Exploring Modes of Adaptation and Consciousness:

Identity Transformation of A Japanese Sojourner in the U.S.

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It was the summer of 1997, when I left my home country and moved to California to go to graduate school. I was twenty-three years old. Since then, I have accomplished many things — I learned how to speak English, earned a graduate degree, worked as a sales and marketing manager at a travel company, learned how to snowboard, hiked up some mountains in Northern California, hiked down to the bottom of Grand Canyon, learned how to return items I bought but I didn't want after all. The list goes on. The last seven years of my life was full of excitement and uncertainty, which I would have never experienced if I had stayed in Japan. Now looking back, I kept pushing my limits to the maximum extent I could ever imagine. It was a challenge that I created for myself. I have been enjoying my life to the fullest.

Although I honestly say that I enjoy the challenge of living in a foreign country and I feel good about my accomplishments, it is not easy. And one question which keeps coming back to me at times is this: "who am I?" In my everyday interaction with people around me in this country, I have encountered many incidents that made me question about my identity. My self-concept and self-image has been changed since I moved to the U.S. It was the way people here treated me, it was my observation on other Japanese people in this country, or it was the way other Japanese people or other nationals talked about Americans that made me realize what it means to be me is different from what it did in Japan. In this essay, I examine my own lived experience of living in the United States by tracing my journey of intercultural identity transformation. I reflect on my personal experience and interrogate how I have come to understand what it means to be me (Japanese, female, foreigner, Asian.... sometimes Chinese, as some people mistakenly or ignorantly refer me as) in American culture. In particular, I employ Martinez's (2000) three modes of ethnic consciousness and Berry's (1990) four attitudes of acculturation for my analysis to discuss how the modes of my adaptation has shifted and how the shift of the modes made my identity experience possible for the past seven years of my stay in this country.

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Cross-cultural Adaptation and Berry's Acculturation Attitudes

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the phenomenon of cross-cultural adaptation has been given significant attention to in various social science disciplines (e.g. anthropology, sociology, psychology, business, linguistics, etc.) in the United States. In communication, as well, this issue has been researched extensively. Communication scholar, Young Yun Kim (1988, 1995a, 1995b, 2001) has developed a communication theory of cross-cultural adaptation focusing on how communication mediates the process of migrants' cross-cultural adaptation. According to Kim, the core of cross-cultural adaptation is to acquire communication competence of the host culture, so that newcomers can communicate with the host nationals effectively and appropriately. Through communication (both interpersonal and mass communication with host nationals and with the members of the original culture), new comers develop host communication competence (Kim, 2001, p. 73).

The theory predicts three outcomes of cross-cultural adaptation: functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity (Kim, 2001, p. 61). Functional fitness refers to migrants' capability of "carrying out everyday-life activities smoothly and feeling comfortable in a particular environment" (pp. 185–186), while psychological health refers to "a state in which the individual's cognitive, affective, and operational tendencies work in harmony" (p. 187). Achieving higher level of functional fitness and psychological health is important for newcomers to operate their everyday lives less stressfully and more satisfactory, and increased functional fitness and psychological health are accompanied by emergence of intercultural identity. According to Kim (1996, 2001), migrants' cultural identity evolves from singular monocultural one to intercultural one through communicative interactions with a new cultural environment. Kim (2001) states:

> The singular identity of a stranger shaped and conditioned by the original cultural milieu, along with the singular identification with and loyalty to that group, is expanded beyond the perimeters of the original cultural conditioning. The term *intercultural identity* thus refers to an acquired identity constructed after the early childhood enculturation process through the individual's communicative interactions with a new cultural environment. (p. 191).

Similarly, various identity responses of migrants in the new cultural environment are explained in Berry's (1970, 1980, 1990) model of identity modes. In his theory of psychological acculturation, Berry identifies four different modes of acculturation attitudes: assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration. Acculturation attitude is defined as the way migrants (and ethnic minorities) wishes to relate to the dominant culture and their original (ethnic) culture, depending on how much they wish to maintain their original cultural identity and characteristics and how much they wish to maintain relationship with the other (dominant) group(s). For example, if a migrant does not value his/her original cultural identity and values and want to relate to the dominant group in the new culture, her/his acculturation attitudes is characterized with assimilation. On the other hand, if he/she tries to maintain his/her original cultural identity and do not wish to relate to the dominant group, her/his mode of acculturation is that of separation. Integration mode occurs when he/she value both original culture and new

culture, while marginzlization occurs when he/she values neither of them (Berry, 1990, p. 244).

