "*Okinawa ni wa ne, watashitachi mitai ni, Firipin-jin to kekkonshite [Isseitachi] takusan yo* (In Okinawa, there are a lot of [*Issei*] like us who married Filipinos)." Like the other *Issei*, Arakaki-san, Shiroma-san, and Shimoji-san all met their husbands while working on base during the American occupation of Okinawa. Most of the women worked as maids while some were engaged in work as waitresses and store clerks. Arakaki-san worked as a clerk for a dry-cleaning company, and this was where she met her Filipino husband, who was a manager there. For her part, Shiroma-san met her husband at the mess hall where she was working as a waitress. Shimoji-san said that she washed the clothing of the American soldiers and cleaned their rooms, but she emphatically said that she was not a maid: "*Watashi wa maid ja nai* (I was not a maid)." With their Filipino husbands, the three *Issei* left Okinawa to settle in their husbands' hometowns—Arakaki-san and Shimoji-san both left Okinawa in 1957 and Shiroma-san left in 1964.

As in most cases, emigrants usually experience difficulties in settling in their host countries, and this is not any different from the *Issei* who settled in their husbands' hometowns in the Philippines, some of which were located in far-flung towns in the countryside. According to Maehara (2001), many of these women had to assimilate into Philippine society and culture to hide their Okinawan identity, since Filipinos' sentiments against the Japanese during that time were still ripe, and Filipinos did not distinguish between Okinawans and Japanese. Many of them had to learn the local language and/or dialect and culture. Indeed, this was so, and Arakaki-san, Shiroma-san, and Shimoji-san all said that they were called "*Haponesa* (Japanese woman)" by the locals. Arakaki-san laughingly recalls how her children were called "*anak ng Haponesa* (child of a Japanese

woman)" in those times. She also said that even the teachers were calling their children "*Hapon* (Japanese)." At the time, those were deemed derogatory remarks. Moreover, Shiroma-san said that because of the Japanese atrocities in Cabanatuan (a city in Nueva Ecija province), many, but not all Filipinos in the area had anti-Japanese sentiments, so her husband told her not to go outside the house. While the women did not explicitly share their feelings about being called "*Hapon*" or "*Haponesa*" during that time, not to mention that their children were also called "*anak ng Haponesa,"* it can be surmised that many Okinawan women suffered as a consequence of these discriminatory behaviours of the Filipinos then. Being mothers, they too were affected by the discrimination that their children faced—whether it was merely friendly banter or a more serious case of discrimination.

Arakaki-san added that there were families who disowned their sons who married an Okinawan woman. This is echoed by some children who spoke of how their grandparents on their fathers' side did not like their Okinawan daughters-in-law, with some of them even angry at their sons for marrying Okinawans, who were not considered to be distinct from the Japanese (Zulueta 2005). There were cases where some of these women were ostracized by the people in the small town where they lived for the mere reason that they were seen as Japanese. Many of the women also experienced having had their ties to their immediate families severed because of their decision to marry a foreigner, and a Filipino at that (Zulueta 2005). Fortunately for some *Issei*, they managed to receive support from friends in Okinawa, and this helped them overcome any difficulty adjusting to their new way of life in a different land. For instance, an *Issei* who still lives in the Philippines with her family was able to cope with her new life in the Philippines upon emigrating since she was then exchanging letters with her catechism teacher in Okinawa.[8)]

However, it should be noted that not all *Issei* experienced discrimination and hostility from Filipinos when they settled in the Philippines. Arakaki-san mentioned that in the 30 years that she was in the Philippines, her neighbours were all kind and supported her and made her stay comfortable. Shiroma-san and Shimoji-san both agreed and said that they too did not experience discrimination from their Filipino neighbours.[9)] Nevertheless, the move to the Philippines was fraught with difficulties, as these *Issei* also had problems and difficulties in adjusting to a new life (some had to live in rural areas) and a different culture.

While settling in a new place was of course difficult, Shiroma-san said that Filipinos were very kind to her. Going to the Philippines ahead of her husband (she settled in her husband's hometown, Tanabera, located in the northern Philippines province of Nueva Ecija), she said that she was able to get by with the little English that she knew and that Filipinos were honest and always gave her the correct change whenever she bought her groceries. However, she found it hard ("*kurushikatta yo*") living without a refrigerator (though the town had electricity), especially for the first six months of her stay, since she had to go to the market every day for their daily food.

