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Leisure Activity of Older Korean Americans in the U.S. and Its Relationship to Cultural Integration and Ethnic Preservation
(Under the Direction of DR. DOUGLAS A. KLEIBER)

The purpose of the investigation was to explore daily activities and interactions of older Korean Americans and the relationship of these activities and interactions to ethnic identity preservation and cultural integration. First generation older Korean immigrants were of particular interest in the study because they have lived in both Korea and the United States long enough to know both cultures. An interpretive qualitative approach was used to address the research questions. Participants were six Korean Americans (three females, three males) over the age of 65 who have lived in the US for at least 15 years. In-depth, semistructured, open-ended conversational interviews, a time diary, and field notes were the primary sources for data collection. The constant comparative method was applied for data analysis, first within cases and then across cases.

The findings from the data analysis revealed both personal and cultural leisure meanings. From a personal perspective, leisure (*Yeo-Ga*) was used to create two effects: *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* and self-development. *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* is a feeling of refreshment and transcendence found in a wide variety of activities. But some of the same activities, as well as others, were also used for intellectual, physical, psychological, or spiritual growth. Cultural meanings were reflected in two categories: re-creating Korean-ness and accommodation to the host culture. Three subcategories within the category of re-creating Korean-ness suggested by the data were re-building *Jeong* (attachment/care), re-enforcing collective identity, and seeking familiarity. From a cultural perspective, while some leisure activities (e.g. shopping) served to expose participants to American culture, the manner in which they were done (usually only with

other Koreans) served the effects of continuity and ethnic preservation at least as much as cultural integration. Although physical and cultural differences perpetuated a feeling of strangeness, participants used a wide variety of activities to reinforce their Korean-ness and restore their sense of ethnic identity. In conclusion, while leisure experience of older Korean Americans helped them accommodate to the host culture through everyday life, this study provided more evidence that such activities contributed to maintaining Korean cultural bonds and traditions in a still-strange land.

INDEX WORDS: Older Korean immigrants, Leisure (*Yeo-Ga*) experience, Daily activity, Interpretive qualitative study, Ethnic preservation, Cultural integration

LEISURE ACTIVITY OF OLDER KOREAN AMERICANS IN THE U.S. AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO CULTURAL INTEGRATION AND ETHNIC PRESERVATION

by

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DEDICATION

To the One who has manifested love and compassion through all those who shared *In-Yeon* (relations) during the journey of my life both in Korea and in the United States.

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I have come this far at last! I am truly pleased to see faces filled with happiness and excitement for my completion of the academic pursuit. Never did I expect to be so blessed in sharing *Jeong* with those to whom I was related either by coincidence, intention, circumstances, or preferences for the past years in the United States. Though limited in words to express the abundant love and joy in my heart toward each of them, it is still comforting to me to express my appreciation and respect:

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I am relieved to close a door of academic curiosity and am delighted to open now the final door to search for a light of hope and freedom in the presence of the One. As Thomas Merton captured in his writing, "the 'turning' of our whole self to [the One] can be achieved only by deep and sincere and simple faith, enlivened by a hope which knows that contact with [the One] is possible, and love which desires above all things to do [the One's] will" (Thoughts in Solitude, 1978, p. 50).

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PREFACE

As a native Korean coming from a different educational system and socio-cultural environment, I encountered considerable difficulty in beginning graduate study in the United States. Because the field of leisure studies was fairly new and unfamiliar to me, my focus was to grasp and absorb all the information and knowledge that I felt I lacked. The enormous amount of reading did not allow me at first to think about what the readings meant to me, a person from a very different social, cultural, and traditional background. Overwhelmed by the dominant culture, I was not even critical of why leisure was conceptualized the way it was in course content. Eventually, though, questions mingling in my thoughts were: How are the Western meanings of leisure applicable to people in different cultures? And how do *Koreans* experience leisure?

Living in a different environment surrounded by majority Americans, I have spent much time with them, engaging in activities that ranged from casual social interaction to going to parties. In my daily interactions with Americans, even trivial incidents were initially problematic. For example, it was very awkward for me to greet the same person again in a day whenever I would see the person pass in the hallway. It took a few years to become accustomed to this style of interaction without a feeling of discomfort.

As I now reflect on it, the uncomfortable feeling was a product of the conflict between the agreed-upon behavioral patterns in the two different social and cultural structures, the Korean and the American. In Korea, after the first verbal greeting of the day, nonverbal greetings such as exchanging smiles or eye contact are preferred when

greeting the same person. In Korean culture, redundant verbal greetings may irritate the other person or be read as a sign of inattention or indifference. Knowing the implication of unnecessary verbal greetings in my culture, I only smiled, which I assumed must be interpreted as shyness by the other person and perhaps as an inadequate response.

