

DOMESTIC ELDER ABUSE IN JAPANESE CONTEXT

Concerning elderly women who are not in need of nursing care

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The main purpose of this study is to describe the situation of domestic elder abuse in Japanese context, concerning elderly women who are not in need of nursing care. The aim of the study is to appeal the importance of paying enough attention to the elder abuse cases concerning elderly who are not in need of nursing care.

The social interest on elder abuse is recently rising. However, most of the past researches on elder abuse are made concerning elderly people who are in need of nursing care. If the phenomenon is called 'elder abuse', it should comprehend all abuse cases, no matter where they happen or who is concerned. It is strongly argued that the elderly in need of care do not have ample physical and mental strength to inform anywhere of abuse cases, which means the cases are often hidden. Elderly people who are not in need of nursing care (hereafter called hale elderly) are capable of expressing their feelings themselves. Therefore, paying more attention to hale elderly, it will link up with the prevention for elder abuse.

The data for this study is consisted of five interviews and the data is analyzed by using of the content analysis methodology. Throughout this study, the cultural and social backgrounds are taken into consideration especially the Japanese traditional family system. The research method is qualitative content analysis.

The main finding of this study is that the visible societal change (e.g. economical growth, technological development) is not necessarily proportional with the invisible societal change, i.e. people's mentality. The discrepancy among the societal change is a remarkable factor of elder abuse as a whole. Concerning the definition of elder abuse, no category of neglect and sexual abuse was not found whereas the categories exist concerning the case of elderly in need of nursing care.

This study gives a different angle on elder abuse and it gives a notice of importance to pay attention to the existence of hale elderly people.

Key words: elder abuse, hale, elderly women, family relation, ageism, tradition, Japanese society.

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1 INTRODUCTION

‘Elder Abuse’- this is a new social issue taken up in Japanese society these days. What is ‘elder abuse’? What kind of picture do you describe when you hear the words? My first encounter with this topic was five serial articles in a Japanese newspaper. ‘Nursing care caused too much suffering: violence used against demented mother’, ‘Old person nursing partner - wife killed her husband: worn out from care giving’ etc. Severe cases like these of violence, even murder, because of fatigue caused by nursing an aged parent or spouse, were introduced in the articles. When I read the articles, I could not have a complete grudge against the assailants, I even felt a bit of pity for them. Why was it so?

I quote an article from a newspaper,

‘The bent 85-year-old woman covered her face with her hands and said, “I wanted to die, too.” She murdered her 89 years old husband in March 2003 in a fishing village. Around 2 o’clock at night, her husband woke her up and said, “I’ll take a bath.” She explained to him that there was no hot water in the bathtub any more, but he started to take his clothes off. He had been sick for two years and was demented. Since then she had been looking after him and his excretion. “It’s too much. I can’t take care of him any more. He is too demented.” After half an hour, he calmed down and lay down naked on the bed. When she put a blanket over him, she noticed, she was wreathing a rope around his neck. “I’m sorry, I’ll follow you soon.” Then she wreathed the rope around her own neck and hung herself on a fence of stairs. However, she felt too much pain and gave up dying. She woke up her son and his family and said, “I killed my husband”. The rope she used was the same, which she used in helping with her husband’s fishing when they were younger.

The husband was always telling her, “I want to be with you. Please take care of me.” He did not like to get services by social workers or home helpers and would not let them enter his house.’

(Yomiuri Shinbun, July 26, 2003)

After reading this article, I somehow could not help feeling sympathy for the woman. Why did the woman have to kill her husband? Did she have hatred for him? She was apologizing to him and planning to kill herself as well. The pressure of nursing care might have brought on this tragedy, I thought. I started considering the reasons of the incident. I would assume the alternative factors of the incident as follows; first, the wife had too much stress because of the care giving. Second, her stress got worse because her husband did not let anybody to take care of him, so the wife had to look after him by herself. Then, I started considering the reasons why the husband did not want to get any social or care services. I suppose the old cultural model remains in people's mentality although the society and life situations have changed. For example, there is still a tendency of thoughts that receiving social services from the public sector is shameful. Receiving public social services indicates poverty rescue, which occurred just after the Second World War. Thus, especially the pre-war generations avoid receiving public social services, which mean that the spouse or other family members are required to take care of the elderly person. Nursing sometimes brings about stresses and strains that have a possibility to cause such tragedies. In addition, Sakamoto (1990) listed up the features of these kinds of incidents: 1. Nobody else can deputize the role of the caregiver. 2. There is nobody to complain to about nursing. 3. The caregiver is mentally too tired and depressed, so the person is not able to show SOS. 4. There are other worries on the caregiver's mind, such as the financial situation or relations with the neighborhood. 5. Observations of senility in elderly people. 6. In addition to a lack of provision of administrative services, they (the people who concern the incident) are negative towards applying for the services (Sakamoto 1990, ref. Okamura & Hasegawa 1997, 161).

Since then, I have had a chance to see the same kind of articles in other newspapers and a question has arisen in my mind: 'The articles mention "elder abuse" but why is only the topic of elderly people, who are in need of nursing care, taken up? Why do they ignore the other elderly people?' I have heard of other instances, which might also be categorized as elder abuse cases, and all of these concerned elderly people who were not

under nursing care. Nevertheless, the articles taken up as social issues only concern the elderly in need of nursing care. I have the impression that the researches carried out on elder abuse in Japan are a nominal only, and that not all elderly people are comprehended, since I, after reading through the books and the articles about elder abuse in Japan, could not find any researches about elderly people who are not in need of nursing care. Therefore, I would like to pick up the elder abuse cases that concern elderly people who are not in need of nursing care.

In addition, the reason why I have chosen to make a research about elder abuse in a Japanese context is that I do not think elder abuse should merely be the concern of others. Japan has turned out to be the most aging country in the world and has become an aged society¹. Japan entered the aging society in the 1970s and already 24 years later -in 1995- it reached an aged society. The speed, with which the country has become an aged society, is one of the fastest in the world. It has been estimated that it will not take more than 15 years before 21% of the population is over 65 years old. Consequently, a fifth of the population in the year 2010 and a third in 2050 will be over 65 years old. As well as having the highest amount of elderly people in society, the life span of Japanese people is the longest in the world. The cultural and historical backgrounds play strong roles in any social phenomena, and it is important to make a research on elder abuse as one of the social problems in Japan, which is holding an aged society, showing signs of what other countries will have to deal with later. The world is aging. Therefore, we seriously need to consider elder abuse as a social phenomenon, as we in the near future will find it more urgent to deal with this problem. Moreover, as not necessarily all elderly people are in need of nursing care, it is important to pay attention to those who are not in need of it. Many studies on elder abuse concerning the elderly people under nursing care have been made, and the social concern towards elder abuse is growing. However, little attention has been given to elder abuse regarding elderly who are not in need of nursing care. Any cases of abuse should not be neglected. Therefore, by doing this study, I would like to appeal the importance to paying attention to the situation of

¹ An 'aging society' is the society where the rate of a population over 65 years old reach up to 7 % and an 'aged society' is where over 14% of the population is over 65 years old. (Kawabata 2001, 27-8)

elderly people who are not in need of nursing care.

All of these experiences gave me the ideas for this research. The main purpose of this study is to describe domestic elder abuse in Japanese context concerning elderly women who are not in need of nursing care, and appeal the importance of paying enough attention to the elder abuse cases relating to elderly who are not under nursing care, as a social problem.

The reason why my interest was caught by cases concerning women only is because ‘women relations’, especially the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, has been a fierce topic in Japan for a long time. In addition, I have heard some instances that can be regarded as elder abuse before, and all of them were concerned elderly women and their daughters-in-law. One of the reasons why the relations between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law have been a fierce topic is that there it has been a tradition in Japan that the eldest son’s family and his parents live together in the same household. It has been a social tradition in working life that women quit their job just before they get married. Therefore, in many cases, women’s career stops when they marry and become housewives. If the husband is the eldest son the couple may immediately start living together with the husband’s parents. As women remain at home and men are working outside the house, mothers-in-law and daughter-in-laws spend the whole day taking care of household matters together. In Japanese tradition, respecting the elder people has been absolute which equals that the daughter-in-law must obey her mother-in-law. However, the role of women in society has changed a lot since the Second World War. Under the new civil law, the Constitution of Japan that was proclaimed in 1947, women have obtained equality with men although this has not been practically introduced in many fields (Shinotsuka 1995 etc.). Women’s salaries are in many cases lower than men’s and it is still difficult for women to go on maternity leave. This means that many women tend to leave their jobs when they marry or become pregnant. Nevertheless, the tradition is changing. Women’s employment rate has increased in the past 20 years. At the same time, men have started to take an active part in the housekeeping field, which used to be women’s sole responsibility before. However, there are still many of ‘the traditional model’

households where multi-generation families live together in one household.

Along with the societal transition, the generation gap has become conspicuous. In the summer of 2003, I attended the International Symposium of Establishment Memory Meeting of Japan Academy for the Prevention of Elder Abuse organized by the academy, and after the symposium lectures, I heard a member of the audience saying, ‘Having listened to the lectures, I think my behavior towards my mother-in-law might have been what you would call abusive. I really didn’t notice that!’ Her words made me consider, ‘Attempted abuse actions certainly exist but could it be that abuse also happens unknowingly? Can elder abuse be done unconsciously?’ After careful consideration, I reached a factorial hypothesis that the generation gap may be one of the factors to be considered in elder abuse cases. Great changes have happened in the Japanese society since the time of the present elderly generation people were born. The family structure has changed, and the perception of family has changed along with it. The end of the Second World War brought a dynamic transformation for Japan. As explained above, the new constitution was proclaimed and the long-lasting traditional family system was legally abandoned. This changed the role of women in the family and in the society. The rapid economic growth after the Second World War brought a change in the moral principles and beliefs of people. On one hand, the prewar generation lived in a society that had a lack of production. On the other hand, the postwar generation has grown up in a consuming society. Passing of time produced a generation gap in people’s sense of values. The elderly people today were born in the postwar period. The emancipation of new values and the way of living of the younger generation gradually force the retreat of the older generations (Nakane 1991, 11). Therefore, regarding all above-mentioned facts, throughout this research I will consider the generation gap.

I would consider elder abuse as a part of ageism. Ageism is the act of prejudicing and discriminating against old people (Crandall 1991, Pohjolainen 1990, Tsuji 2000). Palmore (1990) distinguishes ageism into *individual-* and *systematic ageism*. Individual ageism is a prejudice and discrimination by individuals and systematic ageism is discrimination of elderly people by social structure or institutional policy; e.g. retirement system (Palmore 1990, ref. Tsuji 2000: 16). Elder abuse is generally taken up

at individual levels. I will explain more detailed about ageism in the section 1.5.2.

Although the object of this research is the elderly people who are not in need of nursing care, I do not think it is completely ignoring the existence of those cases of elderly who are under nursing care by considering the cultural background of the Japanese society. I believe all social phenomena or problems are strongly connected to the cultural background. I will make this research especially by paying attention to the cultural and social background and a picture of elder abuse as a whole will be described in the end.

The needs for making a research on hale elderly women living in families

In this research, I will focus on hale elderly people living in families. In this context, the hale elderly denote the elderly people who are not in need of nursing care. Aging often brings about disease, and a physical or mental weakness. However, I use the word ‘hale’ here to distinguish them from the elderly who are under nursing care.

As cited above, the cases of elderly who are reliant on nursing care have been focused on elder abuse in the past researches. No clear description about the reasons why elderly, who are under nursing care, were focused on in the past researches has been given, but I assume the reason would be the elderly, who need nursing care, have more chances to meet professional workers like home-helpers or social workers, simply because they are under the control of care services. Since the Long-Term Care Insurance System² (*kaigo hoken*) was introduced in April 2000, elderly care professionals have had a chance to see the reality of elderly people’s lives more than before, so that they have had further opportunities to notice elder abuse cases in elderly people’s households. If a suspected elder abuse case exists, it will have a chance to come out into the open. These sources

² The Long-Term-Care Insurance System is meant for sharing nursing care costs for the elderly among the general public. Persons who are either bedridden or suffer from senility and require constant daily nursing care, or persons in need of assistance with everyday life, are eligible for benefits. Persons older than 65 years are eligible to receive benefits, no matter why they need nursing care. (Tokyo Metropolitan Government 1999, 1)

and information are available to researchers, which make it easier to research cases of the elderly under nursing care, as compared to the hale elderly cases. In other words, because abuses of the hale elderly, who do not need any care services, happen within families (a closed space to which a third person often does not have access or does not dare to meddle in) these cases are hidden and difficult to find. A tendency in the Japanese society that shameful events in the family should not be talked about is also obstructing elder abuse cases from surfacing. In short, there is not much information available about elder abuse of hale elderly people, from which to start a research. However, these cases cannot be left alone and by writing a Master's thesis about them, I have hopefully done my part to shed more light upon them.

Although elder abuse has recently been taken up in Japan as a social problem, the social interest in it is still low. As elder abuse is such a sensitive theme, it is hard to get things out into the open, and it is equally hard to draw a line between actions that are regarded as abusive and those that are not. In recent years, laws on the prevention of child abuse and spouse violence have been prepared, and the Japanese government has begun to hammer out prevention policies. Spouse violence was taken up as a social problem when victimized women stood up for themselves and called attention to the problem, and people are now aware that child abuse is unacceptable. Finally, in April 2006, the Elder Abuse Prevention Law is proclaimed (The Law No.124). However, the debate in society about elder abuse is not as common as that of child abuse or spouse violence. Inoue (1999) explains the reason as follows, 'Elderly people are not sufficiently able to appeal the abuse case, because their physical strength and mental power have weakened. Besides, the present elderly generation tends to avoid "being a nuisance". All of these reasons prevent the pointing out of elder abuse as a social problem. In addition, elderly people are treated as troublesome, who have no future' (Inoue 1999, 13). Furthermore, according to the tendency in Japan, abuse is regarded as a phenomenon better left alone and outsiders should not intervene. This is even more noticeable if it happens within the family. These tendencies are preventing the abuse cases from coming to the surface. Netakiri yobou kenkyuukai (2002) claims that the importance of presenting this phenomenon to the public is that it serves as elderly people's advocacy. For these reasons, a need arises to look upon elder abuse as a social problem and the hidden cases

should be dug out.