Berry's acculturation theory, as well as Kim's communication theory of cross-cultural adaptation, can be applied for both international migrants and ethnic minorities in the U.S. (Kim, Lujan, & Dixon, 1998, p. 258). Berry's theory has been utilized widely in cross-cultural adaptation studies in both international and domestic contexts. For example, Kim, Lujan, and Dixon (1998) conducted a study on identity structure and patterns of Oklahoma Indians in domestic context, employing Berry's model of acculturation attitudes. They found that the degree of identity integration is positively correlated with the degree of intercultural contact. They also concluded that their findings suggest that Kim's conception of cultural-intercultural identity continuum (p. 268). This means that when migrants and ethnic minorities maintain contacts with the dominant group and integrate both their original culture with the dominant one, their identity transforms from monocultural to intercultural.

Kim's notion of intercultural transformation sounds very nice in theory, but I wonder, in reality, if the nature and the process of intercultural identity are as simple as it is theoretically defined. Yep (2002) examines his own multicultural identities being born as "100% pure Chinese" who learned Spanish in Lima and moved to the U.S. to go to college (p. 62). Having three different cultures within himself, he states that he is *not* just simply the summation of three different cultures (Chinese, Lationo, and U.S. American) and that "The combination of my experiences, values, beliefs, and perception sin all three cultures constitutes a new gestalt, a fluid entity that I describe as my 'multiculural self.'" (p. 62). It is not that one culture plus another culture plus another culture is three cultures. My personal experience of identity change caused by crossing cultural border between Japan and the U.S. resonates with Yep's more complex notion of intercultural or multicultural identities, than Kim's simplistic notion of identity transformation from monocultural to intercultural by adding another cultural identity to the original one. Thus, in this essay, my interrogation of identity change takes different approach. Rather than just identifying how integrated I am between Japanese and American cultural identities, I want to focus on the modes of adaptation, and how different modes of adaptation consciousness made me experience in the way I did. In this way, I will allow myself to have space where I can describe my identity transformation in more complex way, rather than simply discussing how much I have been "Americanized."

Unknowing-knowing — Mode of Assimilation

In her book *Phenomenology of Chicana Experience and Identity: Communication and Transformation in Praxis,* Martinez (2000) identifies three distinctive modes of ethnic consciousness and explicates how she has come to speak as a Chicana lesbian intellectual. In her phenomenological interrogation of her own identity as a "Chicana lesbian intellectual and activist" (p. 36), Martinez explains how the three modes of consciousness (noesis) has defined her immediate consciousness — what she feels, thinks, and acts — (noema) and how the shift of these modes made her experience of the transformation of her identity possible.

The first mode of consciousness Martinez (2000) identifies is "*unknowing-knowing* (p. 36)."

When growing up in a wealthy family, she knew that she had Mexican American ancestry from her father, but she never questioned about it. The knowledge about her Mexican heritage was irrelevant and hindered to her because of her family's affluent Southern California lifestyle. It was also because her successful father's "resilient silence (p. 52)" about his life experience growing up as a poor Mexican American. As she recalls, she was unknowing what she knew about her ethnic heritage because she was aware of how her father felt about and reacted to it.

For the first 23 years of my life, being Japanese was *not* a big part of my identity. Sounds strange? What I mean is that I was not aware of how much my Japaneseness contributed to the construction of my identity as a unique person as I see it. I was not aware of how much Japanese I was. It was because when I was in Japan, almost everyone around me was Japanese — I rarely had intercultural interactions when I was in Japan — and I didn't have to even think about myself being Japanese. Yes, I knew I was Japanese, but it was not the issue in my everyday life. When I first moved to the U.S., I was aware that people here would see me as "foreign," "different," "Asian," "minority" or whatever the identity labels they might use, but I did not really know what it meant to be Japanese or just to be "me" in this country. Rather than thinking about who I was, I was focusing, in my consciousness, on my mission to understand what American people were like and what American culture was like.