The same conflicts that I experienced in expectations about the proper workplace greetings occurred in leisure interactions as well. For example, we, in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, often had Friday afternoon “Happy Hour” for graduate students and faculty members to interact with one another away from the academic setting. I attended “Happy Hour” only occasionally because I felt I needed more time for my study than the American students did. In addition to the stress and pressure from schoolwork that kept me from interacting with them, there were other conflicts that would keep me from “leisure” activities.

When people in the department asked me whether I wanted to go to “Happy Hour,” I would say I was not sure, regardless of my intention. When I said “no” or “I am not sure,” I assumed that they would ask me again and encourage me to come with them. However, this did not happen at all. In Korean culture, an ambiguous response to someone’s invitation is a first step in the process of accepting the invitation. After a couple of more requests, you may willingly or reluctantly accept. Koreans are accustomed to the roles played by the invitor and the invitee. Interpersonal relationships among Koreans take place and develop through this kind of conversational interaction, which is culturally assumed. Without repeated invitations, I was discouraged from showing up by myself, especially to a place where I might feel uncomfortable. Koreans

will seldom appear alone if they are not familiar with the place, even though they are cordially welcomed by the invitor.

Because of such cross-cultural differences in how to develop interpersonal relationships, I perceived a barrier between me and the new culture I was living in. In leisure experiences, my preference was to be with Koreans, to play tennis with them, to eat out with them, and to do all free time activities with them. Because of conflicts in social interaction, I had been less likely to feel comfortable spending leisure time with Americans.

Living longer in the host culture, however, I have noticed some changes in my thoughts and behavior. New cultural knowledge and information have contributed to transforming my thoughts, and this has been followed by behavioral changes. I slowly began to adapt myself to the host culture, enjoying some of the cultural differences, such as casual interactions across gender or age, which provide a way for one to express oneself more easily and freely. After about two years, I began to feel comfortable going to parties given by American professors and students. I felt relaxed in a crowd at these parties, although nobody paid much attention to me. One of the differences at a party I noticed was that two or three people gathered and chatted for a while and moved to another group by forming different groups that kept flowing until the party had ended. In contrast, Koreans typically congregate collectively as one big group, sitting around a table. Conversations are often centralized to one person, whoever starts the conversation rolling at the party. Considering different atmospheres at parties in the two cultures, my behaviors at an American party, in a sense, seemed to be less directed by the culturally-defined expectations with which I was raised.

Despite the changes, I notice after a few years of observing myself that some old values have not been replaced by new ones. Attaining new learning does not seem to change some long-held viewpoints, especially those formed by practicing deeply-rooted cultural traditions. As a sojourner in another culture, I began to question how and in what ways people who voluntarily emigrate to another country experience change, particularly with respect to their leisure patterns and preferences, where presumably they have the greatest relative freedom to do as they please. In fact, given the Eurocentric history of the concept of leisure, the very meaning of leisure and leisure experience to Asian immigrants seemed to be a question worth addressing.

As one way to respond to my intrinsic interest, I addressed my master's thesis to perceptions of leisure-related concepts among older African Americans, Caucasian Americans, and Korean immigrants (Kim, 1994). The purpose of the research was to determine how people from various cultural backgrounds differs in their perceptions of leisure-related concepts (work, free time, recreation, free choice, and relaxation). I employed a semantic differential procedure with these concepts, and a number of differences were found among the three groups. Although the study revealed some interesting findings, the research participants were limited to residents living in a senior housing apartment complex. The research methods were also restricted to a survey instrument that produced only numbers. Through brief interactions with participants during the survey period, I developed a strong interest in learning more about how daily life among elderly Korean residents in the senior housing complex is actually experienced. However, the geographical distance from these participants and my course work kept me from maintaining further interactions with the elderly on a regular basis.

My personal relationship with the Korean seniors began in working with a Korean senior school during the summer of 1995. When I found out about the organization through a local newspaper, I called the school to see if I could get involved with the older population. In the beginning of my contact with the administrators, they were not particularly receptive to or excited about my interest in the older population. Having experienced several Korean graduate students who showed up for their research surveys and soon after disappeared, they were suspicious that I would take what I wanted from them without making any contributions. Through my volunteer work of teaching an English class for older Koreans in the school, I gradually developed good relationships with the students and the administrators. During my nearly three years of volunteer work, I committed myself to a three-hour round trip to the school to teach English every Saturday morning. I also taught an aerobics class for them for a short period of time.