If we call the phenomenon ‘elder abuse’, it should be comprehended that we talk about all abuse cases, no matter where they happen or who is concerned. As it is now, the hale elderly in families are not adequately considered by researches. It is strongly argued that the elderly in need of care do not have ample physical strength to inform anywhere of abuse cases, which means the cases are often hidden. Hale elderly people, though, are capable of expressing their feelings themselves. Therefore, I took notice that if we pay more attention to hale elderly, it will link up with the prevention for elder abuse.

The main purpose of this study is to describe the situation of domestic elder abuse in the Japanese context, concerning elderly women who are not in need of nursing care. In order to describe the real situation, qualitative research method is chosen. The research data is collected by interviewing and the data is analyzed by using the content analysis methodology. Throughout this study, the Japanese social cultural background is mainly taken into consideration as features of the research subject.

2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The research subject here is the ‘hale’ elderly women living in Japanese families. For that, we need to clarify the detailed concepts and meanings of each field. In this section, I firstly explain ‘family as a social research subject’, the conception of family, the historical transformation of the Japanese family. In addition, the positional change of Japanese women in society will be described. Next, I will give the details about the history of elder abuse in Japan and the value of elderly in the present day Japanese society. In the end, I will analyze elder abuse phenomena from several points of view: who are called ‘elderly’? What is ageism? the difference between abuse, batter and tease, and explain the present definition of elder abuse. Then I will consider the reasons why elder abuse is hidden in the society.

2.1 Family as a social research subject

The family is the smallest but most fundamental unit among any social groups. It is because human beings are born into families where they form the basis of their personality, learn patterns of behavior and train socialization. Then they enter social groups to structure and create society. Therefore, family is one of the social and cultural formation groups (Fukutake & Matsubara 1967, Shimizu 1953).

The necessary issue in family research is to clarify the structural, combinational and functional aspects of the historical changes in the family (Shimizu 1953, iii).

2.1.1 The conception of 'family'

On carrying a research concerning family, let us study the definitions of 'family', 'household', '*ie*' and 'home' in a Japanese context. Nakamura (1998) is defining those connections clearly;

'Family'

First, 'family' is a consanguineous unit based on a married couple, from which the direction of father, mother, spouse, son and daughter extends. The decision of range limit of family is sometimes difficult to define. It is usually decided by the political, economical and cultural condition of the society. Second, family is an organization, which keeps and guarantees people's lives in each society. Therefore, it is a production and consumption unit of daily communal life; it is deeply related to the definition of 'household'. Third, because existence condition of family is a life guarantee for the family members, self-governmental control is needed. The control should be socially approved and have a regulation and value system. The system is called a 'family system', in which the family is regulated. It has a deep connection with the concept of '*ie*'. To make these three explanations short, 'family' is an 'organizational concept', in

which a married couple keeps communal life under a specified family system gathered of consanguineous persons such as parents, brothers and sisters as main constituent members. In this case, even though one of the members are working or studying away from home, if the members have a strong consciousness of being a family constituent member to one another, it can be regarded as a tied organization of family (Consciously, psychologically tied family). Besides, although a person is not such a close relative or is of non-blood relation, if they keep communal life and have a strong consciousness of family constituent member to each other, they can be considered as family members. In this research, I pay attention to the point whether persons who are in relations of abuse regard each other as family members.

‘Household’

‘Household’ is a gathering, where people share livelihood and a residence. The constituent members of a household are usually relatives. Nevertheless, if close relatives live together and do not share livelihood, they are considered as having different households. The biggest difference between ‘family’ and ‘household’ is that the constituent members of a household may include resident workers or lodgers who are not paying any rent or food expenses but do not have any consciousness of being a family member either.

‘Ie’

‘Ie’ means the family, which follows the traditional Japanese family system. In order to secure family members’ lives, the occupation of the family was fixed and the family business had the highest priority in families. Wholly rights to succeed the family property and the family estate were given to the eldest son of the family. In other words, ‘ie’ is an example of the classical pattern of maintaining social tradition by limiting the emancipation of individuals (Takahashi 1991, 122). I will explain more detailed about the traditional Japanese family system (‘ie-seido’ family system) later in the section of 1.2.1.

2.2 Changes in Japanese families

In modern Japan, especially after the Second World War, a dynamic change in the Japanese family system and structure has taken place. As seen in Western countries also, the population concentration in cities is remarkably high and the number of nuclear families has increased. In addition to the family structure, the role of the individual family member is also changing. With the aim in mind of making a research on elderly people who live with their children's families, it is essential to get the real family picture. I will here explain the history background and the change of the Japanese family.

2.2.1 The 'Ie-seido' traditional family system

It is almost impossible to talk about the Japanese family without knowing the '*ie-seido*' traditional family system. It has had a decisive influence on the formation of traditional social values, thinking and customs (Takahashi 1991, 122). Since 1898, there has been a legal family system called '*ie-seido*' or '*kafuchousei-seido*' (patriarchal family system), which existed until the end of the Second World War. '*Ie*' denotes the traditional Japanese family, in which each family member had an identified status, and where family business had the highest property. The system was laid down in the Meiji Civil Law (promulgated in 1898), which defined a regulation of rights for the eldest son should succeed his father in order to continue the household, while his brothers and sisters should leave home when marrying. For parents it is the worst tragedy to terminate the household without a successor (Nakane 1991, 16).

In those days, agriculture had the biggest holding of Japanese production and the majority of people were farmers. The ideal family structure for farmers was an extended family³, consisting of two married couples. In the early modern age agriculture

³ In an extended family, three or more generations might be living in one household. This could for example exist of a married couple with young children and a grandparent. (Crandall 1991, 299)

depended on family labor force. Thus, a pool of family labor force was a necessity for the family development. Farmer family members had to be organized people in order to fulfill the family goals. Titles expressed each family member's status, such as, the head of the family, the head's wife, the successor (the eldest son), the successor's wife, the grandchild, the names indicate the status in the family seen as an organization. These statuses were hierarchical, with an authority relation build in this way: the head of the family > the head's wife > the successor > the successor's wife > the grandchild. However, the decision-making and the execution of family activities were divided into genders. Decision-making was the role of men and women, who had responsibilities of taking care of the housekeeping. In the housekeeping field, a hierarchical status could also be found: the head's wife > the eldest son's wife > the grandchild (Masaoka 1981, 173).

Under the traditional family system, all family members registered their names below the head of the family. Even in the case when one of the family members would marry, it was required that he sought permission from the head of the family to create his own family register. In other words, a marriage or deletion of a name from the family register without the consent from the head of the family was hardly possible. The head of the family changed when the eldest son, by way of inheriting it, took over the title. The previous head then settled down for retirement. The new head had the biggest responsibility in the family, which was to take care of his retired parents. In 'The Law Concerning Education' from 1890, the filial piety was emphasized. Parents had to be obeyed at all costs, so supporting the parents until their death was the duty of children. The support was carried out economically mainly by men and physically by women. The tradition remains, as women tend to look after the aged parents-in-law. Thus, the '*ie-seido*' family system and filial piety was the center pole in maintaining the support system for the retired parents. The pole steadied the living standard until the end of the Second World War (Kawabata 2001, 13-4). The family system strongly influenced the spiritual structure of the Japanese people. Therefore, it is a natural course for the elderly people who were born in the Meiji era to expect support from their children.

The end of the Second World War brought a radical change. After the Second World

War, a new civil law was proclaimed in November 1946. The '*ie-seido*' family system was abolished and the family registration system, to which all the family members belonged, was phased out. Not only the eldest son, but also the other sons in the family received the right to create freely their own family register, consisting of a wife and children. The name, 'the head of a family' fell into disuse and changed to 'the head of a household'. Under the new civil law, wives had the same rights as their husbands, which meant that equality between men and women was put into practice. Accordingly, the family system changed from centering on the entire family registration to having the married couple in its center. However, the '*ie-seido*' family system remains in people's consciousness, even after the system has been abolished. In this, an explanation to today's phenomenon of elderly people tending to live with the eldest son's family should be sought. Nevertheless, the family structure nowadays differs from the one in the old times. I can also say from my own experience, when I talk about marriage with my friends, that we often discuss if 'by the way, is your boyfriend the eldest son? Is there a possibility in the future that you have to live together with his parents and take care of them?' The phenomenon proves the traditional family system remains even in the younger generation's mentality.

The family system has changed into a couple-centered system. Consequently, the family is a gathering unit of several nuclear independent families. Though nuclear families are on the increase, a large number of extended family households exist even today. The phenomenon is more visible in the countryside than in urban areas. According to the Health and Welfare White Paper 1996, 50.3% of people over 65 years old live together with their children's families (The Health and Welfare White Paper 1996).

2.2.2 Relations in present Japanese families

In this section, I will explain the present picture of Japanese families, where a notable transformation in relations can be observed. Until today, the functions regarded especially important in human social history were social and cultural functions. The responsibility and duty of parents for their children to succeed culturally and socially

was more important than how their children felt and thought about things. In the past unstable society, individuals were required to prioritize the maintenance of the society and its culture in order to preserve their living conditions. However, in the present abundant society, the individualistic mentality is more important than any social-, or cultural priority thinking. Parents are now, first and foremost, taking their children's feelings into consideration. Parents are trying to recapture things they failed to obtain themselves in the past society, by using their children as a substitute. This is an indication of parent dependency on children (Masaoka 1981, 2-3).

The tendency of parents using children as a substitute for themselves was evident after the Second World War, and especially since the 1980s. Ochiai (1990) claims the child-centered principle is a characteristic of modern families (Ochiai 1990, 49). In the present Japanese society, it has been regarded important to graduate from a high-level university in order to get a proper job, which yet again secures a high income and success in life. This trend changed after the collapse of the bubble economy and Japanese workers cannot expect a lifetime employment any more. Today's middle generation brought up the present younger generation during the bubble economy period and this younger generation is now setting up their own families. We need also to take into consideration the parents-children relationship regarding elder abuse time by time.

2.3 Women in Japanese families – past and present –

Until the end of the Second World War, the mainstream of women's image was 'a good wife and a wise mother', an image the Japanese state expected women to fulfill. Most women turned to be housewives after the marriage and the breadwinners of families were men. After the new civil law was proclaimed, women got equal rights to men. Along with the social change and economical development, women have also started entering labor market. The situation of women's employment differs, depending on which generation. More women from the younger generations are full-time employees than women from the middle age generation who have part-time jobs. It is strongly

connected with housekeeping. When women get married or especially when they get a child, they tend to quit their jobs and become housewives. There is an explanation of the tendency. According to Takahashi (1990), the thought, ‘mothers should concentrate on bringing up children while they are small’ is deeply rooted in Japan. If a mother is working outside home, she would be recognized, ‘she is not fulfilling the responsibility as a mother’ from society (Takahashi 1990, 69-71). Therefore, when their children get older the women have more spare time and go back to the labor market as part-time employees. This tradition has not changed much even after the Second World War (Ueno 1990, Takahashi 1990 etc.).

In Japan many books are published intended for women married to an eldest son. (e.g. Ei 2001, Hayashi 2000, Kutsuwada 2001, Nishikawa 1992) These books have themes such as, ‘how to behave in a marital home’ and ‘how to deal with your mother-in-law’, etc. The authors are women who experienced troubles with their relations with mother-in-law or daughter-in-law, psychiatric doctors and so on. The women authors are usually giving advices for women based on their own experiences. If I give an example, ‘in order to keep a good relationship with a mother-in-law is, although the relationship is tight and good, daughters-in-law should regard mothers-in-law as outsiders. Mothers-in-law basically dislike the wives of their eldest-son’. Another example is ‘Put up your mother-in-law in “the women’s castle”, kitchen’ (Saito 1997, 133-9). From the advices and experiences shown in the books are surprisingly conservative. It is said that men and women are equal. However, we can see from the quotation given above, if a kitchen is still regarded as ‘women’s castle’, the equality is far from the ideal equality between the genders. The books are directed also for younger generation who are not yet married. In a way, they are depressing to read because there are so many severe vivid experiences of the authors what they had and the books give an impression that marrying the eldest son is full of problems in the future. Of course, it is important to get knowledge beforehand about possible troubles but the conservative description is, in my opinion, influencing younger generation to brainwash about the traditional system that is legally abandoned already half-century ago. Books for mothers of the eldest sons, that is to say the mothers-in-law, are also published. If I introduce some examples of advices for mothers-in-law, in order to keep the relationship good with daughters-in-law, ‘avoid

using these forms; “do (imperative)” = meaning of looking down, “do something for you” = meaning of officious, “what will you do?” = meaning of pressure’ (Nozue 1992, 244-5). The letters of daughter-in-law and mother-in-law also explain the tradition. Regardless to say how many women are keeping the regulations, these observable facts present the relationship between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law as a socially recognizable important issue.

If I add an example, how women are regarded in society, the letters can explain it. The letter of daughter-in-law (*yome* 嫁) is 女 (woman) + 家 (*ie*, home). Mother-in-law (*shuutome* 姑) is 女 (woman) + 古 (old). Women have been staying at home for keeping households.

2.4 History of elder abuse in Japan

Legend has it that elder abuse has existed since the old days, but elder abuse then differed from the present concept. I will here introduce the past and present meaning of elder abuse.

In old times, folktales were told about mountains where elderly people were taken to be abandoned. The oldest legend was written down as early as in the 12th century. In the poverty era, when not enough food was available to all family members, elderly people were brought to mountains called *Ubasuteyama*⁴. It is said that *Ubasuteyama* were situated around Japan. ‘*Narayamabushi kou*’ written by Fukazawa Shichirou in 1957 is a famous fairy tale, in which the eldest son brings his aged mother to an *Ubasuteyama*. The story describes the shame of being an aged person at that time. The heroine keeps telling her eldest son that he should bring her to *Narayama* (a named *Ubasuteyama*) and

⁴ *Uba* – nurse (i.e. mother),
sute – abandon,
yama – mountain.

abandon her as soon as possible. It is not clear, if this really happened or if it is a legend only. Even if the fairy tale is a true story, it is important to remember the fact that in those days old parents were abandoned because of poverty. Parents themselves would even ask their children to send them away, but today's elder abuse happens without the consent of the elderly people. Elderly people are treated as worthless beings, society is discriminating against them, and their human rights are being ignored (Han 2003, 117). It is not clear whether *Narayamabushi kou* can be defined as elder abuse because the abandoning is done with the mutual understanding between the son and the mother

In the medieval as well as in our times, absolute loyalty towards the sovereign was called for, with the aim of maintaining the hierarchical structure. Similarly, the head of the family and parents had the absolute power in the society. Punishments (e.g. crucifixion) were a feature of the societal structure, directed at people who were against royalty (Kaneko 1987, Masaoka 1981). Elder abuse was prevented in those days because of the legal system. Attention should also be paid to the life span in medieval times. The average life span was 15-30 years. In the end of the 19th century about 75% of deaths happened to children below 5 years of age. In consequence, the number of elderly people was small back then.