As I recall, the first couple of years of my stay in this country is characterized with what Berry (1992) refers to "*assimilation*." This mode of acculturation resonates with Martinez's *unknowing-knowing* consciousness, as she states "this unknowing-knowing mode of consciousness encourages assimilation" (p. 36). I was in this mode of consciousness, somehow knowing that my cultural identity or foreignness is perceived negatively by the people here and affected my interaction with other people, but I was unconsciously unknowing that fact and pushed myself into assimilation mode.

Living in this mode of acculturation and consciousness, I tried to become like the normative "American" — whatever that means. I tried to make friends with Americans. My priority was to be accepted and included by my American friends, rather than by my Japanese friends. I kept telling myself "I came to this country to learn the language and culture here, so I shouldn't just stick with other Japanese students. I should be with Americans." This was, actually, not just the message I received from my internal voice. This message had already gotten instilled in me by my teachers, friends, family, and mass media when I was still in Japan. For example, I would tell someone that I was going to the U.S. to study, they would tell me how bad it would be to just stick with Japanese and do not learn the language and culture from the Americans. They emphasized the importance of cultural and language learning. The definition of cultural adaptation was determined for me even before I came to the U.S. and I thought that the being assimilationist was the normal way for cultural adaptation.

Although, at that time, I was not aware of the fact that the dominant Japanese discourse and ideology about study abroad encourages assimilation, I was aware that this is a common attitude among other Japanese students, not just me. I also realized that this created conflict within the Japanese student community. Although we tried to make friends with Americans, it was often difficult to really make friends with them because of the language barrier and cultural differ-

ences. So when someone was adapting well to American culture and making friends with Americans, the other students were often jealous and it caused tension or conflict among the students.

For example, in my first semester in the U.S., I was living on campus and there were many Japanese girls living in the same residence hall. Since we were all new there, we would do things together, such as going grocery shopping, eating at the cafeteria, partying together, studying together and so on. There was one Japanese student, however, who wouldn't even talk to my group and avoided us completely. She was always with her American friends and she wouldn't associate with other Japanese students at all. We would see her eating at the cafeteria with her American friends all the time, and my friends would talk about her, "look, that girl again. She is always with Americans." "She thinks she is American or something, ha ha." "She avoided me when I talked to her the other day." "She is a stuck-up." "She doesn't like to talk to Japanese. That's so typical! There are many international students who are like that. They say they came here to study English so they shouldn't be with Japanese. But I think it is stupid that she doesn't want to talk with other Japanese." One day, I ran into her on my way back to the dorm, and I spoke to her in Japanese. "Hi. You live in the same dorm. I see you all the time." She looked little bit shocked and hesitantly said "hi. I think I have seen you, too." So I started talking to her and asked her regular routine questions that international students usually ask to each other during the initial interaction. "How long have you been here?" "This is my first semester here." "Oh really? I wasn't sure because you seem to speak English so well. You are always with your American friends." "Well, actually, I was in Hawaii before I came here." "Why did you move?" "I was always hanging out with my Japanese friends there and I didn't learn English at all. There were too many Japanese students there. So I wanted to change the environment, and I moved here." "Oh, is that why you don't talk to other Japanese students?" She told me how most of the Japanese students just stick with other Japanese students and they never learn English while they are staying in the U.S. She also told me how much she liked her American friends and how happy she was with her new Japanese-free environment.

She did not say anything new to me — yes, I completely agreed that we should learn English and shouldn't be just spending time with the other Japanese students. What I realized, however, is the reason why my friends always talked about her. It was because she was doing what we wanted to do or what we thought we were supposed to be doing (but it was also difficult for us to do). Her existence made us realize how successful she was in her cultural adaptation, and how *not* successful we were. In the mode of assimilation, the goal of cultural adaptation is to assimilate, and this episode shows how all of us (me, my friends and the girl) were in this mode of adaptation.