The school started at ten o'clock in the morning. The school arranges a car pool for students who live near each other. A church van picks up students who live in inconvenient locations. Often adult children of students drop off their parents at the school in the morning and pick them up in the afternoon. There are quite a few elderly who are unable to attend the school because neither transportation option is open to them. On several occasions I was asked to provide a ride for students on my way back home after the school. This enabled me to establish closer relationships with some of the students.

One of the benefits of the school was the arrangement of travel opportunities for the students. The Korean welfare center provides resources for students to travel at least twice a year, usually once in the spring and once in the fall. During the period of my

volunteer involvement in the senior school, I joined an overnight trip to a beach in Florida with senior school students and members of the Korean welfare center. In two big vans occupied by about 50 elderly Koreans, we left the city early in the morning. All the wrinkled faces were shining with excitement; they looked like little children who could hardly hide their smiles. It seemed that they were just glad to get away from their confined environments, particularly from the language constraints and transportation barriers they face in daily life. Long hours of riding in the van did not seem to be boring or tiring because their time was occupied with singing or talking the whole time, with only short intervals of silence. During the whole travel period, the group was like a water-resistant package protected from the sea of mainstream society. Inside the package, they were one cheerful family having solely Korean food for each meal, coming and going to the beach together, and singing, dancing, and clapping in one of the rooms they rented at an inn. They were by themselves and seemed not to realize that they were in another country. There was a total separation from the real world, the American culture, while they were engaged in the activity. The loud singing and dancing seemed to relieve all the stress and released their suppressed feelings and emotions.

Recalling my own early experience of adjusting to another culture, I could understand and identify with their retreat into their native culture. The process of acculturation can be painful. For many in the group, the decision to emigrate had not come from their own desire. They had been invited to come to the United States by their children. I have noticed some changes in thoughts, perceptions, behavior, and values, after having lived in the U.S. for a certain period of time myself. My goal for this

research thus became that of learning how older Korean immigrants have used free time and leisure activities in their new culture to hold on to the old and/or to embrace the new.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> I went to the U.S. in 1979. So I have lived here for fifteen years. But I am not an American, nor Korean. I do not speak English at all, I do not have any American friends, I do not watch the television, I do not know what's going on in this country. I am not an American at all. I just live here. I am not a Korean either, because I have been changed during last fifteen years one way or another. Even if I can go back to my country, Korea, I feel that I cannot get along with the people there. I feel I lost my soul as a Korean. Even though I became a permanent resident in this country a couple of years ago, I don't know who I am. ("Ms. Lee," in Oh, 1994, p. 128.)

This older Korean American, Ms. Lee (pseudonym), seems perplexed about her identity. She considers herself a person with few communication and interaction opportunities within the host culture of the United States and clearly feels isolated. Hence, it is not surprising that she refuses to identify with the majority culture. But what of her Korean culture? The effort to maintain native ethnic identity among immigrants, especially elderly immigrants, is a common phenomenon (see, for example, Koranyi 1981). Yet, Ms. Lee implies that her Koreanness has diminished and changed since she has been living in the American culture. Indeed, she is reluctant even to identify herself as a Korean. Perhaps there are few other older Korean Americans with whom Ms. Lee shares daily activities and interactions. Unfortunately, Oh's interpretation of Ms. Lee's experience and conditions does not provide sufficient detail to know for sure. Clearly something is missing in her experience, leaving her without an attachment to either culture.

According to Cronen, Chen, and Pearce (1988), when people reach adulthood they are programmed by their cultural patterns, through which they determine and manage their meaning systems. In other words, culture unconsciously controls individuals' perceptions, thoughts, behavior, and values with respect to the surrounding world and is deeply embedded in their daily lives (Barrett, 1984). Nevertheless, the case of Ms. Lee raises a question of how great a hold culture really has on our perceptions, thoughts, and behaviors. What are the factors that have left her with such a sense of "homelessness"? Perhaps she lacks the social interaction necessary to either preserve her identification with her former culture or cultivate her connections with the new culture.

Social interactions may be very functional, as in ordering a meal or negotiating various tasks at work, but they often take place in the context of leisure as well. Leisure is not an isolated segment of life or culture but is that condition of social life wherein people feel free to be themselves and are most open to others (cf. Kelly, 1996; Samdahl, 1992; Shaw, 1985). According to Kelly (1996), people learn to interact most naturally with others in leisure-oriented social settings. Cheek and Burch (1976) stressed that leisure interaction is a primary context for social bonding. Leisure is not just individual action and experience, but relational action and experience in a social space (Kelly & Godbey, 1992). Kaplan (1975) noted that while many studies of leisure-related experiences focus on the individual independent of others, the individual's leisure is inevitably affected by and in turn affects others. Kelly (1996) emphasized that leisure cannot be defined by certain activities; it is human interaction that is clearly culture-specific. Hence, the daily activities and interactions of immigrants that occur in the

context of free time may be a good reflection of their particular sense of culture and, indeed, may contribute to that sense of culture.