2.5 Value of elderly in the present Japanese society

Japan has a world-renowned reputation as a country where elderly people are respected. In the present society, though, thinking of the elderly with respect is on the decline.

Ueno (2000) claims the value of elderly people is decreasing in families. These days, parents work all day and children must therefore go to a crammer after school. Parents do not allow their children to watch as much TV or play as many computer games as they would like to, but as grandparents are the ones who spend most of the time at home during the day with the children, they are free to do whatever they like without any restrictions. Children do not understand the position gap that exists between them and their grandparents. When television had not yet been invented, one form of child

entertainment was to have let parents or grandparents tell fairytales. Not many children are willing to listen to such stories today, since media provides plenty of other knowledge and information. Games or Manga (animation) are more attractive for children than listening to fairy tales told by grandparents. In the past, children used to learn about manners and get practical wisdom from their grandparents. Through getting all kinds of knowledge from their grandparents, children got a natural respect for the older generations. However, since many children today have to go to a crammer school after school today, they do not have much time to spend with their grandparents, and respect for the elderly is therefore a less recognized feature in the present Japanese family. The genuine honor in the past of grandparents is not much recognized any more.

Japan became one of the richest countries in the world. At the same time, young Japanese became individualistic. Although the collectivist way of thinking governed Japan for a long time, a switch to individualism has begun. Langone (1991) mentions the insignificance with which elderly people are treated in Japan today. Independence is now emphasized and the traditional way of thinking is in disregard. Along with the dynamic change of the Japanese economy and the change in society, a troublesome problem can be found in the extended families. The problem is a friction between the traditional elderly and the westernized young people (Langone 1991, 126-7, translated by Inoue in 1992). That is, the difference of consciousness between the elderly people and younger generation, who have grown up in different social environment, is generally called 'generation gap'.

Yamada (2000) claims that one of the biggest problems we hold is that we cannot find any worth in elderly people. In Japan nowadays, old age does not signify anything graceful. An old person is someone who has lost his or her youthfulness and is now useless to society. The elderly are looked upon with pity and people find them ugly. The Japanese society has become more based on aptitude. An aged person cannot compete well in this, and from a business point of view, it is evident that the younger generation consumes more products than the older generation. This in consequence has the societal consciousness that being young equals something wonderful and being old equals worthlessness. We should not be so fast to judge other human beings. The big theme to

be solved in Japan is to stop being hypocritical about aging and start finding the real merit and grace of it (Okonogi & Yamada 2000, 178).

There has been a saying 'the elderly wisdom' for a long time; therefore, elderly people were honored both at home and in the society. Nevertheless, the phenomenon was valid only in the era in which the social movement was not radical, thus, in the traditional society. The elderly wisdom, such as old custom, is useful only in the conservative society. In the society where the goal is radical development and efficient revolution, the elderly people's adherence to the old custom is regarded as useless and is at the same time an obstacle to attaining the social aim. This is the general view on the elderly wisdom today (Kawai et al. 1986, 189).

2.6 Elder abuse from various points of view

In order to understand elder abuse better, I will here introduce the definition of elderly, and an ageism theory that comprehends the explanation of elder abuse as a part of discrimination. I will then compare the difference between abuse, battering and teasing. Finally, I will introduce the present definition of elder abuse.

2.6.1 Elderly people - Who is defined as elderly?-

Synonyms to the word elderly are aged, old, advanced in years, aging, long in the tooth, past one's prime, gray-haired, gray-bearded etc. (the Oxford Thesaurus 2001, second edition).

According to Koskiaho (1991), 'The definition of who is "elderly" or "aged" or "senior" varies from society to society and has been modified over time. The United Nations defines elderly as people who are above 60 years old. Although the definition of elderly in the Japanese elderly welfare law, the Long-Term Care Insurance and the Elder Abuse Prevention Law are defined to be those older than 65 years, the Elderly Health Law

defines elderly to be those older than 75 years (and anyone between the ages of 65 and 74 who are bedridden). Additionally, the requirement for joining an elderly club is set to be those older than 60 years. Thus, the definition of elderly with its multiple definitions is lacking in unity.

Crandall (1991) argues that the difficulty in defining the terms 'aged' and 'older person' is; 'The problem in defining who is aged or older stems from the fact that researchers use different criteria to classify individuals. For some, it is simple chronological age, although the specific age may vary. For others the classification may depend on certain social characteristics such as retirement. Other researchers may base the definition on physical functioning, in areas such as the filtration rate of the kidneys or the stroke volume of the heart. Others may base the definition on a combination of social, physical, or psychological characteristics' (Crandall 1991, 7).

Elderly people are usually regarded as a group of people who have the same kind of characteristics. Kangas & Nikander (1999) emphasize aging means stereotypically degeneration or weakness and combined disease.

The image of elderly people can be positive, but it is more often negative. The ageism theory explains the image of elderly people from several viewpoints.

2.6.2 Ageism

Ageism is a prejudice and discrimination based on age (Butler 1960, 1987a. ref. Crandall 1991, 6). Technically, any age group can be subject to ageism. In this course, it refers to discrimination on the basis of 'old' age (Crandall 1991, Pohjolainen 1990, Tsuji 2001). 'Discrimination' is developed from 'distinction'. When something is negatively distinguished from something else, it is regarded as discrimination. In this case, aged people are told apart from other people and if they are treated negatively, it is called ageism.

According to the United Nations, ageism is one means by which the human rights of older persons are denied or violated. The negative stereotypes and the denigration of older individuals can translate into a lack of societal concern for older persons, a risk of marginalization and a denial of equal access to opportunities, resources and entitlements (UN Economic and Social Council 2002, 4).

Ageism is a subjective experience, it is known as the generation gap and it is a serious national problem (Tsuji 2001, 14). Ageism reflects an enormous anxiety on behalf of both the younger and the middle-aged generation (e.g. worries about aging, getting a disease, becoming incompetent). The Japanese society's cultural attitude is reinforcing this anxiety. We can observe ageism in cases where people have a ridiculing opinion of those who are behind the times or where the individual's capacity in an employment situation is ignored. There are two types of ageism: *an individualistic ageism* and *a systematic ageism* (Ibid, 16). The individualistic ageism is discrimination or prejudice done by individuals and the systematic ageism is a political or social structural discrimination and prejudice. Several premises lead to ageism. In the Japanese case, these are social structural-, cultural structural- and social interaction premises (Ibid, 22).

1) Social structural premise

- **Efficiency in the modern society and age limited retirement system**

The present society divides people into 'useful' and 'useless'. The system treats youth warmly and tends to eliminate any old-fashioned knowledge and technology. The age-limited retirement system expresses a belief that the individual's professional capacity ends around the age of 55 - 60 years old. People who exceed this limit are eliminated from the working field. Although employment for retired people is increasing, their salaries are much lower than the younger generation's. Moreover, in many companies people lose their official titles when they turn 55 years old. It indirectly denotes that companies regard people's capacity at work to approach the end when people are 55 years old.

- **Influence of quantitative change on population**

In the past when people's life span was shorter, the older generation was a minority group in the population. Although elderly people belonged to a minority group, they at the same time formed a dominant group because they possessed plenty of knowledge and people were in awe of those who lived long. Today, the life span has lengthened and the number of elderly people has increased. Along with time, the population is aging and a new elderly policy is required to come out with such as welfare, nursing care, health and social participation. Nevertheless, many unsolved elderly problems are hidden in the society and elderly people are staying behind in many cases. The present society has let elderly people drop from their superior status to an inferior position (Tsuji 2001, 23).

- **Social expectation for human behavior and a border beyond becoming 'old'**

In society, there is a border beyond 'becoming old' (Tsuji 2001, 23). When people turn a certain age or pass the defined line, they become 'elderly people' in the society. The line is set to be around 60 – 65 years old. Although it differs, depending on the situation and the region, we constitute elderly people seeing a person passing the 'old line' or there is a social expectation for individuals to behave according to their age. Although there is a big difference between the physical aging of individuals, society and culture form elderly people with a strong expectation that 'elderly people' should behave in a certain way suitable to their age: e.g. retirement from labor market, transfer the leadership and authority in family (Tsuji 2001, 23).

2) Cultural structural premise

- **Cultural structure of respecting and eliminating elderly**

It has been said that elderly people are respected in Japan. In old times, elderly people were honored as wits. In September, there is a day of 'respecting the elderly' (*keirouno*

hi) and a celebration takes place when turning 61, 77 and 88 years old. However, in the present society respect for the elderly is turning into a myth. Palmore (1985) claims, there are perhaps more problematic ageism in Japan compared to the U.S.A. (Palmore 1985, ref. Tsuji 2001, 24). The Japanese society has traditionally respected the elderly, but during the process of modernizing the society, this respect has weakened and as a result, hereof, ageism will begin. Nowadays the traditional fixed idea of treating the elderly with respect can especially be found in the farm- and fishing villages in rural areas.

- **Supporting elderly people as a person dependent on family**

As I introduced before, the '*Ie-seido*' tradition remains in the Japanese society. It remains more strongly in extended families as compared to the nuclear families. Under the system, supporting aged parents were regulated in the legislation. After abolishment of the system, it is not obligatory to support an aged parent, so the tendency to regard elderly people as a burden has been strengthened.

- **Cultural value oppositions**

The present society is influenced by the capitalist market principle and the social value. For example, the capital market adopts the competitive principle for seeking profits. The society leniently treats the younger generation who consume more than the older generation, and the market put the value on beautiful quality. Therefore, these phenomena bring about the value oppositions such as young-old, health-disease, live-death, beauty-ugliness. Unfortunately, the image of elderly people is those negative ones like old, disease, death and ugliness.

3) Social interaction premise

- **Fear and anxiety of aging**

The present society tends to welcome people who contribute to the society by consuming and producing. Younger generations produce and consume more than older generations, so younger people are more welcome on the market. For example, in the labor market, younger people can easier get a job than middle-aged people. Aging is a process which none of us can avoid going through. However, the present consuming-and-producing centered society has put it into people's mind that being old is something we need to be afraid of, because getting old means you loose your youthfulness, beauty and your capacity to survive in society. Thus, people tend to have a fear and anxiety of aging (Tsuji 2001, 26). These premises are similar to the above-mentioned cultural opposition.

- **Labeling on elderly people (passive)**

In society, becoming old has a special meaning. In this context, it is a tacit negative expectation for elderly people. The implied expectation is such as 'elderly people should retire from the societal forefront' and 'they should leave their businesses to the younger generation' (Tsuji 2001, 26). From these images and social expectations, we can say that society structures elderly people without paying any attention to the physical condition of the single individual.

- **Labeling on elderly people (self-labeling)**

When people pass the retirement age, they start considering themselves 'being old'. In the first stage, they try to deny the 'being old feeling' but the fact that they loose status and that other people regard them as elderly people, force them to accept the 'being elderly'-part. Self-labeling is a mental process, so the length of the process varies, depending on the individual person. There are people who completely deny 'being old/

elderly'. The tendency, however, of the image 'being old' is often passive in the Japanese society, such as 'I am only waiting for Buddha or for God's messenger to take me to paradise', 'I have no reason to be here any more' (Ibid, 27). Thus, elderly people tend to label themselves in a negative way. All of these premises are interacting factors in discrimination against elderly people.

Han (2003) explains the social factors in elder discrimination. Han clarifies the impact of society in elder discrimination. As a social factor of elderly discrimination, an isolation of elderly in the society takes place. The cultural and social structure leaves elderly people with very little in common with young people, and this in turn brings isolation for the elderly. Thus, society has a stronger influence on elder discrimination than the influence of individuals (Rosencranz & McNevin 1968. ref. Han 2003, 119). The value intention of each society and of any given time also promotes elder discrimination. For example, there may be preconceptions that elderly people, who emphasize the need for traditions, are old-fashioned, irrational and stubborn. These elder discriminations cannot only be interpreted as an individualistic distinction but also as stratum bias, which is a more macro point of view. Therefore, the elder discrimination mechanism passes elderly people off as incompetent and isolates them. It nurtures an environment where elder abuse can easily happen. After all, in such a society where a furious elder discrimination occurs, elder abuse cannot help becoming a more serious problem (Han 2003, 119-120).

We can observe the ageism phenomenon in Japanese libraries and bookstores. The books concerning elderly people are placed in the corner where the 'Elderly Problems' are, or they are sometimes mixed with the 'Disabled People's Problems'. Is growing old a problem? It cannot and should not be. The bookshelf whispers back to us as if aging equals being disabled. We can say that the common knowledge in the present Japanese society, that being elderly equals a 'problem' or a 'disability', is part of ageism. I would say that elder abuse is deeply connected with the society, in which a negative image of being old is projected. In this context, it is discrimination against elderly people caused by society.

Langone (1991) claims the characteristic differences of elderly people depend on individuals. As a larger group of the population becomes older, the individual difference among elderly people varies more. The group of elderly people is the most varied, compared to other groups in the population. The health condition, the education, the marital status, the physical ability, the condition of life, the economical condition and life styles differ depending on the person. The age difference can be more than 30 years among the 'elderly' group. Sometimes both parents and their children are included in the group of over 65-year-olds, a phenomenon not observable in the other generation groups. More than 10 % of the elderly have children who are above 65 years old (Langone 1991, 26).

Tsuji (2001) suggests that the researches on elder abuse could be regarded as a part of researches on discrimination. Although abuse has no direct connection to discrimination, the action of treating elderly people cruelly is part of discrimination (Tsuji 2001, 18).

2.6.3 Abuse, batter, tease -what is the difference?-

Since there is no clearly defined border on what kind of actions should be called abusive, I suggest an understanding of the difference between abuse, battering and teasing would help get a clearer picture of what abuse is.