Then at the end of my first year, I had a conflict with one of my Japanese friends. She and I were both living in the same dorm that time, and when the contract with the residence hall was up, she was planning to move in an apartment with her American roommate. At that point, I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I was going to move out of the dorm anyway, so I was asking around some people I knew if they would be interested in becoming roommates with me. Then one of my American friends told me that she was going to buy a house in the summer and asked me if I would like to move in. I told her that I would, but she was not sure exactly when

she would be able to buy a house, so we made a promise that we would move in together when she buys a house. Then the American girl who was supposed to move in with my Japanese friend "ditched" my friend, when she decided to live with her boyfriend. My Japanese friend was very angry about it. She was deeply hurt and started saying that she hated Americans. Because her American roommate did not want to move in with her, she expected me to rent an apartment with her. When I told her that I was going to move in with my American friend, she was furious. She said "you are a traitor! You like Americans more than Japanese people. You ditch your Japanese friends for your American friends. You are so selfish, and you think only for yourself!" She was very angry and she started avoiding me from that day on. One time she found me being with other Japanese friends in the dorm, and she yelled at me "I thought you didn't like the Japanese! Why are you being with the Japanese?" and started crying and ran off to her room.

I told my American friends about this and asked them for their opinions. They all assured me by saying "you didn't do anything wrong. You are here to learn American language and culture. You made the right decision. Besides, if she hates Americans and this country, she should go back home. Why is she staying here? We never asked her to stay here. She should just go home." With this assurance from my American friends, I felt better about my decision. This incident encouraged my assimilation mode even more, and after I moved in with my American friend, I completely stayed away from the Japanese student community for the next couple of years.

I had several very negative experiences with the Japanese students in the international student community other than this traumatic incident. So after I left the community, I wished if I could erase myself from their memories, so that they wouldn't even think about me, and talk about me when I was not there. This is how I completed my separation from the Japanese student community that time and I continued my adaptation to American culture and society in the assimilationist mode.

Preknowing-knowing — Toward the Alternative Mode of Adaptation

After I left the Japanese student community, I started participating in local church activities and social gatherings with my American roommates. I went hiking, backpacking, and snowboarding with my American friends, celebrated American holidays and had parties with my American roommates at home. I was very fortunate that I met all those nice people. My roommates were always helpful and they included me in everything. We went up to Seattle for my roommates' brother's wedding one summer. We spent a lot of time together, and I enjoyed it very much. I had an American family who accepted me as their daughter and treated me as a member of their family. These people have become very important in my life and they hold a special place in my heart today.

At first, my assimilation to the dominant American group (most of all my friends were "white" Americans) seemed successful. Being in the assimilationist mode, I unconsciously denied my Japaneseness and tried to abandon the Japanese part of me as much as possible. For example, I tried to look more like Americans by buying American clothes and dressing like them, eating

American foods (hotdogs, beagles, sandwiches, etc.), doing "American things (watching football games, American TV shows, having BBQ, etc.)." Although I did not know at that time, my Japaneseness was always present despite my effort to erase it. My name, the way I looked, the accents in my verbal and nonverbal communication, the way I thought, and the way I felt — they all signified my Japaneseness and my *Otherness*. I was never able to completely erase that from me. Because it was apparent in my interactions with Americans, people treated me as "Japanese," "foreign," "different," or just someone who was not "normal."

As a result, I never felt that I was completely a part of the group. Sometimes I felt invisible among the American people. For example, when my roommate's friends were visiting our house, I was making myself a cup of tea. I poured some water in my cup and put it in the microwave, and when it was done, I took it out and I checked if the water was hot enough to make tea. My roommate's friend saw it, and she asked my roommate "is she drinking hot water?" and my roommate responded and said "no, she is making tea." "Oh, I thought she drinks hot water, thought it was weird, ha ha ha." People would talk *about* me like that, in stead of talking *to* me. When I was at a store with my American friend and asking a clerk about something, the store clerk would answer to my American friend, not to me. When I was taking a class and working on a group project with American students, I was completely ignored during our presentation. My group members did not give me a chance to say even one word during the presentation. They told me in advance which part I would be presenting, and when I thought it was my turn to present the information, someone else did it and I ended up just standing in front of the class with the group and did not speak at all. It was a very humiliating experience.

These experiences made me wonder who I was — *what am I? Why do people treat me like I am not there? Why people don't treat me equally? I thought I was normal. I thought I was just like them. What is wrong with me?... Am I "different?" That is right, I am different. I am not American. I am not white. I am not Christian. I don't speak English like they do. I am not like them! Is that why they treat me like that?*

I started questioning about my *Otherized* identity in the eyes of the Americans here, and it was when I started making transition from the *unknowing-knowing* to *preknowing-knowing* mode of identity consciousness. According to Martinez (2000), this second mode of consciousness occurs when one begins her/his attempt to search for her/his unknown identity. Martinez characterizes this mode as precariousness, and explains that it is "where there is a reverberation back and forth between what is unknown but sensed as a possible knowing and what is known (p. 37)." In reflection on her own experience, she talks about how she started getting letters that were targeted to Mexican and Mexican Americans students on campus pushed her this second mode of identity experience once she started attending to college.