The following statement demonstrates how another older Korean immigrant, Ms. Park (pseudonym), spends her discretionary time in the host culture:

> Every morning I get up at five. I attend the early prayer meeting at six and get back home around seven thirty. And I take a shower and clean the house and cook for myself. I usually have a breakfast at ten or twelve because there are so many calls or visits. After brunch I take a nap. During afternoon, I usually go out for the doctor visitation, grocery shopping, family matters or friendship. And then I return to my apartment and prepare dinner. During the evening hours I read the newspaper or other books except Wednesdays and Fridays. Those days I go to church because there are Bible study classes on Wednesday and prayer meeting on Friday. And on Sundays I spend all day at the church. ("Ms. Park" in Oh, 1994, P. 275)

While this statement gives us an idea of the daily activities in which Ms. Park is involved, which, if any, of these activities would be regarded as leisure in a matter of both semantics and experience. Leisure is typically defined by Western scholars as free time, recreational activity, or the experience of freedom and intrinsic motivation (Kelly, 1996). It is difficult to come up with exact translations of these ideas in Korean. "*Yeo-Ga*," however, offers a rough synonym for the most common western connotation of leisure, free time. "*Yeo-Ga*" is defined as "leisure time, spare time" in The New World Korean-English Dictionary (1979, p. 1515). The word "*Yeo-Ga*" often accompanies another word such as "*Si-Gan*" (time), or "*Whahl-Dong*" (activity). And yet, "*Yeo-Ga-Si-Gan*" (leisure time) and "*Yeo-Ga-Whahl-Dong*" (leisure activity) are used interchangeably with "*Yeo-Ga*." For instance, one might use all three to ask the same question: "What do you do for your leisure [leisure time or leisure activity]?" This translation seems to demonstrate that the Korean word "leisure" includes both "leisure time" and "leisure activity." Although the particular meaning and personal significance of "*Yeo-Ga*" will vary between

individuals, most Koreans share this common definition of "*Yeo-Ga*." For the purpose of this study I will define "*Yeo-Ga*" as free time activity and equate it roughly with Kelly's (1996) meaning of leisure as an "activity chosen in relative freedom for its qualities of satisfaction" (p. 8). However, just how older Korean Americans interpret "*Yeo-Ga*" in a personal way remains a question for this study to address.

As a volunteer worker at a Korean American senior school, I am very familiar with the kind of daily activities described by Ms. Park; I have observed this pattern on a daily basis. As Ms. Park stated, activities and interpersonal relationships occupy her daily routine. Ms. Park goes to Korean church every morning and Wednesday nights for Bible study and Friday evenings for prayer meetings, and she stays at the church the whole day on Sundays. Other activities described by Ms. Park during the morning hours are receiving phone calls and visits. I suspect that Ms. Park is talking about visits of her friends living nearby. The "informal visiting act" or "*Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi*" (pronounced 'ma-sil-gah′-gee') (Chun, 1984) has been a traditional leisure activity for socializing in Korea. Although transportation barriers may limit the mobility of older Korean Americans, *Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi* seems still common among older Korean Americans residing in senior housing complexes.

Ms. Park's leisure activities in the afternoon may provide another point for discussion. She mentioned that she spends time on family matters or friendship. Her daily routine indicates that she lives by herself, but her statement implies that she has family members who live nearby. It is likely that one of her meetings is called "*Kye*" (rotating credit association), which is actively practiced among Korean-Americans for diverse purposes (N. Kim, 1995). Although the main purpose of a *Kye* (pronounced 'geh')

meeting is to collect substantial sums of money through mutual aid among family members and friends, it is engaged in freely for its qualities of intrinsic satisfaction, putting it at least tentatively in the category of leisure activity. Unlike Ms. Lee's case, such cultural activities as *Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi* and *Kye* demonstrate some continuity in Ms. Park's involvement with her previous daily activities in Korea.

During the evening hours ("except Wednesdays and Fridays") Ms. Park indicates that she reads newspapers and books. It is not clear whether these are Korean or English language books, though I suspect that they are the former. Interestingly, Ms. Park makes clear that she reserves two nights for Bible study, where she can interact with other Korean friends. Apparently, she considers this activity to be both important and meaningful though whether she would regard it as "*Yeo-Ga*" would need to be probed further. Also, it is not clear whether Ms. Park participated in either religious activity in the past or began them after immigration as a way of interacting with other Koreans. As a whole, Ms. Park's social activities and environment are very much confined to the Korean community, much as we have previously observed in Ms. Lee's case. In contrast with Ms. Lee, Ms. Park is involved in the community; but her involvement is with other Koreans rather than the host culture. Although Ms. Park's living environment has physically and socially changed since her immigration, her ethnic identity is likely maintained by social interaction within a Korean community.