Abuse, battering and teasing do not concern only elderly people. Battering and teasing are often discussed in schools. When we consider elder abuse as a social problem, it is essential to understand the different level of actions. A key point to be considered is whether the action is done with the mutual understanding of the people concerned or if it is a one-sided action only. Here I reflect on the differences between abuse, batter and tease.

To begin with, I quote the dictionaries' definitions of tease, batter and abuse (Longman Dictionary of the English language 1995, Collins English Dictionary 1983).

Tease	to vex (someone) maliciously or playfully, especially by ridicule
Batter	to hit (someone or something) repeatedly using heavy blows, as with a club or heavy instrument, to damage or injure, as by blows, heavily wear
Abuse	to use incorrectly or improperly, misuse, to speak insultingly or cruelly, to revile, insulting, contemptuous, or coarse speech, any interaction, any communication, that detracts from the aliveness, well-being or serenity of another, to maltreat

Elliott (1997) makes the meaning of battering clear. She gives examples of battering at schools concerning children and analyzes the factors and characteristics of battering. In the book she explains, ‘battering is the act of purposefully hurting other human beings. As a result, the victim is afflicted with anguish. Battering does not occur because the victim provokes the bullies.’ (Elliott 1997, 15. Translated by Serizawa in 1999). Besides, Elliott claims bullies are aware of their own behavior, they clearly know what they are doing. They batter somebody with the aim of insulting the victim and they are conscious of their own controlling power over the victim (Ibid, 15).

She also mentions the difference between battering and teasing. Teasing is allowed only as long as both parties concerned enjoy it. When one of the participants wishes to stop the act, the teasing should be stopped immediately (Elliott 1997, 27). When an action exceeds the limit of teasing, the grade of the action has turned into battering or abuse.

Considering the definitions of abuse and battering, battering is more related to the physical action, whereas abuse can include psychological damage also. Battering and abuse are actions where power relations exist between the assailant and the victim.

2.6.4 Definition of elder abuse

Finally, we have reached the discussion of the definition of elder abuse. No singularly

accepted universal definition of elder abuse exists (Netakiri yobou kenkyuukai 2002, Crandall 1991, Decalmer & Glendenning 1993, UN Economic and Social Council 2002, Tataru 2001, Tsutsui & Higashino 2002). Benett (1990) claims 'the difficulty in defining elder abuse is a major thread throughout the published literature' (ref. Decalmer & Glendenning 1993, 10). With no universal definition, how has elder abuse been measured so far? Let us look at the different arguments on the definition of elder abuse.

According to Decalmer and Glendenning, many definitions of elder abuse and elder neglect existed in the 1980s, and it is widely recognized that they lacked clarity and precision. The reason would be as follows; 'A clear difficulty has been that investigators have approached elder abuse from different perspectives: the victim, the carer, the physician, the nurse, the agency, the social worker, social policy; and, as a result, there has been a lack of clarity' (Decalmer & Glendenning 1993, 5).

The lack of a universal definition of elder abuse is causing problems. If social workers or home-helpers visit elderly people's homes and find a case, that can be regarded as elder abuse, the workers are not able to certify, whether the case is to be categorized as elder abuse or not. Alternatively, should it happen that an elderly patient comes to a hospital or a health center, a doctor or a nurse will have to leave the case alone, even if they find an abuse has taken place, since no manual for dealing with abuse is at hand. Tsutsui and Higashino (2002) question the significance of a definition. The reason for having to define elder abuse is that elder abuse is a social problem that can take place in any kind of family, thus, elder abuse must be discussed as a social problem because we need to find a solution through some kind of universal social service. Moreover, they claim that if the classification of elder abuse is not decided upon, getting a clear picture of the elder abuse problem is bound to fail and a causal connection of the problem will be impossible to bring out (Tsutsui & Higashino 2002, 171-2).

The United Nations Economic and Social Council over the limited information available on elder abuse. 'The value of existing information as a global evidence based on abuse of older persons is further limited by the lack of clear and transposable definitions, deficiency of reliable and valid data and shortcomings of methodology' (UN Economic

and Social Council 2002, 3). Hirst and Miller (1986) claim that including too many broad types of abuse would result in an overstatement of the problem, which would make it impossible to determine the aetiology of abuse. As we can see, it has obviously been agreed upon that a universal definition is essential in dealing with elder abuse but the discussion has not reached a mutual agreement. There is no universal definition, but definitions and concepts made by researchers, institutions etc., do exist (Hirst & Miller 1986, ref. Decalmer & Glendenning 1993).

The United Nation Economic and Social Council defines the definition of elder abuse as ‘a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person’ (United Nation Economic and Social Council 2002, 4).

Elder abuse can be divided into three categories; firstly, domestic abuse, in which the victim and the assailant usually have kinship relations. Secondly, abuse in institutions like nursing homes, day care centers, the assailant is a caregiver or a professional worker whose duty it is to take care of the elderly. Thirdly, self-neglect or self-tormenting where elderly do physical or mental harm to their own bodies (Johnson 1995 ref. Han 2003, 118).

Although the definition varies in researches, the typology of elder abuse is in the majority of cases defined as follows:

PHYSICAL ABUSE	Non-accidental use of physical force that results in bodily injury, pain or impairment.
EMOTIONAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE	Willful infliction of mental or emotional anguish by threat, humiliation, intimidation or other verbal or non-verbal abusive conducts.
SEXUAL ABUSE	Non-consensual sexual contact of any kind with an older person.
FINANCIAL OR MATERIAL EXPLOITATION	Unauthorized use of funds, property, or any resources of an older person
NEGLECT (passive)	Willful or non-willful failure by the caregiver to fulfill his/her care-taking obligation or duty
NEGLECT (active)	A set of behaviors that threaten the health or safety of an older person. This is often called as 'self-neglect'.

(See Crandall 1991, UN Economic and Social Council 2002, Netakiri yobou kenkyuukai 2002, etc.)

In April 2006, the Elder Abuse Prevention Law is proclaimed in Japan. The definition of elder abuse in the legislation is similar to the definition above.

For reference, I here introduce the Child Abuse Prevention Law, from 2000, which proclaimed the definition of child abuse is the following actions done by children's guardians:

- An assaulting act to children that may injure or harm children's bodies
- An obscene act or letting children act obscenely
- A remarkable idling of responsibility as a guardian of children (e.g. a long time of neglect, starvation)
- A verbal or physical action that may lead to mental or external injuries

Although the definition of child abuse is similar to the definition of elder abuse, Tsutsui

and Higashino (2002) state the difference between child- and elder abuse is that taking an example of a violence case. It is often regarded as an action of teaching manners to children, though, when the object is an elderly person, it is habitually seen as abuse. (Tsutsui & Higashino 2002, 168)

Talking about the definition of elder abuse, we can say that the definition is mostly reproduced from researches made abroad (mainly in the USA and Great Britain). Nonetheless, it is essential to take a country's specific characteristics into consideration, such as the cultural and historical background. If it is only a replica, based on researches made in other countries, a danger persists that special features of a country are overlooked. Therefore, we should bear in mind that the particular definition should be made in Japan.

2.6.5 Reasons why elder abuse is hidden in the society

As mentioned in the introduction part, elder abuse cases do not easily come into the open in society. When talking about practical factors, on one hand, many of the elderly who are under nursing care do not have enough physical strength to attract attention to the problem themselves. Therefore, a third person like a home-helper or a social worker usually discovers the cases. On the other hand, although hale elderly people have the physical strength to appeal to authorities about their problem, it is in many cases hidden. The United Nation Economic and Social Council (2002) advocates the reasons as follows; 'There are situational and psychological barriers to self-reporting of mistreatment. Motivation to conceal mistreatment includes fear of institutionalization, fear of retaliation, a desire to protect the abuser from the consequences of their acts, shame and embarrassment and the victim's perception that the abuse is expected, or deserved' (UN Economic and Social Council 2002, 6).

In addition, there are social factors behind the reason. Daniels et al. (1989) claim that isolation is another reason why abuse is often underreported. Elderly people are often isolated from the 'mainstream' society and as a result, abuse can go undetected (Daniels

et al., 1989, ref. Crandall 1991, 320). Modernization, industrialization and flowing knowledge are letting elderly people fall behind the times. People do not have time to sit around contemplating the elderly because they desperately need to follow fashion, technological changes and so on.

There is also a cultural feature. In the Japanese society, where collectivistic thinking has been regarded as essential, neighbor-relations are important for the citizens. Therefore, people tend to avoid making trouble in order to maintain a good relationship with their neighbors.

Elder Abuse Prevention Study Group (2004) claims several reasons why elder abuse is hidden in the society. The main factor is that the concept of 'elder abuse' is exceedingly vague. Abuse cases are not black-and-white issues. The cases are often situated in a 'grey zone' where it is difficult to judge whether they are abuse cases or not. The second reason is passivity of professional workers, when abuse takes place, because of the long process of bad relationship between the family members. The professionals will be passive in dealing with the case because of its complexity of family relations. As a third reason, the group lists the lack of professional training for assessment and intervention. Naturally, professionals do not know how to deal with cases if they are not trained to. The fourth factor is that there is no professional institution, which handles elder abuse. Child Guidance Center is the institution, which deals with child abuse but an organization for elder abuse does not exist.

In addition, as mentioned above, the lack of a universal definition on elder abuse is obstructing the matters from coming into the open.

2.7 Previous researches and activities on elder abuse

In Europe and the North America, the study on elder abuse has begun already in 1970s. The researches are mostly made in the USA and Great Britain till today. In the late 1980s, the researches began in Japan.

2.7.1 Researches and activities abroad

The first research on elder abuse was presented by Baker in the British Medical Journal in 1975. At that time, the word 'elder abuse' did not exist and the expression '*Granny battering*' was used. It stirred the attention from British medical experts. In the mid-1980s, the British social worker Eastman changed the terms of 'granny battering/bashing' to 'old age abuse', which made British social workers admit the existence of elder abuse.

The USA and Great Britain are the most advanced countries in the world on elder abuse researches. American researchers have largely concerned with domestic abuse and the British researchers have mostly made researches in institutional settings.

In the USA, many states have created laws concerning elder abuse (Bedridden prevention group 2002, Crandall 1991, Decalmer & Glendenning 1993, Elder Abuse Prevention Study Group 2004, Tatara 2003 etc.). However, the early formulations of these laws had numerous problems such as vague definitions and few resources to ensure enforcement. In fact, as a result of the lack of resources the laws have been called 'symbolic' (Daniels et al., 1989, ref. Crandall 1991, 322).

O'Malley et, al. (1996), listed up five different factors of elder abuse. First, the elderly person in a dependent situation, thus, needs nursing care. Second, when the family members or caregivers are highly stressed. Third, when a family member tends to solve a problem by using violence. Forth, abuser's individual problem e.g. mental disease, alcoholic addiction. Fifth, influence of the negative image of elderly people e.g. ageism (O'Malley 1996 ref. Elder abuse prevention study group 2004, 16-8).

I do not refer researches made in USA, UK or elsewhere as examples of elder abuse since the research data are, as I mentioned before, concerning elderly people under nursing care.

2.7.2 Previous researches in Japan

The Japanese doctor Kaneko published the first research on elder abuse 'Roujin gyakutai' (Elder Abuse) in 1987. Kaneko sees elder abuse from several points of view; the history of elder abuse, its classification and compares it to child abuse. Since the 1990's, the ongoing research of elder abuse in Japan has intensified. The Japanese Center for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the Bedridden Prevention Study Group have among others made surveys at nursing homes, health care centers and have interviewed professional workers, such as social workers, home helpers, nursing care managers, and asked them to report if they had had any experiences in dealing with elder abuse cases. From the research results, it turned out that most of the elder abuse cases in Japan are in the category of 'neglect' (Tatara 2003 etc.). The introduction of the Long-Term Care Insurance System has given professional workers more opportunities to visit elderly people's households and made it possible to identify neglect in its first stage. In most of the cases, the reason why professional workers discover elder abuse is that they observe the state of affairs between the elderly and the caregiver, and the condition of the bedroom, therefore, 'neglect' is found in the first place (Tsutsui & Higashino 2002, 171). However, some doubts remain. As mentioned above, the hale elderly do not have many occasions to meet professional workers, and the target of the researches was only the elderly under nursing care. Therefore, if the research targets were different, the result might have been accordingly dissimilar.

Along with the social trend, elder abuse has been noticed as a social problem, and the Japan Academy for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (JAPEA) was established in August 2003. By the cooperation of JAPEA and the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor, a national inquiry on domestic elder abuse cases was made for the first time in Japan, in the winter of 2003. The research method was quantitative. More than 16,000 questionnaires were sent to home care service centers for elderly people and municipalities all over Japan. The main question was to establish whether the workers in the centers or municipalities had heard about any elder abuse cases during the past year, concerning their customers over 65 years old. If there were any, they had to fill in the

details of the case in the questionnaire. As a result, hereof, only 0.4% of the cases concerned hale elderly. As stated above, hale elderly people do not rely on care services so they hardly have any chance to meet professional workers. Thus, a doubt remains whether the reality of elder abuse is grasped.

In April 2006, the Elder Abuse Prevention Law was proclaimed for the first time in Japan. The characteristic of the legislation is the subject person of abuse is defined as ‘*yougosha*’ and workers in nursing homes. I started wonder about the meaning and subject of ‘*yougosha*’. When I looked up dictionaries to check the meaning, ‘*yougo*’ is ‘to bring up children who are physically weak’ (ref. New Japanese Dictionary) or ‘to support growth of somebody with special protection’ (ref. goo dictionary). ‘*Sha*’ means person. Thus, if I use the definition of ‘*yougo*’ by goo dictionary, ‘*yougosha*’ means ‘a person who supports growth of somebody with special protection’. It sounds as it is concerning children. The word ‘*yougo*’ is sometimes used concerning nursing. In this point, the subject of elder abuse is quite unclear in the legislation. The concepts of the law is mainly

- Municipality offers advice windows for elderly people and engaged person of an abuse case
- If a person find an elderly person who seems to be abused, s/he has to report to municipality
- If the elderly person is facing severe danger of his/her life or body, mayor has right to send a worker (workers) of municipal support center or a worker (workers) who is (are) engaging elderly welfare to the elderly’s dwelling and investigate the situation
- When needed, the mayor is allowed to ask support from police

The legislation was proclaimed only a month ago, therefore, the effect of the law is not yet visible. Promulgation of the elder abuse prevention law is a step for preventing elder abuse. Only a remaining doubt is who is pointed as the subject person of abuse. The clear definition is needed.