For her part, Arakaki-san said that when she arrived in her husband's hometown, there

was no electricity, so they could not use the refrigerator and radio that they had brought from Okinawa. Her husband was a farmer, and they grew their own vegetables and had livestock. She said that they did not need a refrigerator as they could get fresh eggs every day and fish from the nearby pond, in addition to the vegetables they always harvested fresh. Arakaki-san spent 30 years in the Philippine countryside and was selling vegetables in the market even when her children went to Manila for college. She also mentioned that she and her husband were able to raise their children and send them to school through agricultural work. However, she lamented the fact that recently, with neo-liberal policies, local farmers are very much affected, and some are even having difficulty coping with their daily lives. Nevertheless, Arakaki-san found living in the Philippine countryside a wonderful experience and had fond memories of it. She smilingly said that she had beautiful memories ("*ii omoide*") of her life back then.[10)]

In the Philippines, most of the *Issei* learned Tagalog or the language of the region where they live or lived. For Arakaki-san, it meant learning Ilocano, the language mainly spoken in the Ilocos region, the northern part of the Philippines. She said that while she knows a little Tagalog, she is more fluent in Ilocano and can even write and read in the language, having lived in Ilocos Sur, the hometown of her husband, for 30 years. Her decision to learn Ilocano was for the reason that she had wanted her children to grow up like any other Filipino children, and hence, she never spoke to them in Japanese and/or Okinawan. Similarly, Shimoji-san, having spent 20 years in La Union (a province in the northern Philippines), also spoke to her children in Ilocano and never spoke in Japanese or Okinawan to them. Shiroma-san, meanwhile, knows Tagalog. For these *Issei*, raising their children to grow up as Filipinos was not exactly a reaction to the hostilities that many *Issei* experienced that brought not a few of them to conceal their Okinawan identities, but rather, it became a strategy for the quick assimilation of their children into what was Philippine society of that time. The decision of the *Issei* to raise their children in a "Filipino way" had certainly influenced their children's perceptions of themselves, with some of their children seeing themselves as "culturally more Filipino" than Okinawan. However, there are *Issei* who tried their best to impart Okinawan culture to their children through their food culture, values, and also their Okinawan language (Zulueta 2005).

The Return to Okinawa

Several of these *Issei* women returned to Okinawa as early as the 1970s, while others returned even before the reversion of the prefecture to the Japanese mainland in 1972. In recent years, many more are returning and settling in the prefecture. Not necessarily resettling in their hometowns, they now live on the main island of Okinawa. As mentioned earlier, not a few of them live on their own, as their children live with their families. To these women, the return is not so much a homecoming or a return to their natal home/birthplace; rather, the return signifies a desire to be with their children. Their roles as mothers as well as their familial duties define their return, with many of them returning to

Okinawa to assist their children in looking for work since many of them are not proficient in the Japanese language. Several of these *Issei* also encouraged their children to return to Okinawa (and mainland Japan) as it is more economically and politically stable than the Philippines. For many of these *Issei*, their duties and obligations as mothers extend beyond borders, space, and time, and while physically living apart from their children, their presence in the prefecture (as opposed to being in the Philippines) functions as an assurance for both parents and children of their "new lives" in Okinawa.

It can be said then that the *Issei*'s decision to emigrate to the Philippines and to return to Okinawa can be said to be dependent on their children's decision for emigration. In other words, the *Issei*'s reason for emigrating and/or returning was mainly due to their children. As Arakaki-san put it:

> *Watashitachi wa ne, mukou ni itta no mo kodomotachi no tame, kochi ni modotte kita mo, kodomotachi no tame* (it's for the sake of our children that we went there (to the Philippines); we came back here ("returned") also for the sake of our children).