Language is a major factor in restricting Ms. Park's activities and relationships within her ethnic group. How then does speaking English make a difference in the daily activity patterns of older Korean Americans? Let us look at the examples of Ms. Yoon (pseudonym) and Mr. Choi (pseudonym), who speak some English. Oh (1994) introduced

Ms. Yoon as a 75-year-old woman who does speak a little English and is not afraid of using English at all. Ms. Yoon goes shopping with other Korean friends and eats at American restaurants whenever she wants. Ms. Yoon seemed to have several adult children who live nearby and help her with her daily activities by providing transportation and other services. Ms. Yoon stated:

> Sometimes we go down to Marshall Field's downtown for shopping. My children usually pick us up and leave us there. Then we shop around and see other people and take a rest at a restaurant. At first, it was intimidating, but now it is easy. You have to act like you are an upper-class citizen, and walk, speak, and look dignified. ("Ms. Yoon" in Oh, 1994, p. 268)

Ms. Yoon, at first glance, does not seem to be affected by the level of her English ability in selecting activities she likes. Ms. Yoon and her friends seem to enjoy activities such as going shopping and eating at restaurants which are often considered leisure activities among older people (see, for example, Graham, Graham, & Maclean, 1991). The leisure environments they choose are not isolated from those of the majority Americans; they are in the center of the mainstream culture. Nevertheless, Ms. Yoon and her friends seem to stay in a glass box, seeing and being seen but not interacting very much with indigenous Americans; they open the glass door and go out to interact with other Americans only if necessary. Accordingly, though the distance between her and other Americans is rather comfortable, Ms. Yoon demonstrates a "by-stander" disposition, acknowledging that she is inevitably different from them. Nevertheless, it is clear that Ms. Yoon is adapting to the world of her host culture to a greater extent than Ms. Park.

Oh's (1994) other example, Mr. Choi, also has a good command of English. Interestingly, because of his English ability, Mr. Choi is considered a leader among his

friends. The following statement suggests how much the choice of activities in the United States is determined by whether one can speak English or not.

> Whenever we go out for breakfast at McDonald's, ordering is my job. Because my friends do not know English, they are afraid to order. Also whenever they need to use English they call me to go with them. Then I hit the road and do whatever I can. This kind of things makes me feel that I am an important person. ("Mr. Choi" in Oh, 1994, p. 267)

Several aspects of this anecdote are worth considering. Unlike previous examples, Mr. Choi seems to have developed a new activity as a way of adjusting to cultural and social circumstances in the new environment. Having breakfast at McDonald's demonstrates a degree of adaptation and may also be seen as a sign of acculturation. Likewise, according to Oh (1994), Mr. Choi is very fluent in English. Presumably, Mr. Choi would not restrict himself to activities and social interactions within the Korean community unless he so desired. Judging from Oh's remark and the quotation, the presence of Mr. Choi is the major determinant for his Korean friends in selecting an activity for the day if they want to engage in the dominant culture. Only if Mr. Choi is available do they have an opportunity to be a part of American culture by engaging in typically American activities, such as having breakfast at McDonald's. Nevertheless, this case is not much different from Ms. Yoon's example. Mr. Choi's friends seem also to be sitting in a glass box with the understanding that Mr. Choi is the doorman who keeps them safe inside. They probably enjoy the American food, interacting with each other in Korean, and comfortably looking out the glass window to see other Americans around them.

Of the people in the previous examples, Mr. Choi is clearly the most culturally assimilated, with a good command of English. This may be in part because, as a male, he has had more educational and social opportunities than Ms. Park and Ms. Yoon. He

would probably encounter fewer problems engaging in social activities in the main culture and interacting with the majority Americans. Nevertheless, according to Oh (1994), his daily activities and social interactions occur primarily with other Koreans. And while Mr. Choi's male friends also likely have more education than Ms. Yoon, they chose to depend on the care of Mr. Choi, whereas Ms. Yoon was ready to step into the majority society with minimal communication skills. Language limitations may in fact be more of a constraint for Korean males who have "more to lose" in appearing to be deficient. How gender differences promote or deter older Korean immigrants in assimilating into the majority society through daily leisure activities and experiences will be worthy of further investigation.