Comprehensively, after reading through the earlier researches on elder abuse we can see

that a majority of the research subjects only concern the elderly who are in need of nursing care and that the research only has focused on care support centers, day service centers, and professional workers like nurses, care workers, and social workers.

3 RESEARCH METHOD AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Path of the research

I had to walk long paths until I succeeded to find the interviewees who were willing to talk about their stories.

Collecting data and materials for the research was no easy task, since elder abuse is a sensitive theme that does not simply surface as explained in 1.5.5. I came across several obstacles through my research. Firstly, my intention had been to choose families at random, then interview the elderly people and the other family members in the household, in order to detect any sign of abuse in the given families. It was too optimistic a way of collecting data. In the Japanese tradition, people are not willing to talk about their private matters, especially if they are of a negative sort. Therefore, I set the main question for the elderly as 'life of elderly people' and 'living with an elderly' for the family members, without mentioning the word 'elder abuse' at all. Regrettably, I could not get a permission to do an interview from either the elderly or their family members. The reasons were 'I do not feel like talking about my life' and 'I do not have anything to talk about', etc. I entreated the needs for an interview, but my requests were turned down. I had to give up any thoughts of realizing my first intentions. The second option I had in mind was to read through newspapers and magazines and analyze the articles in them about elder abuse. However, most of the articles concerned elderly people who are in need of nursing care. This did not fulfill my research terms, so the second plan had to be aborted, too. At about the same time, I had an opportunity to hear of a real abuse case from a willing elderly informant. The elderly lives together with her eldest son's family, which fulfils my research subject. Elder abuse is a theme, which

hardly comes to the surface as open information. Therefore, any reports should not be neglected and her sentences guaranteed value of the given information. At last, I succeeded to obtain the research material, which I feel is rare and irreplaceable for this kind of research.

3.2 Research data and its analyzing methodology

3.2.1 Research data

The main purpose of this research is to describe the domestic elder abuse concerning hale elderly women in a Japanese context. I emphasize, that in this research the hale elderly refer to the elderly who are not in need of nursing care.

Adachi (1999) states the efficiency of using a qualitative method in the study of elderly people and the family relations. ‘The reason why qualitative data is effectual in the research of elderly people and families is that it is indispensable to grasp the relationship process between the elderly and the family so as to understand the present network which the elderly holds’ (Adachi 1999, 25). In addition, the reason why I chose the qualitative method is that many of the past researches concerning elder abuse were made by using the quantitative method. I would assume that using the qualitative method better reflects the voices of the elderly people and the people involved in elder abuse. In order to describe the phenomena and get a picture of reality, I have chosen the qualitative method. Pietilä (1973) explains that empirical social research is suitable when the researcher tries to describe phenomena and the process or tries to explain the phenomena with the help of other phenomena and the process. In this sense, since my research purpose is description of elder abuse as social phenomena, the empirical research is a suitable method. From several kinds of empirical methods, I chose interviewing. Hirsjärvi (1997) states that the advantage of interviewing makes it possible to adjust data collection flexibly along with presuming the situation and at the same time admitting respondents. The interviews were half-structured interviews.

Eskola and Suoranta (1998) explains the concepts of the half-structured interview that in half-structured interviews, the questions are the same for everybody but the answers are not set as alternatives, which means the interviewees are able to answer the questions using their own words. According to Hirsjärvi and Hurme (1982), the half-structured interview is called a theme interview. It is based on the book by Merton, Fiske and Kendall (The Focused Interview: A Manual of Problems and Procedures, 1956, new edition in 1990). There are four main characteristics and stages of the focused interview. First, interviewees experience a certain situation. Second, social scientists tentatively clarify the important parts, structure, process of the phenomenon to study and entity of the phenomena. Analyzing the phenomena, the researcher finds the features that might possibly explain the phenomena. In the third stage, the researcher develops an interview outline. In the last stage, the interview that directs for the interviewee's subjective experiences of a situation, which phenomenon is analyzed beforehand by the researcher is accomplished. I followed the methodology and completed these five interviews for my study with: an elderly woman, the son of the elderly and his wife (separated interviews), a group interview with five wives and a woman whose grandmother is being abused.

In the beginning, I interviewed a nearly 90-year-old elderly woman who lives with her eldest son's family. I met her twice and both interviews took place at her home in the daytime. During the interview, the members of her family were not at home and only the two of us were present. It was my intention to conduct the interviews during the daytime because I assumed that if only we would be present, the interviewee would not have to pay any attention to the surrounding environment, e.g. if somebody would be listening to our conversation. In the first interview I did not record our conversation because my aim with the first meeting was to chat in a relaxed manner and try to build a reliable relationship with the interviewee. In the second interview, I recorded the discussion. According to the proverb, '*a hedge between keeps friendship green*', I was especially careful about entering their private sphere since we were going to discuss a serious issue. For that reason, the first interview was done without recording it. The second meeting took place a week after our first meeting. It lasted a bit less than an hour. During the interview, I did not ask straightforwardly about 'abuse' I did not even

mention the word. ‘Abuse’=*Gyakutai* (in Japanese)’ sounds too severe as the word is used e.g. concerning the Iraqi War; ‘American soldiers abused ordinary Iraqi people’. I thought the word ‘abuse’ might hurt the feelings of elderly, so I avoided mentioning the word. Somebody may wonder, ‘how did you define the cases as abuse cases if you did not ask directly about abuse?’ – I will answer as follows; - I analyzed the cases based on the “present definitions about elder abuse”. No universally specified definition on elder abuse has been made and the ones that exist have been made from the research concerning the elderly people under nursing care, which differentiates it from my research subject. Should I not be allowed to use the present definition for the research? There may be similarities whether the cases concern nursing care or not.’

The interviews with the son of the elderly and his wife were done separately. I did this purposely in order to gain different viewpoints from the situation. In addition, the interviewees would not have to care about the presence of other persons, such the interviewee would care the other’s opinion. Therefore, I made the interviews separately. Both of the interviews were made on the same day, so the interviewees knew that I interviewed their spouse, too. However, the elderly did not know I would be interviewing them. I told the married couple that I interviewed the grandmother and asked if I should tell the grandmother that I interviewed them. According to the married couple’s views, it was better not to tell anybody I was interviewing them because ‘*we don’t want to cause unnecessary anxiety to the grandmother*’. For that reason, I kept it secret that I would be interviewing the elderly interviewee’s son and his wife. I first interviewed the wife and it took about two hours. During the interview, the husband went out and only the two of us were left in the house. After interviewing the wife, I interviewed the husband and this interview lasted a bit less than an hour. Both interviews were theme interviews and recorded with their consent.

In the group interview, there were five women (47 – 60 years old) participants. All of them live with either their mother- or father-in-law, or with both of them. I found the interviewees through one of the participants. The relation between the interviewees is that their son or daughter attended the same class in primary school about 10 years ago. I had heard beforehand that they get together every month to have fun and often talk

about their family issues, mainly the relationship to their mother- or father-in law. I was invited to participate in one of their meetings. The place where I held the interview was in a town, whose main industry is fishing and tourism. All of the interviewees were from this town. I did not tell the other participants about the topic we were going to talk about. I asked questions and they freely discussed them. The reason why I interviewed daughters-in-law, was that I was expecting to hear their opinions about elder abuse would differ from the opinions elderly people have. In addition, I think that their opinions can probably help to prevent future elder abuse cases. In the interviewees' families, no elder abuse has taken place. I asked what kind of actions or under which circumstances they feel like battering the elderly person. During the interview, I participated as an interviewer and listened interviewees' conversation most of the time. However, I was sometimes asked questions by interviewees so I also participated in their discussion in some cases. Our meeting took place in a restaurant and lasted an hour. The discussion was recorded.

Then, I interviewed a late 20s woman whose grandmother (about 80-year-old) is being abused. The purpose of the interview was to hear about elder abuse case from younger generation point of view because I am especially paying attention to examine whether generation gap is influencing as a factor of elder abuse. The interviewee does not live together with her grandmother but she meets her about once a month or every two months. The elderly does not have any illnesses and she can take care of herself. The interviewee often hears about what has happened through her family. I interviewed her in a cafe and the interview lasted for about an hour. It was also recorded. The interviewee is the same generation of the researcher, thus, the interview was held in a relaxing mood and it was rather a conversation than a formal interview.

All of the recorded interview data are changed into letters on papers.

3.2.2 Analyzing methodology

Having piles of interview data, choosing a methodology of the data analysis was a

difficult task. Among the alternatives of discourse analysis, narrative analysis and content analysis, I finally chose the content analysis as the methodology. The content analysis method is introduced by the American researcher Bernard Berelson. Berelson (1952) explains the content analysis as a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of manifest content of communications (Berelson 1952, 18 ref. Pietilä 1973, 51). Objective and systematic as features of the content analysis should be ignored because the objective and systematic are the basic rule for all scientific research. Manifest content of communications mean content of documents as such, thus, phenomenon as it is (Pietilä 1973 51). The content analysis method is nowadays used for all kinds of researches, which have the purpose to describe statistically or verbally the content of data as a phenomenon in itself or as an outside phenomenon, whose contents indicate the phenomenon. According to Markoff, Shapiron and Weitman (1975), content analysis method is able to limit the text analysis by the meaning of social science. They suggest the name should be text analysis or text coding. The form is only suitable for the data from the theme interview and as the main purpose of this study is to describe the elder abuse phenomena, I, therefore, chose the content analysis as the methodology of the data analysis.

The analysis is on one hand done deductively. I categorized the data by using the theoretical concepts I introduced in the theoretical perspective section and considered how the theories and data are related to each other. On the other hand, the analysis is inductive. I analyzed the sentences of the data, then modified theoretical categories and found critical elements for analysis.

In addition, I analyzed the individual expressions and qualified them by using four different dimensional categories. In the quotations, there are the sentences with the underline (A): main events, the thick underline (**A**): expression of feelings, the doubled underline (A): obligatorily expression and the dotted underline (⋯A): important expression. It was often apparent how the expressions should be categorized but sometimes the expressions were mixed together.

I have got piles of interview data, though; I was at a loss how to analyze them because

the interviews were made in different situation and method: individual and group interviews. After a long consideration, I ended up to use those four different categories for the analysis. The data gained in the interviews are consisted of interviewees' words and expressions what are common in every interview no matter what interview, individual or group interview. The idea to use the four categories was suddenly flashed up in my brain, therefore, I would say, it is my own methodology. I could not find this kind of methodology in any methodological literature so far, however, I believe, I was succeeded to handle the methodology for the analysis after all.

The individual expression analysis was done by myself, thus, the categorization was done from my viewpoint. I categorized them objectively but the categorization might have turned out differently had it been done with several different people, I must add.

In the quotations, I used shortenings; (*e*): the elderly, (*s*): the elderly's son, (*d*) the son's wife, (*w*): the woman interviewee, and (*gA-E*): the interviewee from the group interview. The group interviewees are named A, B, C, D, E. For example, the sentence of A is marked as (*gA1*).

4 RESEARCH RESULT

The main purpose of this research is to describe the domestic elder abuse concerning hale elderly women. The research result is divided into two main parts. In the first part, I categorize the cases by using the present definition of elder abuse. Second, I introduce the factors of elder abuse.

4.1 The cases of abuse

In this section, I will introduce the classification of each action by using the present definition of elder abuse. In the analysis, I especially pay attention to the elderly's viewpoint and feelings about the cases, because in my opinion the term 'elder abuse'

should comprehend all kinds of pain and suffering of elderly people.

Emotional or Psychological abuse

According to the definition, emotional or psychological abuse is ‘willful infliction if mental or emotional anguish by threat, humiliation, intimidation or other verbal or non-verbal abusive conducts’ (Crandall 1991, UN Economic and Social Council 2002 etc.). In my data, there are lots of expressions where such emotional and mental violation of the emotions of the elderly person in question is present. There are situations like living together in the same house but having a feeling of being left out of the discussions and the presence and expressions where the interviewed person recalls the old good times of family life.

‘The eldest son and his wife are chatting and laughing and eating something nice in the kitchen. She (the elderly) says, “I am sad that they don’t ask me to join them. I don’t mean that I want to eat something nice, only I’m sad that I am not allowed join them.” (d1)

‘My eldest son’s family sometimes goes out, but I have never gone with them. They never ask me.’ (e1)

‘The daughter-in-law only does the laundry for her family.’ (e2)

‘She (the daughter-in-law) hardly ever talks to me. She only speaks about business things.’ (e3)

‘It was fun living here when he (her husband) was alive, but I feel lonely now.’ (e4)

‘My grandmother usually eats alone because the family members don’t accept her to be present while they are eating. Because her way of eating is dirty and she is ill-mannered. But she wants to eat together with the others.’ (w1)

In the elderly’s phrases, we can see that the elderly feels a sense of alienation as there are emotional expressions in the sentences such as sad and lonely. She said ‘my eldest

son's family', she doesn't include herself as a member of the family. Likewise, in the other case, the elderly is alienated because she is not allowed to eat together with the other family members, although she wants to join them. All the above cases verify that the elderly has an emotional anguish from the non-verbal abusive conduct, which is stated in the present definition of elder abuse and all of these feeling may play a very essential part in the welfare of the person in question.

Physical abuse + Psychological abuse

Physical abuse is 'Non-accidental use of physical force that results in bodily injury, pain or impairment'. (Crandall 1991, UN Economic and Social Council 2002 etc.) In my data, there is no expressions of physical violence, or situations where the tolerance of caregivers brought down even though there are rumors and writings in the newspapers on this topic. The data gives one other dimension for physical and psychical abuse, such as expressions related to the services and behavior of family members.

Meal

'The foods are usually left on the table for several days at a time. The white rice turned to be almost yellow... She said she got diarrhea when eating it.' (d2)

'I've heard that they give her old food or leftovers.' (s1)

'I can't eat meals at home. They taste so bad and they are stale. If I don't eat them, the foods are left on the table.' (e5)

Laundry

'I can't use the washing machine, so I am washing my laundry manually. It's hard to wash big things like sheets.' (e6)

'The daughter-in-law only does the laundry for her family.' (e2)

The fact that the elderly ate food, which was left on the table for several days and got diarrhea, can be classified into the category of physical abuse, bad behavior of caregivers and neglect of the feelings of elderly. At the same time, we need to pay attention to the elderly's expression '*can't*', which shows that although she wants to eat at home, she is not able to, because she gets the rotten food. Thus, the fact is the mixture of physical and mental twinge. Then, let us consider the laundry case. The elderly said that she is not welcome to use the washing machine so she does her laundry manually, even big things that is hard for her. This is because her daughter-in-law only does '*the laundry for her family*'. As I mentioned in the psychological abuse part, the elderly feels alienated. Furthermore, doing your laundry with her bare hands is physically hard. Thus, this case also overlaps the psychological and physical anguish.