Although I was aware of my *Otherness* in the American society from the beginning, because I knew the perceived negativity of my foreignness, Asianess, or Japaneseness in this culture, I was unconsciously trying to let go of my Japanese cultural identity and values. Instead, I tried to internalize American ones within me. Having being in the mode of "*unknowing-knowing*," I was unconsciously trying to "unknow" my *Otherness* and what it meant to be the "*Other*", a "foreigner", an "Asian", or a "Japanese person" in this country. Because of the perceived negativity of my

Otherness, I didn't want to really think about it and question about it. However, because my Otherness was apparent to the Americans through communication, I was treated as the "Other". It finally gave me a wake-up call. In my assimilation mode of acculturation, I was trying to identify myself with the dominant group (White, Anglo, Christian...) in the U.S. but I finally realized that I was never fully a part of the group. Again, I knew as a matter of the fact that I was foreign and I did not belong to the dominant group, but I didn't really understand it. Looking back, when I was in the *unknowing-knowing* mode, it was as if I was almost constantly deceiving myself or I was just living in the illusion. Maybe it was the fantasy world that I created based on the very common idea that we are all equal regardless of our race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, and so on, but in reality, we all know that we do not live up to the ideal and the real world is not as it should be. When I finally got the wake-up call, it was a transition from *unknowing-knowing* to *preknowing-unknown* mode. It was a very strange feeling. It was an I-knew-that-but-I-didn't-know-that-really kind of feeling.

Knowing-unknowing — Integration and/or Marginalization

"*Knowing-unknown*" is the third mode of ethnic consciousness which Martinez (2000) defines as "where one knows precisely that there is a field of unknowingness that is directly relevant to oneself (p. 37)." In this mode, one actively engages in questioning and searching. In this mode of ethnic consciousness, she started actively engaging in learning about her ethnic heritage as Mexican American. Now that one knows there is something unknown, he/she can actively pursue the knowledge.

After I finished my Master's degree in Calofornia, I moved to Utah for a job. It was a fresh start for me. I had to make new friends there, and this time, I started spending more time with Japanese people again. My best friend was a Japanese girl who was several years younger than I and we would always hang out together, go shopping, watch movies, and go snowboarding together. Soon I remembered how fun it was to hang out with Japanese people and how easier for me to be with my Japanese friends than with my American friends. This is when I realized that I did not have to be in assimilation mode to live in this country.

Although my best friend was a Japanese person, she and I always had American friends we spent time with, so it was not a complete "*separation*" but rather the "*integration*" mode of adaptation (Berry, 1992, p. 244). We would go snowboarding and going out for parties with our American friends. Many of my American friends spoke Japanese. In Utah, there were many returned Mormon missionaries who had gone to Japan as missionaries, so it was easier for me to meet Americans who spoke my language and make friends with them. I finally felt really good about myself. It was because I found a space for myself where I could be Japanese even when I was with Americans, rather than changing myself to be more like an American in order to be accepted by them. I had both Japanese and American friends and I felt accepted by the both groups.

Then I moved down to Arizona for my doctorate degree. Again, it was a fresh start for me, and I had to build my new social network here. Then something changed... As I began to understand American culture more, and I got familiar with the studies of race, gender, and ethnicity

through my coursework in my Ph. D. program, I started becoming more conscious about how my identity was ascribed by the people around me and how people use different stereotypes on me based on my race, ethnicity, gender, and nationality.

For example, I once met this American guy from Boston. He was a friend of mine. One day, he asked me for my phone number. He later called and asked me out, and we decided to meet at a café. When I got there, he was already there, drinking his coffee. So I greeted to him briefly and told him that I was going to go get my coffee. When I was ordering my drink, he came up to the register (where I was) and he started talking to me. When my coffee was ready, he said "Oh, I will take care of it." I said "oh, no that's okay." But he insisted. "No, no, I'll take care of it." So I said "thanks." Then he grabbed my coffee and took it to his table. I first thought that he meant that he wanted to take care of the bill (that was what I had been accustomed to in situations like this). It was surprising to me, but it was not a big deal, so I just decided that he was not thinking this as a "date" and I was fine about it. (I was not attracted to him romantically anyway!) I paid for my drink, and I went to his table.