We should not infer too much from only one set of statements, however, since they do not provide information about all aspects of the daily life and social interactions of those involved. Interview quotations are useful in other respects, however. While the research of Oh (1994) focused primarily on religious and theological issues, the data he collected also offer insights into leisure activities and experiences of older Korean Americans. First, they address issues of ethnic identity preservation and cultural integration in daily activities and experiences in leisure settings. Second, they suggest ways in which ethnic identity is preserved in such interactions. And third, they suggest that social leisure is of particular relevance in adapting to the host culture. These are the subjects of this current investigation.

The Influence of Age on the Immigration Experience

The age at which immigration occurs is likely to influence the tendency to use activities to preserve ethnic identity or to facilitate acculturation to the host culture.

Acculturation may be more common in younger people whose lives are yet to unfold in the new culture. In contrast, older immigrants have left much if not most of their lives in their country of origin. For them the past may be more significant than the future. Their daily patterns may change in accommodating to a different culture, language, and environment, but maintaining certain activities or interests that they have engaged in the past may be especially important.

Atchley (1989) asserted that people in later life attempt to preserve and maintain internal and external structures of their lives. The sense of *continuity* is linked to an individual's perceived past with personal history. According to Atchley (1989), continuity can be either internal or external. Internal continuity is a capacity to integrate inner changes in relation to the individual's past and to recognize the relationships between the old and the new selves (Lieberman & Tobin, 1983). External continuity is reflected in the structure of physical and social environments, role relationships, and activities that are maintained overtime. Atchley (1999) highlighted long-term patterns of external continuity as living arrangements, household composition, marital status, income adequacy, and primary modes of transportation. Atchley (1987) found that relationships maintained with close friends, parents, and adult offspring were particularly important among older people. Thus, continuity of activities, relationships, and environments provides older people with the practical advantage of stability in spite of other challenging circumstances. Maintaining an interest in certain enjoyable activities contributes to both external and internal continuity.

Although Atchley (1989) asserted the need for continuity in late life, discontinuity can be a source of growth and adaptation for people of all ages. Change is part of

growing, learning, and adapting. This is particularly true in the case of adult immigrants. On the one hand, discontinuity of social and physical environments caused by immigration may contribute to the lack of internal continuity (e.g., ethnic identity preservation) and external continuity (e.g., previous activity patterns or interactions). On the other hand, discontinuity in roles, relationships, and social support may lead adult immigrants to adapt to changed conditions in ways that are growth producing. For instance, having breakfast at McDonald's even as an adapted form of *Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi*, may reflect a degree of acculturation, while slight variations in *Kye* meetings may demonstrate accommodation to the new environment. Further investigation is thus needed to reveal how external and internal continuity are preserved in the context of immigration changes and if and how discontinuity in activity patterns contributes to cultural integration.

Other Influential Factors

For immigrants who are suddenly disconnected from familiar people and resources, family relations and living arrangements in a new culture have a significant influence on everyday life. For instance, older Korean Americans living with their adult children and grandchildren may develop a sense of belonging and recognition through family activities and interactions. However, living in a residential area within American neighborhoods may isolate this population from other Koreans. Their daily activities are most likely confined to their house and family members. Older Koreans living with other older Koreans in the same apartment complex may use leisure more effectively for preserving ethnic identity than those who live in American neighborhoods, while the latter may be more acculturated to the host culture as a result of their living arrangements. Older Koreans living in the same apartment complex have more opportunities to interact

with other Koreans, speaking in Korean, watching Korean TV programs, singing Korean music, and sharing Korean food. All these cultural activities may remind them of who they are and to whom they belong in a foreign country. According to Kim (1981), this phenomenon is particularly common among new Korean immigrants with a strong desire to maintain part of their own culture. In this study the “new Korean immigrants” who emigrated to the United States after the Immigration Act of 1965 will be identified as “first generation Korean immigrants.”

Such activities may or may not be exact replications of the activities of their pre-immigrant lifestyles. We may ask then, how do they choose or adapt certain activities for their leisure once coming to the United States? What are the driving forces in their decision process? And perhaps most important, what impacts do such choices have on maintaining a sense of self or creating a new sense of self and place? Despite the significance of leisure in people's lives (cf. Driver & Brown, 1991; Kleiber, 1999), researchers surveying immigrants' leisure behavior in the host culture have directed their attention almost exclusively to structured social settings such as the workplace and school system (Yu & Berryman, 1996). Leisure experiences in immigrants' daily nonwork lives have seldom attracted the interest of researchers studying the immigration experience of ethnic minorities.