In addition to the fact that their children had all gone back to Okinawa (or to mainland Japan) to work, the fact that their husbands had already passed away also pursuaded many of these *Issei* to return to Okinawa. Shiroma-san, had this to say:

> *Mukou de nani mo nai sa ne, kodomotachi mo ookii sa ne, Okinawa ni itte . . . Okinawa [ni] takusan shigoto [ga] aru yo, mada wakai sa ne, 30- 40-dai . . . Okinawa no shigoto, takusan yo ne, minna Okinawa ni [kite], shigoto wo shita wake sa . . .* (Nothing's left there (in the Philippines), our children are all grown up; they all went to Okinawa . . . there are a lot of jobs in Okinawa you know, they're all young, they're in their 30s and 40s . . . there are a lot of jobs in Okinawa, everyone came to Okinawa for work . . . .).

There are also those who returned to Okinawa due mainly to the presence of greater economic opportunities that would enable them to secure a brighter future for their children.

The return to Okinawa, however, was not at all rosy and was less of a "homecoming" for these women as some of them experienced discrimination from their fellow Okinawans since Okinawan women who married or cohabited with Filipinos were looked down upon. One of the reasons for this is that Okinawans give prime importance to "blood purity," and marriage to a foreigner, someone from a less-developed country at that, was looked down upon in Okinawan society. According to the *Issei*, the discrimination they received came from people their age and not from the younger Okinawans. Since "international marriages (*kokusai kekkon*)" are now common among the younger generation, the younger Okinawans do not really care if the *Issei* had married Filipinos or not.

These women converted to Catholicism when their children were baptized as Catholics, following their Filipino husband's faith. During this period (1950s to 1960s), a non-Catholic parent had to be baptized as well in order for a child to be baptized into the Catholic faith. These women became ardent believers and are currently active in Catholic churches in Okinawa. Oroku Catholic Church in Naha, the prefecture's capital, has been

instrumental in bringing together these Okinawan women return emigrants—their families, stories, and legacies. This church served as a place for socializing for these women, thus creating a small community of returnees from the Philippines. These women only had the opportunity to get to know each other in Okinawa (despite living in the Philippines for a long period), and their similar fates bound them to each other, with the church serving as the centre of their social lives. However, some of them also experience discrimination in Okinawa for being Catholic converts since there are people who consider Catholicism to be a foreign religion. They are accused of believing in a god that foreigners believe in ("*gaikokujin no shinjiteiru kami wo shinjiteiru*").

Many *Issei* returnees have already been widowed, and most, if not all, of their children are living in Okinawa or mainland Japan. Thus, the *Issei* made the return trip to Okinawa for these reasons. There were also cases where some women made temporary return trips to Okinawa for visits or to take their children on a holiday and then eventually decided to return to live in Okinawa. Medoruma-san, an *Issei* I met when I visited Oroku Catholic Church in July 2010, said that she recently returned to Okinawa. She came back to the prefecture for a medical check-up and consultation a few years ago and then went back to the Philippines. She eventually decided to stay in Okinawa "for good" since her husband passed away and her children are all living and working in Okinawa. For Medoruma-san, her own return has become a homecoming for her because she was "reunited" with her children now living and working in Okinawa. Another example is Miyara-san. She returned with her two daughters in 1960 for a short visit. However, in the 1980s, Miyara-san, who wanted a good future for her family, eventually decided to return to Okinawa in the 1980s with her family.

Nevertheless, one should not overlook the fact that a good number of *Issei* chose to remain and live in the Philippines with their families and are leading comfortable lives. Aside from being used to life in the Philippines, they are able to speak Tagalog (or another one of the Philippine languages). They have household helpers as well—a luxury in Japan—and their children also make it a point to take care of them, as it is customary in the Philippines to have aging parents under the children's care.

The Issei's Return: Fulfilling a Mother's Obligation

The *Issei*'s decisions to return to Okinawa were largely influenced by their children's decision to live and work in Okinawa (and/or the Japanese mainland). As argued at the beginning of the paper, their return is not very much linked to notions of nostalgia for their homeland but is rather tied to a sense of being connected with their families and a desire to be with their children, most of whom have families of their own. It is also argued that these women's duties and obligations as mothers extend beyond borders, and that while for some *Issei* the return to Okinawa is a "return for good" (i.e. re-settlement in Okinawa), for other *Issei*, their return takes on a transitory nature, in that their return also speaks of several returns.