When we started talking, he was acting like we were a couple, and he would try to touch my hair and hold my hands, so it made me feel very uncomfortable. I was trying to avoid him, but he didn't seem to care and kept trying to touch me. So I hid my hands under the table and I kept distance from him across the table. While I was doing so, I kept wondering "why he thinks it is okay to touch me like that? It is obvious that I don't like it, but he's still doing this. That is so rude." And he asked me "so, do you cook Japanese food at home?" "Yes, I do." "Oh, really? That's great!" He seemed really excited about the fact that I know how to cook Japanese food, and he continued "I'd be happy to *have you cook some Japanese food for me!*" That comment froze me right there, and I didn't know how to respond. While he kept telling me how much he liked Japanese food and other Asian food, I was irritated and insulted.

When he found out that I was leaving for Japan next day, he was again very excited and asked me "so, what's the symbol of Japan?" I said "what do you mean? Like, the national flag? The big red dot? Or like, ninja, geisha, that kind of things?" He said "no, no, no, don't be silly." "What do you mean then? What's the symbol of the United States?" and he replied "OK, in America, we have Mount Washington." "Mount Washington?" "Yeah, there're presidents faces on the…" "That's Mount Rushmore." I interrupted him. "I've been there a couple of times. It's called Mount Rushmore, not Mount Washington." Then he said "Oh… OK, yeah…. That's right, there is Mount Rushmore, but there is also Mount Washington, just like Mount Rushmore. Maybe you don't know about it, because you are not American. Anyway, while you are in Japan, just pick up something for me, something that symbolizes Japan. It doesn't have to be anything expensive, just something small is fine. Just bring back something Japanese for me OK?"

I left the café in disbelief. How come he thought that he could order me to cook and buy something for him like that? Did he think that I would be pleased to do things for him? Would he act in the same way if I were an American girl? Did he think that I was so dumb that he could get away with the lie about Mount Washington, like that?

This incident made me realize how naïve I was about how people use stereotypes when interacting with me. I realized that he was putting the stereotype of Asian women being submis-

sive and please to do things for men on me. And what upset me the most was the fact that many people (mostly men) have asked me to cook Japanese food or get them small souvenirs from Japan in the past, and I used to do that for them without being offended. Before I learned the stereotypes of Asian women in this country, I interpreted the same behaviors of American men differently. I simply thought that it was just the sign of interest in Japanese food and culture, and they wanted to make friends with me. I even felt almost obligated to be a good "ambassador" to represent my country. I thought I had to be nice to them and had to fulfill their requests, so that they would like my country and culture. It upsets me now when I think about how naïve I was and how I was behaving in situations like that in the past.

Incident like this made me think more about what it meant to be a Japanese woman in this American society. When I was in assimilation mode and unknowing-knowing mode, I never asked myself this question and reflected on my own experience to understand my cultural, social, and gender identities. I am now more aware of how people prescribe my identities here based on the stereotypes, and how it affects our interaction. The way I understand my interaction with American people has changed, as a result.

I want to conclude my narrative by saying that after the seven years of my sojourning in the U.S., I feel that I belong to the neither groups, Japanese nor American. It is very strange that once I felt very comfortable about my adaptation in this country when I finally achieved the integration mode of acculturation, I now find myself living in a limbo. Sometimes I feel that I am successful of integrating both cultures in myself and feel confident about my adaptation, while sometimes I feel that now I fit in neither culture. Then I find myself always comparing my imaginary life in Japan and my current life in the U.S., telling myself "if I were in Japan, my life would have been a lot easier. If I were in Japan, I didn't have to speak English to do my job and I wouldn't have this difficult time..." At the same time, I also know positive aspects of my life in the U.S. I have the long list of the things I like about this country which I wouldn't have if I go back to Japan.