Furthermore, researchers have seldom paid attention to Asian immigrants (see, for exception, Allison & Geiger, 1993), whose cultural backgrounds are very different from those of European immigrants. Given steady increases in their numbers in the United States (Barkan, 1996; Mangiafico, 1988; Min, 1995), more research attention to Asian immigrants is certainly warranted. I chose particularly Korean immigrants because: (1) I

am Korean and am qualified to act as a cultural translator; (2) I speak the language, which is especially important in doing qualitative research; and (3) they are a convenient population, with a substantial number in a nearby city. While Korean immigrants may have significant similarities with Chinese or Japanese immigrants, the major concern of this study is the experience of Korean immigrants in the U. S. rather than with differences between Asian cultures. Hence, the differences between Korean immigrants and other Asian immigrants would be a subject for future study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to explore daily activities and interactions of older Korean Americans in leisure contexts and the relationship of these activities and interactions to ethnic identity preservation and cultural integration. First generation older Korean immigrants are of particular interest in the study because they have lived in both Korea and the United States long enough to know both cultures. And because they are likely to be influential in the experience of immigrants, I will give special attention to living arrangements, gender, and previous leisure activity in Korea. This study will be restricted to individuals who have some competence with English and those who have been in the United States long enough (over 15 years) to have some perspective on the immigration transition.

Research Questions

The main research questions I will explore in the study are: (1) what are the meanings that older Korean Americans associate with leisure (*Yeo-Ga*) and other social activities? (2) How, if at all, are leisure activities (*Yeo-Ga-Whahl-Dong*) and social interactions related to previous (pre-immigration) lifestyles and to ethnic preservation in older Korean

Americans? (3) How, if at all, are leisure activities and social interactions related to the cultural integration of older Korean Americans? (4) How do living arrangement and gender contribute to the relationship between leisure activities and ethnic preservation or cultural integration of older Korean Americans?

Research Strategy

The interpretative qualitative study is the research method used in this study. The primary data sources for this study will be a series of in-depth, semistructured, open-ended conversational interviews with voice recording, a time diary, and field notes. The time diary will be used by participants to record the daily activities and interactions in the everyday leisure context. The entries in the time diary will help participants reflect on their daily patterns and routines and will be used by the interviewer to generate relevant research questions before and during interviews.

The sampling method used for the study was purposeful sampling, specifically network sampling (Lecompte & Preissle, 1993) or snowball sampling, which helped identify participants who meet the criteria of sample selection and can provide information-rich data (Patton, 1990). Interviews were held at the interviewees' houses by their agreement. Interviews were conducted in the Korean language and audio-taped. All audio-taped data were transcribed in the language (mostly Korean) spoken in the interviews. I employed a "gradual language transition process" from Korean to English in going through the various steps of data analysis (coding, categorizing, and generating themes). Further details about this process and other aspects of the research method are provided in chapter three.

Rationale for the Study

As Kelly (1996) acknowledged, leisure is not distinguished by time and activity, but by the particular use of time and the meaning of the activity. Accepting these notions of leisure means recognizing that leisure experience is culture-specific. Because of cultural differences in meanings, activity forms, and values, different ethnic groups in a multicultural American society may practice and be shaped by different leisure experiences. Leisure provides a context in which individuals develop new identities and/or strengthen existing ones. And this is particularly important to immigrants who are faced with a significant disruption in lifestyle. Although researchers have paid some attention to how immigrants in general assimilate into the host society, rarely have they investigated actions and social interactions of daily life that may act upon immigrants' cultural integration and ethnic identification. While Korean immigrants are only one category among many Asian immigrants, a close examination of Korean immigrants will demonstrate how leisure patterns and lifestyles of one specific immigrant group are related to ethnic preservation and/or integration into the dominant culture.

The value of studying older people is that they often have the time and the perspective on their lives that younger, especially working, people do not. By focusing on older immigrants we are increasing the likelihood that they will have lived in the US long enough to have gained some perspective on the immigrant experience. And by virtue of personal history alone, they will be more likely than younger immigrants to have had more of their lives lived in the "old" country.

Hence, an investigation of older Korean Americans in the study will contribute to enriching leisure research and literature for several reasons. First, older Korean

Americans have never been a research target for an extensive qualitative research study in the field of leisure studies. Accompanying the growth in the older American population is a rapid increase in the number of older Korean Americans (Moon, 1996). Older Korean Americans in general have limited resources and more free time in a different cultural background. It is therefore important to investigate their daily life activities and patterns, with the ultimate purpose of providing better services and improving their quality of daily life for them and other immigrant groups. Second, the findings of the study will enrich leisure research on minority populations in the United States. Although there has been increasing interest in leisure experience of minority populations, only a handful of research reports on the leisure of immigrants is currently available. No extensive research has been conducted on daily leisure experiences of older Korean immigrants, nor of Korean Americans in general. Third, the findings of the study will help researchers understand how the leisure patterns and lifestyles of minority populations speak for their ethnic identity and/or cultural assimilation. Fourth, this study will help researchers reflect on the extent to which Western perspectives on leisure, which currently dominate the field of leisure studies, apply equally well to a minority group with Eastern cultural traditions.