After their return to Okinawa, the *Issei* occasionally visit the Philippines, particularly if they have children living there. This speaks of their maternal concern and duty towards their families, especially towards their children. "*Minna wa jibun no katei wo miteiru* (Everyone takes care of her own household/family)," they say. The *Issei*'s familial duties as mothers can be said to be due to the expectation or the "burden" placed upon them to keep their households together. Marion Kaplan indicates that this "burden of keeping households and communities together" was also observed among German-Jewish women refugees in Nazi Germany (Kaplan, in Quack (ed.) 1995, 11). While these Okinawan women are far from being called "refugees," their move to the Philippines as well as their return to Okinawa was not without hardships (not to mention discrimination), and their emigrations—their move to the Philippines and return to Okinawa, as well as (for some) their shuttling back and forth between those two places—indicate a desire to keep their families intact and fulfil their maternal obligations and their familial duties. For the *Issei* who decided to remain in the Philippines, their decision to do so was because their children and their husbands are all living in the Philippines and so their familial duties are more locally fixed.

Pragmatic factors influencing the decision of the *Issei* to return to Okinawa should also be considered here. It was in the 1970s that some, such as Shiroma-san, started returning to Okinawa because that was a time when the Philippine economic and political conditions were not stable compared to those of Japan. Shiroma-san returned to Okinawa in 1973, barely 10 years after her arrival in the Philippines. She decided to go back to work so as to be able to put her children through college. In those years, her husband had gone to Vietnam, Iran, and the U.S., and she told me that she only had vague knowledge of what happened to him; thus, she decided to return to Okinawa to work to support her children. Since then, she has visited her children in the Philippines once every six months to a year, but in the times she visited, she only stayed with them for two weeks since she had to earn money for her children's education. Shiroma-san's case illustrates the "double" role that mothers are tasked to undertake under certain circumstances—to be a mother and a breadwinner at the same time. While current female labour migration sees women taking on the role of breadwinner (with most of them leaving their husbands at home) and working in other countries (usually engaged in "reproductive labour" [Parreñas 2003]) in order to earn their family's keep, Shiroma-san had to "return" to Okinawa to fulfil the role of breadwinner, a role she had to undertake due to an absent husband.

The Catholic Church in the Lives of the Returnees

Most of these women converted to the Catholic faith for the main purpose of having their children baptized as Catholics. Arakaki-san converted to the faith two years after marrying her husband at the age of 21. Shiroma-san decided to convert before going to the Philippines in 1964. It was because her husband wanted to enrol their son in an American school that she decided to be baptized as a Catholic since the school required

both parents to be so. Shimoji-san, however, said that she only decided to convert upon returning to Okinawa after living in the Philippines for 20 years.

What links these women is their conversion to the Catholic faith and their continuing devotion to Catholicism as manifested in their attendance at mass and church activities. The Catholic Church in Okinawa (particularly Oroku Church) serves as a place where these return emigrants can interact with their fellow returnees. This church in Naha brought together these *Issei* as they share the same fate and the same faith. Sunday morning masses are usually said in Japanese except for the second reading and parts of the responsorial psalm.[11] Songs are sung in both English and Japanese, and some Tagalog songs are part of the repertoire as well. The presiding priest is usually a foreigner (who is fluent in both English and Japanese), who belongs to the Capuchin Order (the religious order in charge of Oroku Catholic Church), and the homilies given are first said in Japanese and then translated into English.

Gatherings after Sunday morning mass are venues where the *Issei* can socialize with each other as well as with their children and other parishioners. After the mass, which usually finishes at 11:00 a.m. or earlier, the women, along with other parishioners, gather in a small hall inside the church just outside the entrance to the main chapel for some snacks and coffee. Snacks are occasionally followed by lunch, especially on special occasions. After chatting for an hour or so, the women go to a nearby shopping mall and spend the rest of the time socializing with each other (when lunch is not served in church, the *Issei* have their lunch there).

Mass is also held every Wednesday mornings at 10:00 a.m., and several of the *Issei* attend the service. In the instances that I attended Wednesday mass at Oroku Church, the women were also present and showed their support for the church community. Their presence in these services also indicates their sense of belonging to the Oroku Church community, which in turn offers opportunities for them to be with fellow *Issei*. The community is a tight-knit one, where most parishioners share the same histories of emigration to and from the Philippines.[12] These women also join several other church activities, such as visits to facilities for the aged. They also help out in cleaning the church on Saturday mornings. While not everyone is as active as Arakaki-san in joining these activities, other *Issei* attend other activities such as bazaars.