When I was classifying the leftover food case, I wondered how I could define the case if it was coming out of laziness from the daughter-in-law or whether it was an intended action. The present definition states 'non-accidental use of physical force'. It may even be an example of different cultural background between the younger and older generation what concerns the traditional models and values of housework. However, from the elderly point of view, she suffered from the action. Therefore, regardless whether the action was done on purpose or not, I came to the result that the action should be regarded as abuse and part of the welfare of the person in question.

Financial exploitation + Psychological abuse

The definition of financial or material exploitation is, 'unauthorized use of funds, property, or any resources of an older person'. (Crandall 1991, UN Economic and Social Council 2002 etc.) This kind of loss of power or authority is very common topic of discussion in families and in the society in large. We may even propose that financial and material issues and possible exploitation has the genre of its own in the cultural discourse. Nevertheless, whatever the case, there are also verified examples of real threats. In my data, expressions are related with property, pensions and authority issues.

'When my father died, there was a rich inheritance. After all, we found out that the property was changed to our eldest son's name, not to our mother's. Our eldest brother brought our father to a notary public's office and made him sign the paper changing the name while our father was alive.' (s2)

'My mother didn't know about the incident and she was shocked. I think...she was shocked not because she lost the inheritance, but because of the eldest son's behavior.' (s3)

'My uncle's family (where the elderly lives) lives off my grandmother's pension because none of the family members are working.' (w2)

'My grandmother is of course not willing to give her pension away. There is not much money left for her to spend on herself.' (w3)

Naturally, the elderly should have been a heiress of the property after her husband's death. However, the eldest son brought his father to the notary public's office and made him sign the agreement paper and this was done without informing the elderly. In this sense, the inheritance is used in an unauthorized way, so the elderly is financially exploited. In the second case, the elderly's pension is used for family livelihood and she is not willing to give the money away. Therefore, her pension is used unauthorized and this case can also be categorized as financial exploitation. The common feature among these cases is that, in addition to the financial exploitation, both elderly persons suffered psychologically as well.

Findings from the data and criticism of the present definition of elder abuse

It is hard to draw a line at a matter of case whether it is an abuse, tease or batter, since there is no universally clarified definition. However, all the above-mentioned dimensions I would say are categorized as abuse. The acts are done without mutual understanding between the actor and receiver. In this sense, the actions cannot be regarded as teasing. According to Eliot (1997), teasing is allowed only as long as both parties concerned enjoy it, and when one of the concerned wishes to stop the act it should be stopped immediately. If the action does not stop, it exceeds to battering or

abuse. Based on the definition, battering is more related to the physical action compared to abuse. In the data of this research, the case only concerns physical damage was not observed and all of the cases were a mixture of physical and psychological anguish. Therefore, I would categorize the data as *abuse* cases.

By analyzing the data collected for this research, I did not find any cases of sexual abuse and neglect (both passive and active). Sexual abuse usually concerns different genders and it occurs more obviously in other constellations than home care. In home care, sexual abuse may be more hidden and neglect the elderly peoples emotional rights as such. In this research, the object only concerns women. Therefore, there were no findings of sexual abuse. Concern neglect, some doubts and questions arose in my mind while doing the analysis. I wondered if the meal case could be categorized as a passive neglect. According to the definition, neglect (passive) is ‘willful or non-willful failure by the caregiver to fulfill his/her care-taking obligation or duty’. Regarding the meal case, because the victim (the elderly) is hale, the assailant is not necessarily a caregiver. Therefore, I avoided to categorize the case as neglect and categorized it as physical and psychological abuse.

I noticed that the present definition of elder abuse is obscure, regarding from whose perspective the definition is defined. The emotions of the elderly people seem to have been ignored. Considering the above-described case, whether it is an accidental or non-accidental case, the action for the elderly is the same. Therefore, the definitions have to be made from the elderly’s viewpoint. Otherwise, the definition will only be useful for the researchers and will not lead to any practical relief for the elderly who have suffered from abuse.

The elderly is ‘hale’ and has no emotional or mental (e.g. no dementia). Therefore, physical- and psychological abuse cannot be separately categorized. When the elderly is physically anguished, she is psychologically sorrowed at the same time. It is the same with financial exploitation. The cases overlapped the financial and psychological abuse. All human beings have emotions and feelings. I would assume that abuse deeply connects with emotion, thus, it is hard to separate the cases from the category of

psychological abuse.

Considering all the above-mentioned characteristics about abuse of hale elderly, I assume that the definition should be re-defined by taking the elderly's viewpoint as victims into consideration. Of course, there are elder abuses to elderly under nursing care. Therefore, I emphasize the need of re-defining elder abuse, which comprehends all the cases regardless of the elderly's condition of health.

4.2 The factors -the society as a factor of elder abuse

In this section, I will discuss the factors of elder abuse regarding the data collected for this research. I emphasize that the following information only apply to the cases where the elderly people live with their children. Why did these cases take place? What were the hidden reasons behind the cases? To answer these questions, I list up the main featuring factors of the cases.

4.2.1 Remaining the 'ie-seido' traditional family system

Family is the smallest but most fundamental unit among any social groups, as I have mentioned in the theoretical part. That is, family and society is strongly connected with each other as units and social organizations. Firstly, I discuss the form of family as a factor of elder abuse in detail.

The '*Ie-seido*' traditional family system was abolished when the new civil law was proclaimed. However, it is said that the system is still alive culturally and in people's mentality. Throughout the data, we can find remarks and traces of this cultural family form.

'Because the eldest son has got a wife. It is a matter of course to live together with the eldest son' (e7)

'It is customary to live with the eldest son.' (d3)

'Nobody made the decision of starting living together. It is natural for the eldest son to succeed the home.' (s4)

'My uncle, the eldest son has never moved away from home. When he married, his wife moved to his house.' (w4)

As the elderly, her son and the daughter-in-law said, an implicit understanding of the custom of the traditional family system remains in people's mentality. All of the women in the group interview of my study are married to the eldest son in a family and they are either living with their father-in-law, mother-in-law or both of them. The grandmother of the third interviewee, a young woman, also lives together with her eldest son's family. Based on the interviewee's words, we can see that they feel rather obligatory to have the elderly live together with the eldest son. Thus, for the eldest sons to live with his parents or for elderly people to live with the eldest son's family is not really their own decision. The decision is more or less assigned by the society. In the data, I did find following remarks and traces on the family form and praxis.

The meaning of 'ie'

'I have never thought of leaving the house. This is my husband's and my home. I have been trying really hard to keep the "ie".' (e8)

'It's funny that the marriage is still regarded as a marriage between family and family. Like, we can see them in marriage ceremony in hotels.' (gB1)

'We still say, "get a wife" or "go to a wife". Somehow it sounds as if women are in lower position than men.' (gC1)

In Japan, there is a tradition to have a marriage ceremony at a party room in a hotel and there is a notice board, which provides the information of marriage ceremonies of the

day. On the notice board, only the names of families are usually written, the names of the marriage couples are not mentioned anywhere. In addition, the invitation letters are sent by the marriage couple's fathers' names. It strongly denotes the tight family relations, already at the stage of getting married. The interviewee said the phenomenon is 'funny' and at the same time mentioned the word 'still'. It indicates that people recognize the traditional family system is legally gone but the system *still* remains in people's behavior and society.

Hierarchy

Concerning the traditional family system, there was a hierarchal structure in families among women. The interviews show the remaining of the hierarchal structure even today.

'I always pretend to obey my mother-in-law, but often I feel "like shit" deep down in my heart.' (gA1)

'I wonder how she (the mother-in-law) can be so arrogant.' (gD1)

These are also one of the remaining features of the traditional family system. As Masaoka (1981) describes the hierarchy among women in a household as the head's wife > the eldest son's wife > the grandchild. Here it can be proved that the traditional family system remains in the society even today.

The practical reality

Under the 'traditional' family system, women had the responsibility to take care of housekeeping, and the execution of family activities were women's role. In my data I did find following remarks on it.

'After all, the wives have the responsibility to take care of the parents-in-law

practically. (gE1)

'Everybody (the elderly's children) expects that the sons take care of the parents, thus, the wives, they mean. Because the husbands are working outside of the home.' (d4)

Women are nowadays entering the labor market and the new constitution claims the equality between genders. However, from these interviewees' voice, we can recognize that women are taking care of the execution of family activities today as well as in the past era.

Authority change in the family

Fukutake & Matsubara (1967) claims that one of the main points to consider in a family research is to find the authority structure in the family. The structure of authority deeply connects with the human relations in the family. First, we need to pay attention to the interaction between the family members. Every one of the family members has their own roles but the roles are not necessarily equal, it might depend on e.g. gender or generation. At the same time, we have to take notice off who has the authority in the family, in order to maintain the family life. The main features to consider are; which of the family members holds the leadership, what is the basis of the authority, in which way is the authority recognized, how the authority has changed during the family development. (Fukutake & Matsubara 1967, 138 - 9). In the data, we find remarks on changes in the authority, respect, position and status of an elderly woman when she is left alone after the death of her husband.

'It was fun living here when he (her husband) was alive, but I feel lonely now.' (e4)

'After he (her husband) died, the daughter-in-law became strong-willed and it feels as if there is no longer room for me at home.' (e9)

'Hm...how can I put it..., authority, nowadays the eldest son and his wife are holding the authority. When my father was alive, my father was strong. No, it doesn't mean that he was overbearing, just... he was dignified at home.' (s5)

'My mother looks as if she is a parasite.' (s6)

'I think my mother was livelier when my father was alive.' (s7)

A radical transformation of authority took place after her husband died. The death of her husband also brought a drastic change in the living arrangements and in the mentality of the elderly. Let us look more closely at the main events for the authority change.

The main events for the authority change

As well as the authority transformation in the family, getting a clear picture of the family internal structure (role, authority, sentiment) is a key issue in understanding the phenomena by seeing the transformation of different life periods and considering the connections between the social change and internal change in the family. In this case, there are three stages for the change of authority: before the eldest son's marriage, after the marriage and after the death of the elderly's husband.

Before the marriage

'Before our eldest brother got married, we, my brothers and sisters met at home quite often.' (s8)

After the marriage

'After the marriage of our eldest brother...I'm sorry to say, but when an unrelated person (his eldest brother's wife) came, the atmosphere changed.' (s9)

'Till he got married, all kinds of things concerning our family were discussed openly among us. Of course, the parents were in the center of attention. I think

the structure of the family changed (after his marriage).’ (s10)

‘I think we siblings became estranged.’ (s11)

‘I’ve heard my mother saying that they (mother and father) are left out at home.’ (s12)

After the death of the elderly’s husband

‘She (the mother) used to be at home with great dignity when my father was alive, but now, she is alone and curls herself up.’ (s13)

‘My mother looks as if she is a parasite.’ (s6)

‘It was fun to live at home when he (her husband) was alive, but I feel lonely now.’ (e4)

‘I have nobody to talk to.’ (e10)

‘After he (her husband) died, the daughter-in-law got stronger and it feels as if there is no longer room for me at home.’ (e9)

Along with time, the relations among the siblings and their parents have been changing. The eldest son’s marriage and the death of the elderly’s husband were the main events that brought authorial change in the family. When ‘an unrelated person’ entered the family, the atmosphere changed. It can be said that the factors behind the cases are deeply related to ageism, as explained in the theoretical perspective (see 1.6.2). The transformation of the hierarchy in the family is influenced by the Japanese cultural structure, so the elderly’s sense of alienation at home is one of the ageism, which has a cultural structural premise. At the same time, it is also the social structural premise of ageism, especially it can be categorized as a social expectation for human behavior. The society requires elderly people to transfer the leadership in the family to younger generation at some point. I do not recognize it as ageism or discrimination if elderly people do not suffer because of the transferring of leadership. However, in the data of this study, the elderly has mentally lost her room to be in at home and she is

psychologically suffering because of the transfer of authority in the family that happened after the elderly's husband died. In this sense, it can be categorized as ageism, which has a social structural premise.

4.2.2 Lack of communication

When saying that my methodological approach is the content analysis, I mean that I take these expressions of the informants as such and look at the content and meaning of the expressions. Therefore, I do not go beyond the sentences and ask if the informants speak the truth or not, or if they use some expression in a specific way. I even expect the informants speak about their lives more or less open-mindedly. In the data, there are following expressions on the lack of communication in the family and care relationship.

'My daughter-in-law doesn't let me know what goes on in her mind.' (e11)

'I have never shared a meal with my daughter-in-law' (e12)

'She (the daughter-in-law) hardly ever talks to me. She only speaks about business things.' (e13)

'The eldest son and his wife are chatting and laughing and eating something nice in the kitchen. She (the elderly) says, "I am sad that they don't ask me to join them. I don't mean that I want to eat something nice, only I'm sad that I'm not allowed to join them." (d1)

'I hardly ever eat breakfast with the others.' (e14)

'Both (the elderly and the daughter-in-law) are unsociable.' (d5)

From the interview data, we can see that the elderly and her daughter-in-law are not communicating much. According to Nakamura (1998), communication is a tool to express, form and distort relationships among human beings. If there is no communication, it is impossible to form a relationship. It does not necessarily have to

be verbal communication, it can also be nonverbal communication. It is not too much to say that if there is no communication it hardly brings about a relationship between the persons. For mutual understanding, communication is an essential tool for human beings. In the data of this research, there is neither verbal nor nonverbal communication between the elderly and the daughter-in-law. In this sense, it is hard to understand one another and the situation will never get better if they do not start communicating more.

Rhythms of daily life

Concerning communication, the length of common time the family members spend among each other deserves careful attention. Here I chose the expressions how much common time the family members spend together.