It seems like that when I focus on the difficulties in my life here, I tend to feel marginalized, and when I focus on the positive aspects of my life here, then I tend to feel integrated. It could be that the mode of *marginalization* and *integration* that Berry discusses are the two sides of the same coin. Also, when categorizing the modes of adaptation in relation to the original culture and the dominant culture, we miss out other important aspects of intercultural identity transformation. In this essay, I focused on my experience with Japanese and American friends, but I have many friends from different countries. My everyday interaction is multicultural beyond just the Japanese-American dichotomy. Thus, Berry (1990) and Kim's (2001) notion of simplistic structure of identity do not really apply to my lived experience. Future research needs to investigate the multiplicity and complexity of intercultural identity and its process in the context of cross-cultural adaptation.

Motivation for Assimilation: Historical Context

I illustrated how my identity modes of adaptation and consciousness have been shifting

during my seven-year stay in the U.S. Now, I have one question I would like to address. That is, "what motivated me to be in the assimilation mode at the beginning of my adaptation process?"

As I said in my narrative, I was preset in the mode of assimilation even before I came to the U.S. People there told me how important it was for me to learn the culture and language of the U.S. and told me not to stick with other Japanese students. Although I was not consciously aware of it, I had this assimilation attitude toward the U.S. Americans, which I had internalized in myself growing up in Japan.

I do not believe that this is just my unique individual experience. Rather, I say that this assimilationist attitude has been historically internalized in the Japanese collective mind as a result of the history of the Western domination. After Japan's defeat in the WWⅡ, Japan went through the reconstructions of social, political, economic and educational systems under the strong influence of the U.S. occupation. Because of this strong presence and domination of the U.S. power in institutional reform of Japan after the war, it was natural for the Japanese to develop the idea of U.S. being superior. Thus, it was natural for the Japanese to recognize the benefit of assimilation to the U.S., because it meant getting closer to the center of the power.

Fujimoto (2001) summarizes this history of modernization and internationalization of Japan, and argues that it was the process of internalizing the Western ideas about race and ideology (p. 6). When Japan adopted Western economic, political, and educational models, technology, architecture, and fashions, it also adopted the Western racial hierarchy. Because of that, the racial hierarchy was already internalized in me even before I came to the U.S., and it contributed to push me into *unknowing-knowing* mode of the identity consciousness. It is important to note here that it emerged in my consciousness only after I moved to this country when I was thrown into the U.S. American "racist" society.

From the beginning I knew that there was racial hierarchy existing in American society, but it never occurred in my consciousness — maybe it did, but I kept denying it and try to unknown the existence of it. It hurt when I had to realize that I could be less valued because of my race, ethnicity, and nationality in this white dominant society. So, maybe that is why I tried to remain naïve and tried to unknown my racial, cultural, ethnic, national identities in my everyday interaction with white Americans. In this sense, I had to engage in this self-deception to protect myself. It is shameful to admit that I have accepted the racial hierarchy.

This historical context of Japan-U.S. relation is one possible explanation of how Japanese students in the U.S. are being pushed into assimilationist mode of cultural adaptation. It is a reflection of U.S. domination in the global society. Also, it has been pointed out by the various scholars that U.S. society is an assimilationist society (Goldberg, 1993; Martinez, 2000). Americans, too, can collectively have assimilationist attitudes that encourages assimilation to newcomers, just like my friends encouraged me.

Conclusion

I am still in the middle of my transition — which now I know will never come to end — and I am not sure how I will understand my current experiences later when I reflect on them.

Applying Martinez's (2000) three modes of consciousness and Berry's (1990) four acculturation attitudes helped me examine how different modes of adaptation and identity consciousness made me experience my life in this country in the way I did, and how those modes shifted as my adaptation progressed. Making transition from *unknowing-knowing* to *knowing-unknown* mode helped me liberate myself from my strong assimilationist attitude, and it pushed me to integration/marginalization mode of adaptation. As I reflected on my own lived experience, now I realize that we need to develop alternative theories and models of cross-cultural adaptation that can capture the multiplicity and complexity of intercultural identity transformation without perpetuating already existing assimilationist force. I also recognized that the existing communication theories of cross-cultural adaptation imply assimilation as the goal of adaptation. We need to step out from this assimilationist way of thinking both in theory and practice, and seek alternative frameworks to understand what it really means to adapt to a new culture and what it really means to have intercultural identities.

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