It cannot be denied that "establishing a sense of place" is important in any return (Long, in Long and Oxfeld [eds.] 2004, 88) and that this return movement also necessitates "creating another place" (Constable, in Long and Oxfeld [eds.] 2004, 123), since the place returned to has changed over time, and for these return emigrants, returning to the place where they originated, or that they once considered "home," does not necessarily ensure a smooth re-integration into the society they have been absent from for a long time. For the *Issei*, their return was not exactly a return to their exact place of birth or hometown (although many have re-settled in their hometowns). The Okinawa they left in the 1950s and 1960s was one that was recovering from the destruction caused by the War and was currently under American Occupation. These *Issei* returned to an Okinawa that

has since reverted to Japan, and the prefecture undeniably has changed over time. As previously mentioned, these women also experienced discrimination from the locals, and hence, one could say that their "homecoming" was not necessarily a "welcome" back from society.

Some *Issei* also waxed nostalgic for the place where they lived in the Philippines when they found out that Okinawa was not the same Okinawa they once knew. "*Firipin wa ii tokoro yo* (The Philippines is a nice place)," Arakaki-san said, to which Shimoji-san agreed, "*sou yo*". Then Arakaki-san added, "*Firipin [wa] daisuki yo, hontou* (I really like the Philippines)." One thing that these women noticed was that family values in Okinawa have changed, and many elderly people now live alone, whereas in the Philippines, grown-up children—even those with families—continue to care for their elderly parents. According to them, Okinawans used to take care of their elderly parents, and they lament the fact that nowadays things have changed. Speaking in Tagalog, Arakaki-san said that everyone only thinks of his or her own life—"*kanya-kanyang buhay*." She added that Japan may be a prosperous country economically, but she feels that interpersonal relationships have suffered and that nowadays, people have become "spiritually poor (*kokoro wa mazushii*)." She continued, "*sore wo kangaeru to, Firipin no hou ga zutto ii. Relationships, ne* . . . (Whenever I think about that, (I think) the Philippines is much better (in terms of interpersonal relationships)."

It is the Catholic Church, more particularly, Oroku Church then, that anchors the *Issei* in their "return" to Okinawa. For the *Issei*, the return movement necessitated the "creation of another place," or rather a place of belongingness, which they found in the Catholic Church. For these converts to the faith, "home" for these women does not necessarily speak of a homecoming but rather of belongingness and a sense of connectedness to the family, as the Okinawa they once knew is long gone.

Conclusion

This paper looked at the return emigration of Okinawan women to Okinawa. Married to Filipino base workers in the immediate post-war years, these women moved to the Philippines upon the termination of their husbands' work contracts. In the Philippines, they were not spared hardship and discrimination as they settled and assimilated into Philippine society while raising their families.

Due to the political instability that accompanied the Marcos years in the 1970s Philippines, the proclamation of martial law, as well as the bleak economic situation in the country (as opposed to the bubble years of the Japanese economy), many of these women wanted a brighter future for their families, especially for their children. Hence, they initiated a return to Okinawa. There were also cases where it was the children themselves who decided to seek better opportunities in Okinawa (and on the Japanese mainland), prompting their mothers to assist them and make the return trip as well to the land of their birth. As these women have said, it was primarily because of their children that they decided to

Figure 1: Oroku Catholic Church in Naha (photo taken by the author)

Figure 2: Church interior (photo taken by the author)

Figure 3: An Issei singing karaoke during a birthday celebration (photo taken by the author)

move to the Philippines, and now that their children are already living and working in Okinawa, many of them with families of their own, these *Issei* mothers saw it as their familial duty and maternal obligation to return to Okinawa. These women have returned to assist their children in looking for work and adjusting to life in Okinawa (as many of their children do not speak and/or read/write Japanese), or just to make sure that they are being well taken cared of despite the fact that many of their children have families of their own. For them, being in Okinawa with their children (despite living apart from them) translates into being present for their children, thus ensuring a feeling of security and the carrying out of their obligations.