'I usually get up around 6 o'clock. The others wake up at seven and leave home about 8.' (e15)

'I go to bed about 20 - 21. The son comes home about 19 - 20, the children around the same time.' (e16)

The sentences show that the elderly and the other family members do not have much common time to spend at home. If there is not much common time, it brings a lack of communication because they do not have possibility to communicate.

4.2.3 Reputation, appearance to the society

Reputation, social value and appearance to the society are controlling people's mind and lives. When I searched the words '*sekentei*' ('appearance to the society' in Japanese language) by a search engine, there were 47,400 hits. In the internet pages, we can meet people's real voices. Of course, the web pages were not only about elder abuse and there were writings about different topics from individuals, organizations and different

generations. Through the data of this research, the strong impacts of reputation and appearance in the society are recognized.

Decisions made on their own or through social impacts?

There are the sentences where we need to consider whether the decisions are made from their own opinion or if society has ‘forced’ them to choose the decision of the form of the family.

‘I ought to be together. In order to continue the ‘ie’, I must be together with my eldest son.’ (e17)

‘Living with my eldest son is seen to be a good thing from public. I am fortunate in this way.’ (e18)

‘We asked the grandmother (the elderly) if she wants to move to the second eldest son’s family. It’s the Japanese custom, if she can’t get along with the eldest son’s family, then it’s better to move to the second eldest son’s home and not to the daughter’s.’ (d6)

‘It looks respectable to live with the eldest son’s family.’ (e19)

‘If an elderly is in a public nursing home, many feel sorry for the elderly.’ (gA2)

‘...the elderly is seen that s/he has no relative to be taken after.’ (gC2)

‘Though she (her grandmother) suffers physically and mentally from living with the family, she doesn’t want to move out from the house. She thinks it’s better to stay at her own house with her eldest son.’ (w5)

‘Once my father and his brothers asked my grandmother if she would want to move into a nursing home. But she said, “I will never ever go to a nursing home, it would be like going into a grave”.’ (w6)

We can see from the sentences that people are paying a lot of attention to how situations or things are viewed from the public or society and not only as an internal matter in the

family. The fact is reflected in the sentences as there are obligatory expressions e.g. 'ought to be', 'must be', 'it's better'. These expressions denote that the decisions are not necessarily made with their own will and are more or less given by the society. The fact that the elderly is regarded with pity if s/he is in a public nursing home comes from the social policy just after the Second World War. After the defeat of the war, the country was poor and the social policy was with the aim of poverty rescue. Therefore, people, especially the elderly generation today who still regard getting public social services equates being poor may connect with shameful and from individuals point of view it probably can be regarded as abuse. As the woman interviewee's grandmother said; moving into a nursing home is like going to a grave. If the image of being in a nursing home is not as bad as the elderly's description, it could be a solution for rescuing the elderly victim from abuse. It seems quite probable that the society is composing the forms of family, something we can recognize from the above-introduced sentences.

Appearance to the society

By analyzing the sentences-below, I consider the relations between the society and people's mentality. How much do Japanese people care about the appearance in society?

'Of course the neighbors don't know what is really happening at (the elderly's) home. Nobody would tell such happenings willingly.' (s13)

'My mother-in-law only complains about the cruel conduct by the daughter-in-law to the relatives. You know, about shameful matters, we shouldn't talk about with a stranger.' (d7)

In the Japanese society, neighbor-relations are important for the citizens. It derives from the social tradition, where the collectivist way of thinking has been regarded as important, people are trying not to have disputes with the neighbors. In society, shameful happenings are not only the individual's shame but also the shame of the family as a whole. If something negative has happened in a family, the family members try to solve the problem among the family only, or even if the range is extended, it is

settled among the relatives. Therefore, if there is a problem in a family, it hardly comes out to be seen in society even though the problem should be considered as a social problem such as elder abuse. As I referred in the section of 1.6.5, the reason why elder abuse is hidden in the society is that these social phenomena are blocking the way the problems come out in the society.

The phenomenon is probably not only the feature of the Japanese society and the cultural mentality is difficult to change. However, at least, it is clear that the phenomenon is one of the reasons why elder abuse is hidden in society.

I would like to add a comment about the appearance in public. When I searched the words by a search engine, most of the web pages were writing negatively about the appearance in society, but a web page showed up where the writer was arguing positively that the appearance in society has kept the good sense, which is the wisdom of a society. However, concerning elder abuse, the appearance to the society in people's mind is influencing negatively.

4.2.4 Different generation viewpoints

An enigma arose in my mind, as I referred to in the introduction part, whether abuse could even happen unknowingly and unconsciously. Then I reached a hypothesis that the generation gap may be one of the factors to be considered in elder abuse cases. Here I categorize the data that concern the generation difference. How are the interviewees looking at the relations with elderly people?

From the group interview data, I could collect the viewpoints of the wives on how they think about elder abuse. Although they are not concerned now with any abuse cases, they could give their own examples of factors that could possibly lead to abuse in the future.

Triggers of elder abuse

'When my mother-in-law is going to the hospital, she needs a lift. But she doesn't ask me directly. She only says, "I'm going to the hospital" and waits. She takes it for granted that I'll give her a lift.' (gA3)

'When I got married and moved into my husband's parents' home, my mother-in-law declared to me, "We don't have enough space for your belongings. Take them back to your home". I was really upset and have never been able to forget the feeling and the happening.' (gD2)

'I always pretend to obey my mother-in-law, but often I feel "like shit" deep down in my heart.' (gB2)

'I wonder how she (the mother-in-law) can be so arrogant.' (gD3)

The common points among the wives' opinions were the stresses they get from having their mothers-in-law present in everyday life, or that the big negative happenings relating to the mothers-in-law accumulate hatred and indignant feelings about their mothers-in-law. The accumulation of these feelings could lead to revenges when their mothers-in-law are aged and weakened, and the revenges may connect to abuse. One of interviewees commented, *'I don't want to torment my mother-in-law in the future but I never know what I'll be doing then'* and all the other interviewees agreed with her.

Opinions of wives about elder abuse

It is quite a fearful fact that all of the interviewees in the group interview commented that they may torment their mothers-in-law in the future. What are the reasons?

'I think in the first stage, I recognize myself that I am torturing my mother-in-law and also feel guilty. But, when the torturing becomes normal or part of my everyday life and I lose the sense of guilt in my mind, maybe the action can be seen as abuse.' (gE2)

'If people see the action, only at the time of the incident, they may think it is abuse, but if they look back at what had happened in the past, they would recognize that the wives were "abused" by the mothers-in-law. I don't think it only concerns my case, it's quite general.' (gC2)

*'You know the saying "no smoke without fire"? I think there is so much accumulated anger before abuse actions.' *(gA4)**

'The parents-in-law also have dissatisfactions about us, but we the wives have complaints about them.' (gA5)

By analyzing the sentences, we notice that the past-long relationship between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is much influencing the possibility of abuse in the future. Wives think that they are 'abused' by their mothers-in-law and they may torture their mothers-in-law in the future as a revenge hereof. It was interesting that the interviewees all answered with using the 'I'-form although my question was 'In your opinion, what are the reasons why elder abuse happens in general'. The interviewees were substituting their position for the assailants of elder abuse.

Elderly's attitude towards her parents-in-law in the past

For comparing the different generation viewpoints, I pick up the sentences that the elderly expressed the attitude towards her parents-in-law or elder people in general. Here I especially pay attention what kind of attitude the elderly had towards her parents-in-law throughout life after she got married.

'When I got married, I had so much hardship. My mother-in-law was a very strict person and gave me such hard orders. For example, when I visited my parents one day and came back home, the door was locked. My parents-in-law said, "The wife shouldn't visit her parents once she got married except on special occasions". I was really sad but I had to obey them because I came to the family as a wife.' (e20)

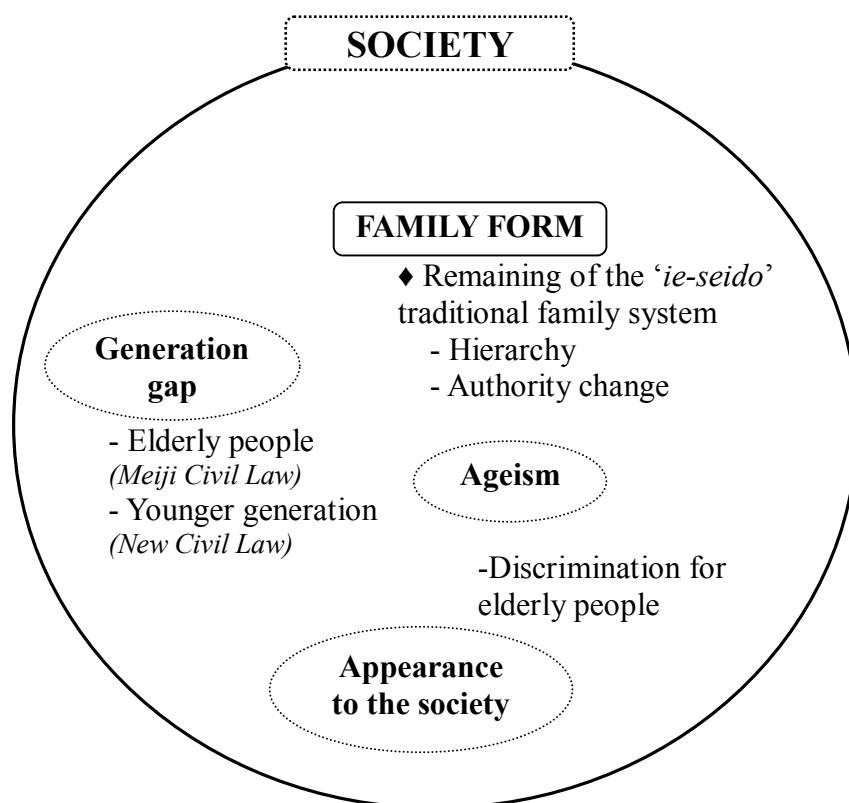
'Of course it was sometimes hard to be with my parents-in-law... But I should respect and obey them.' (e21)

'I shouldn't complain. It's my responsibility to work as a wife in the family.'
(e22)

The elderly said she should respect her parents-in-law and although she had hardship, she should not complain about them. It can be interpreted that the elderly's generation was born and brought up in the era of the Meiji Civil Law, in which filial piety and the traditional family system was commanded. There are obligatory expressions for obeying the parents-in-law, however, she commit herself to the position as a wife in the family under the cultural order. Analyzing the elderly's sentences, I recognized that the traditional way of thinking strongly remains in the elderly's mentality. For example, we can see it in the expression '*I came to the family as a wife*'. Comparing the upper section, the opinions of wives, the elderly expressed the sadness and hardships in the family, but she did not mention any complaints about those happenings. The big difference between the expressions of wives and the elderly is, on one hand, the elderly is admitting the sad and hard happenings but still she obeyed and respected her parents-in-law because the filial piety was legally defined and it was natural or even obligatory. On the other hand, from the group interview data, I did not find any expressions where the wives think the filial piety is compulsory or that respecting elderly people is a natural matter. I assume the reasons of the difference between the elderly and wives as follows: After abolishing the Meiji Civil Law, the filial piety is no longer obligatory. While the Meiji Civil Law was valid, people admitted the regulation and even if there were hardships related with elderly people, they bore the happenings. Then, after the Meiji Civil Law was abolished and the New Civil Law proclaimed, the filial piety is not obligatory for people any more, so the generation, after the New Civil Law was introduced, express increasingly the 'real feeling' towards the elderly people whereas the present elderly generation 'bore' hardships. Of course, people's mentality does not suddenly change only because the legislation is changed. However, it is quite likely that the legislation change caused the different attitude towards parents-in-law in general.

4.2.5 Conclusion on the social dimension of elder abuse

In this section, I introduce the factors of elder abuse and I assume that the present Japanese social background is strongly influencing on elder abuse. Koskiaho (1991) explains that Japanese society still functions within the traditional values and human relationships characterized by a spirit of self-help and the immediate neighborhood. Although 15 years passed since the explanation was stated, by analyzing the data, we can see that the Japanese traditional ways of thinking remain in people's mentality and life styles even today. I made up a figure of the interaction among the factors of elder abuse in the Japanese society.



(Figure 1: The interaction among the factors of elder abuse)

From a macro point of view, I argue that all of these factors are interacting and bringing

about elder abuse in Japanese society. When we take up the cases of elder abuse, each of them has a different background and factors of abuse. However, as we could see from the data of this research, there are the common features among the cases, which are the social impacts on e.g. decision-making and the way of people's lives. The Japanese society today could be having a conflict between tradition and modernity, especially in the mentality of its citizens. From a micro point of view, the elderly was suffered by her daughter-in-law. If I analyze the phenomenon through ageism, it is individual ageism (see page 5), which is a discrimination by individuals. Taking into consideration of a macro point of view, it is systematic ageism, which is social structural discrimination. In this sense, elder abuse is the mixture of both social structural and individual discrimination.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The main findings of this research

Because the object of the research is domestic elder abuse concerning hale elderly people, the result turned out to be different from the previous researches that objects were the elderly people under nursing care. I divide the main findings into three categories: concerning the definition, the factors of elder abuse in this research context and proposals for prevention of elder abuse.

Concerning the definition of elder abuse

- No finding of 'neglect' and 'sexual abuse' case
- All of the abuse cases are including psychological damage
- The present definition of elder abuse is mainly made from researchers' points of view

First, as I introduced in the previous research section (1.7), the most found cases of the

abuse category was neglect, whereas in this research there were no findings on neglect. In this research, the category of neglect did not even exist. The object of this research was 'hale' elderly people, thus, they were able to take care of themselves. The category 'neglect' may apply to the cases concerning the elderly in need of nursing care. Sexual abuse usually concerns different genders whereas the objects of this research were only women and it happens more obviously in other constellations than home care. Second, it was impossible to separate any of the cases from psychological/mental abuse because every human being has emotions. Considering the past researches, I strongly doubt if the feeling or emotion of the elderly people were taken enough into consideration. After I made this research, I have got even more resistance feeling that the previous researches are not enough treated elderly's feelings. Of course if a person is demented, it may be hard to express her/his feelings, however, it does not mean that the person does not have any emotions. In addition, most of the past researches were quantitative and the objects were such as social workers, care workers, municipalities. In this sense, it is hard to hear the real voices of elderly people. Regardless of dementia, hale, any health conditions, the concept and definition of elder abuse should comprehend all the cases where elderly people themselves feel injured in any way. In this sense, we can say that the present definition of elder abuse mainly is made from the researchers' point of view and that the view of elderly people is not taken enough into consideration.

