



Through Japanese Eyes

Thirty Years of Studying Aging in America

by Yohko Tsuji

DESCRIPTION

In *Through Japanese Eyes*, based on her thirty-year research at a senior center in upstate New York, anthropologist Yohko Tsuji describes old age in America from a cross-cultural perspective. Comparing aging in America and in her native Japan, she discovers that notable differences in the panhuman experience of aging are rooted in cultural differences between these two countries, and that Americans have strongly negative attitudes toward aging because it represents the antithesis of cherished American values, especially independence. Tsuji reveals that American culture, despite its seeming lack of guidance for those aging, plays a pivotal role in elders' lives, simultaneously assisting and constraining them. Furthermore, the author's lengthy period of research illustrates major changes in her interlocutors' lives, incorporating their declines and death, and significant shifts in the culture of aging in American society as Tsuji herself gets to know American culture and grows into senescence herself.

Through Japanese Eyes offers an ethnography of aging in America from a cross-cultural perspective based on a lengthy period of research. It illustrates how older Americans cope with the gap between the ideal (e.g., independence) and the real (e.g., needing assistance) of growing older, and the changes the author observed over thirty years of research.

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AUTHOR/EDITOR BIOGRAPHY

YOHKO TSUJI is an adjunct associate professor of anthropology at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

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