Moreover, the presence of a community of *Issei* in the Catholic Churches of Okinawa (especially at Oroku Catholic Church) was instrumental in these women's re-adjustment to life in Okinawa—a place they once knew but which proved to be different upon their return. Sharing the same history of emigration to the Philippines, as well as a shared Catholic faith, these women—having the same fate and a shared faith—found in the church an anchor for their everyday lives in Okinawa.

Notes

1) Fieldwork for this research was carried out with a research grant for graduate students received from the *Shibusawa Minzokugaku Shinkou Kikin* [Shibusawa Foundation for the Advancement of Ethnology]. This paper is based on a small part of a chapter of my Ph.D. dissertation submitted to Hitotsubashi University in March 2011. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 10th Asia-Pacific Sociological Association (APSA) Conference on 10 December 2010 in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia.
2) In my Ph.D. dissertation, I also interviewed *Nisei*, or second-generation, return emigrants. Here, I utilized some information about Okinawan women gathered from my interviews with the *Nisei* (second-generation) return emigrants.
3) Out-migration statistics gathered from the Okinawa prefectural government website do not include the Philippines as a destination of post-war Okinawan emigrants. See: http://www3.pref.okinawa.jp/site/contents/attach/9780/169-171. pdf.
4) As an example, the case of post-war Okinawan migration to Bolivia can be mentioned here. To curb Okinawa's growing population and the problems that went with it, the USCAR "touted overseas emigration," and Bolivia was seen as an ideal destination, one reason being that it was the first country that accepted emigrants from Japan and Okinawa (Amemiya, in Adachi (ed.) 2006, 178–181).
5) *Obaa* is an Okinawan term of endearment for a grandmother (*obaasan* in Japanese).
6) As of late 2012, I was informed that Shimoji-san had been moved to an elderly facility and does not attend church services anymore at Oroku Catholic Church.
7) Following the Japanese convention, "san" (Mr./Ms./Mrs.) is affixed to the *Issei*'s surname. During the interview, which was conducted mainly in Japanese, I addressed the women in this manner.
8) Data gathered from an interview with this *Issei*'s daughter, who is living in Okinawa.
9) It may be argued here that the *Issei*'s statements about discrimination might have been a bit tempered considering my being a Filipino. However, I sensed sincerity in their voices and demeanour and also observed the same in church when they interacted with the *Nisei* and Filipino (i.e. non-*Nisei*) parishioners.
10) Arakaki-san is one *Issei* who, despite her hardships upon moving to the Philippines, also had good memories of her life in the country. Her *Sansei* granddaughter, with whom this author became acquainted, reported that her grandmother is planning to write a memoir of her life, including her experiences in the Philippines. She said that her grandmother keeps old pictures of her life back then.
11) The Catholic Mass usually consists of two parts: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The Liturgy of the Word is comprised of the first reading, followed by a responsorial psalm (that is sometimes sung), and a second reading. The Gospel, read by the presiding priest, precedes the homily. The Liturgy of the Eucharist comes after that and starts with the offertory rites.
12) On my first visit to Oroku Catholic Church in September 2009, people were not speaking to me, thinking that I was Japanese (this is due to my Chinese looks). Upon eventually finding out that I was a Filipino graduate student at that time, they asked me what I was doing in church, indicating that the parishioners know each other so well. On my next visit in March 2010, I was even approached by a *Nisei* and was asked, "*atarashii hito desu ka* (are you new here?)," confirming the tight-knit community present at this church. Subsequent visits and fieldwork at this church helped me "enter" into this community and be considered part of it, albeit being based in Tokyo. Recently (like in September 2014), each time I pay a visit to Oroku Church, people would always greet me with "*okaeri,*" a shortened and more informal form of "*okaeri nasai*" (welcome back).

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「子どもたちのため」:
高齢移民女性たちの沖縄への帰還移動

ジョハンナ・ズルエタ

本研究は、沖縄人「戦争花嫁」の帰還移動に注目する。また、ジェンダー、アイデンティティ、宗教的帰属意識の交差点に注目しながら、「home（故郷）」の形成も考察する。これらの沖縄人女性にとって、「home」は、必ずしも単に戻るべき場所としての「故郷」を意味するとは限らなかった。むしろ、「home」は帰属意識や家族との関係である。聞き取り調査により、ライフ・ストーリーを使用しながら分析を行う。