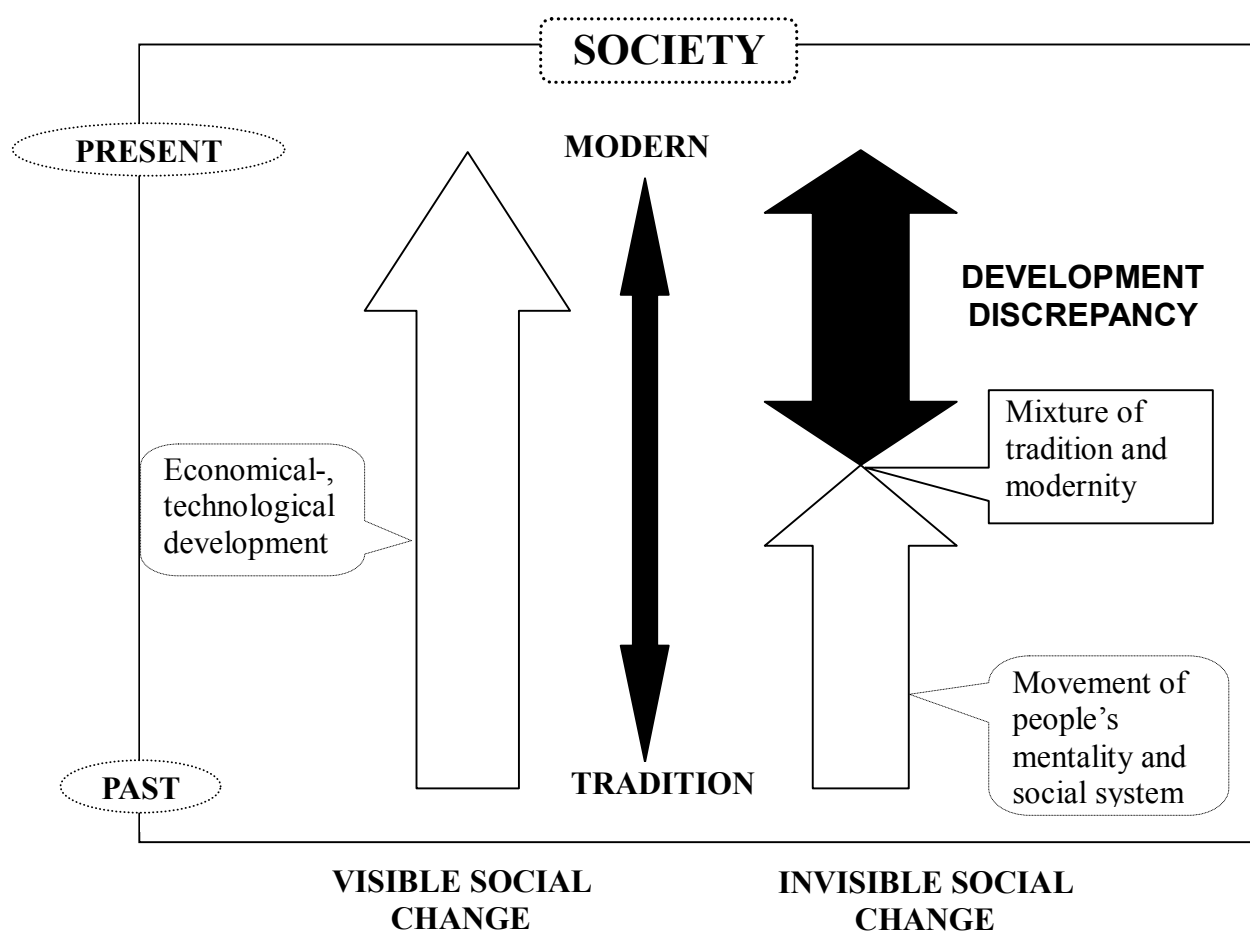
Factors of domestic elder abuse for hale elderly women

- Remaining of traditional family system, mentally and practically
- Different attitude towards elderly people between the past and present time
- Ageism is in many cases connected with elder abuse
- The discrepancy of social change (visible- and invisible movement)
- Society as a whole

By analyzing the collected data for this research, remnants of the traditional family system became obvious. There is still a tendency that the eldest son and his family live with his parents, and women are responsible of practically taking care of the family

activities. As under the Meiji Civil Law, a hierarchy between the daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law exist in families. We could see in the data that the attitudes towards elderly people are different in the past and present time. The present elderly generation used to respect and obey in any cases and the attitude has been natural for people because filial piety was regulated in the civil law. Compared to the elderly generation, the younger generations seem to express more freely their opinions and emotions. Ageism is in many cases related to elder abuse. Because of authority change in a family, if an elderly person feels being left out from the other family members or has no space at home, it is a phenomenon of ageism, which has social structural features of ageism. The phenomenon can be regarded also as a part of a social interaction premise of ageism. Youthfulness is highly valued in the society and oldness is on the contrary not being regarded favorably. The image is produced by the society. These factors lead us to the conclusion that the last one, the discrepancy of social change (visible-and invisible movement) is the foremost factor of elder abuse, which explains the phenomena comprehensively. It is the traditional social cultural background, which I explained as a factor of abuse in this study. People care too much about social value and appearance in the society, the serious problems do not come to the surface. Therefore, the problems are not fundamentally solved. In fact, in this study, we could see how much people live by obeying ‘the decisions made by the social culture’, like the stereotype, that living with the eldest son is normal and appeals as good for society. The point we need to consider here is the societal change. The visible societal change (economical growth, technological development etc.) is not necessarily proportional with the invisible societal change, i.e. people’s mentality. Although nearly 60 years have passed since the ‘*ie-seido*’ family system was abolished, the system is still alive in people’s minds and real lives. Similarly, it is hardly possible that people’s way of thinking and their mentality should change in such short time. I would assume that the discrepancy between the visible- and the invisible societal change is bringing about the social problems, such as elder abuse. In the beginning, I formulated a hypothesis that the generation gap is one of the factors of elder abuse. However, after this study, I reached the conclusion that regardless of the generation gap, the discrepancy among the societal change is the remarkable factor of elder abuse as a whole. The generation gap is merely one of them. In this study, the object was only the hale elderly people, the discrepancy

of the societal change as a factor of abuse would also apply to the elderly who are in need of care. If I again take the example of the elderly's murder case, there was a big discrepancy between the needs for care giving (actualities = **the present**) and the traditional way of thinking (**old**) such as 'receiving social services or moving into a public nursing home is a shame'. In the end, the discrepancy leads to the murder tragedy because of the tiredness and stresses by giving care. Therefore, the mental care is essential in order to prevent tragedies such as murder and abuse.



(Figure 2: The foremost factor of elder abuse)

The present Japanese society is having a strong influence on elder abuse. The society is producing the negative images of e.g. being old, elderly people, is called ageism. We can find that the visible social change (e.g. economical growth, technological development) is not necessarily proportional with the invisible social change i.e. people's mentality. Therefore, the discrepancy between visible- and invisible societal

change was born as a conflict, which is regarded to be a remarkable factor of elder abuse today.

Proposals for prevention of 'elder abuse'

- Create the definition of elder abuse, which also comprehends the cases of hale elderly people
- Secure outlets to alleviate stress, emotion (also for abusing persons)
- Secure the environment and place where people can inform and talk freely about abuse cases
- Provision of aid by people around the person
- Paying attention to hale elderly people (finding potential elder abuse in the future)
- Use the words 'elder harassment'

We need to attach importance to the consideration of abused persons' position concerning the concepts and definitions of abuse. Standing on the position of victims connects the relief of victims. However, regarding the solution of the fundamental problem, the position of the abuser needs to be considered adequately. As an interviewee in the group interview mentioned a proverb, '*no smoke without fire*', the abuser may have principal reasons for abuse. In order to prevent abuse or prevention for letting the situation worse, care for abused persons and abusers alike is necessary in the early stages. In the group interview, the wives said that gathering once a month for grumbling helps to alleviate their stresses. Likewise, when people have a problem, outlets for their stresses and feelings are needed in order not to keep the problem in the mind alone. It also applies to the example of the murder committed by the elderly woman that I introduced in the beginning of the thesis. The elderly was stressed out from giving care, but I wonder if she had any outlets to alleviate her stress. Human beings cannot live alone. When facing trouble or difficulties, aids from the people around the person are essential. It could come from family members, or if the case is such as in this study, the person abused by family members is required to seek aid from outside the home. Then, as I have been repeating many times, paying attention to hale

elderly people would be a proposal for prevention of elder abuse. As the end of proposal for prevention of elder abuse, I would suggest to use the words 'elder harassment' instead of 'elder abuse'. In the group interview, the interviewees said 'the word "gyakutai (abuse)" sounds really severe'. I before mentioned that the word 'abuse' was used about the time of the Iraqi War. Elder abuse should not merely be the concern of others. In order to appeal elder abuse as a social problem, we need to appeal that the phenomenon is familiar to us. In this sense, the word of expressing the phenomenon must be also familiar to ordinary people. Ando (1995) is describing elder abuse as 'silver harassment'⁵. Sexual harassment is nowadays well-known words in Japan. Comparing 'silver', 'elder' is more accurate. Therefore, I would assume that instead of using the words 'elder abuse', using the words of 'elder harassment' is recommended. It makes the phenomenon more familiar to people and people would accept the phenomenon easier than using the word 'abuse'.

Discussion on ethical issues

This study is dealing with elder abuse cases that are deeply connecting with private sphere. Therefore, the researcher is responsible for keep the data in strict privacy. For this study, I had five interviews: an elderly woman, son of the elderly, his wife, one group interview (five wives) and a young woman. Thus, I interviewed altogether nine people. All of the interviewees agreed on using the interview data for this research. The interviews and recording them were made based on all of the interviewees' agreements. In order to protect privacy of the interviewees, I avoided mentioning any proper nouns or information that could specify the people. All the gathered data are confidentially kept by the researcher. In addition, I promised the interviewees that I would show the research paper if they wish to read it. It was quite a hard stage to go over the situation for protection of the interviewees as a researcher. The piles of interview data were full of precious information but at the same time, they are confidential information what have never been told to anybody. As a researcher, of course, I desired to inform the

⁵ The word 'silver' often indicates elderly people in Japan.

reality as much as possible, however, it is an infringement of privacy. The hard experience to find informants for a long time made me to strive to protect full privacy of the informants. Therefore, the data quoted above were held to a minimum description that prevents for the informants not to be discovered as specific individuals.

Strong and weak points and improvement for continuing the research

I would assume the strong point of this study is the rareness especially of the gained data. The subject of this research is a sensitive theme, which does not often surface. The past researches on elder abuse in Japan were mainly made based on the data that were not directly collected from the abused persons or the abusers (Elder Abuse Prevention Group 2004, 23). However, with the aid of willing informants, I could hear the real voices of elderly person who is abused and the family members of the person. The different way the informants described the same happenings made the picture more colorful and I could understand the course of the family relations. The opinions of the wives were helpful, especially in considering the prevention of elder abuse in the future and understanding the daughter-in-law's point of view. The interview data of woman interviewee has filled up the explanation of phenomena. The thing I regret about the data is that I from the interview did not get the viewpoints of the younger generation. I have got the view of the elderly generation, the middle-age generation and there had been viewpoints from the younger generation, other findings concerning the generation gap could have been found.

For continuing the research and with the desire of getting to know more details about elder abuse, more numbers of interview data are required. As I experienced through this study, finding willing informants is a hard job. However, I believe, nothing is impossible. The data should be analyzed from more different aspects e.g. educational-, economical background, occupation. If it is possible, a life history is an alternative method to get to know more details about a case.

In this research, I especially paid attention to the social cultural background as factor of

elder abuse. For future research, the cultural comparison would be interesting. If we pay attention to the difference between monocultural and multicultural countries, the outcome may be different. It would be interesting to know if social cultural backgrounds have any influence upon the factors of elder abuse in multicultural countries as well. Another alternative, if we compare monocultural countries, is that we may see an obvious social-, or cultural characteristic of the countries. For example, as well as Japan, Finland is a rather monocultural country compared with e.g. the USA. The country is also facing the quick society aging. However, one of the major different features between Finland and Japan is that Finnish elderly people tend not to live together with their children. Another different point is the children's dependency (especially economical) on parents. In Finland, education is free of charge and students are able to get a study grant from the government in exchange for a minimum number of credits. In Japan, the compulsory public education (up to junior high school) is free of charge. However, from high school education onwards students are required to pay a school fee, thus, the parents pay the fee. In addition to the educational charge, many of the students go to crammer schools that also have tuition fees. Therefore, in most of the cases children are economically dependent on their parents. Oppositely, when the parents are aged, they require their children to care for them in return for the education expenses. That is to say, it is the position reverse of dependency and a continuous phenomenon. Like this, comparison between cultures, which have differing dependencies, may bring an interesting result to the research.

Concerning the research on cultural comparison, throughout this research, I am strongly impressed how deeply words are connected with culture. For example, I referred the letters of mother-in-law and daughter-in-law in page 17). As well as the letters, I had to face difficulties to translate words or terms from Japanese to English or vice versa. If I pick up 'ie 家' as an example, the literal translation would be 'house' or 'home' in English, but the words contains several different aspects and meanings. Not only translation of words but also social phenomena has different meanings and aspects in different cultures. The researcher is required to be familiar with the cultures to understand social phenomenon especially for making a cultural comparative research.

In the end

I would say the phenomena and factors I introduced are valid only at the present time. I am not able to predict if the situation will get better or worse. Along with the change of generation who are in the core of the society, the way of societal movement and social policy might be different from what it is today. People's way of thinking about the aging, elderly people may in the future differ from today. In any case, the thing we must keep in mind is that we must pay sufficient attention to people's mentality along with their social changes.

In the end, I would like to introduce a tanka made by a 103-year-old woman.

*'Loneliness,
No word for all day long,
You should know,
I am also a human being.'*⁶

Please, describe the feeling of the author and let us remember, mental happiness is an essential part in the welfare of human beings.

⁶ From Ito, Kazuhiko (2004) *Oite utaou 2003 zenkokuban dai 2 shuu* (Let's sing when you are aged, the whole Japan second version.).

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