Definitions of Terms

Acculturation: The process of changing and adapting behavior and values as a result of contact between cultural groups.

Cultural Integration: The process by which immigrants accept and learn the language, values, customs, and attitude of the dominant culture.

Culture: "Web of significance" created through shared language, values, orientations, perceptions of self, thought patterns, behavior, and expectations (Geertz, 1973).

Ethnic Identity: "The sense of personal identification with the ethnic group and the identification by others as being a member of the ethnic group" (Hutnik, 1991, p. 19).

Ethnic Attachment: "The degree to which members are culturally, socially, and psychologically attached to the ethnic group" (Min, 1999, p. 16).

Ethnicity: A sense of 'peoplehood' created by common race, religion, national origin, history, or some combination of these categories (Gordon, 1964).

Integration: The process of change through which immigrants are merged into the dominant society through communication and participation.

Leisure: "Activity chosen in relative freedom for its qualities of satisfaction" (Kelly, 1996, p. 8).

Lifestyle: "An individual's typical way of life: his [sic] attitudes and their expression in a self-consistent manner as developed from childhood" (Webster, 1993, P. 2271); "A way of living, including the kind of home one lives in, the thing one owns, the kind of job one does, and the *leisure* activities one enjoys" (Longman, 1992, p. 763). [Italics added]

Structural Integration: The process by which immigrants interact with the majority through organizations and institutions.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter, I will review literature related to the research questions presented in chapter one. First, I will focus on how immigrants from various ethnic groups have fared in the course of immigration into the United States and what effects these experiences have had on cultural identity. Second, I will examine leisure patterns and experiences of different ethnic groups for evidence of ethnic identity preservation and cultural integration. Third, cultural differences in leisure patterns and experiences of older Korean Americans will be highlighted, with specific examples of "*Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi*" and "*Kye*" meetings, through which ethnic preservation and cultural integration of older Korean Americans may take place. Lastly, I will consider factors that may facilitate ethnic identity preservation and cultural integration of older Korean Americans in daily leisure experience. These include living arrangements and gender as well as language limitations, transportation barriers, religion, age, and involvement in ethnic organizations.

Immigration and Immigrants' Experience

According to Handlin (1951), "immigrants *were* American history." The United States is a country of immigrants, built on different ethnic backgrounds. Immigration is both a historical and a contemporary phenomenon in the United States. As a result, various ancestral generations coexist (Erdmans, 1995). As Hein (1994) noted, today's immigrant groups turn into tomorrow's ethnic groups. In the United States as well as

around the world, immigrant populations have expanded in both urban and rural communities.

Asian ethnic groups, with their distinctive physical and cultural differences, seem to encounter adjustment problems different from those of European ethnic groups. Handlin (1959) clearly demonstrated in The Newcomers that blacks have been hampered by color and Puerto Ricans by ignorance of the English language. Early Asian immigrants, however, have had both disadvantages; they were both unable to speak English and physically distinctive from European immigrant groups. Their struggle to learn the English language was often complicated by discrimination based on their physical appearance. The dominant group does not easily eliminate this type of prejudice, because physical characteristics are so visible and invite assumptions. Wong (1995) asserted that no matter how much Asian Americans are Americanized, no matter how similar to whites in values, aspirations, mannerisms or actions, they will always be perceived as different. This has important implications in terms of physical and cultural differences and their effects on the consciousness of Korean Americans.

Whether Asian Americans were not encouraged to or were unwilling to assimilate to the dominant group, it is clear that their immigration history starts with different standards and treatments. During the early years of immigration, some ethnic groups such as Chinese and Koreans formed ethnic enclaves and neighborhoods, known as “Chinatowns” or “Koreatowns.” Purcell (1951) contended that the Chinese in the United States have shown resistance to integration, resulting in a low level of absorption into American society. However, the major impetus for Chinese segregation in Chinatowns may have been the desire to protect themselves from the discrimination and racism of the

greater society (Yuan, 1963). This segregation was also preserved because the Chinese were excluded from the larger labor market as well as from housing allocations (Yuan, 1963).

The social and economic conditions of early Korean immigrants were not much different from those of the Chinese. A small number of Korean students, political exiles, *In-Sam* (ginseng) merchants, and immigrant laborers began to arrive on American shores in 1888. Like the Chinese, Korean immigrants later created Koreatowns in urban cities of the United States. These ethnic communities enabled new immigrants to maintain their previous lifestyles in a new environment without sudden cultural adjustment. Many new Korean immigrants settled in a Korean community and sometimes started their businesses within or around a Koreatown.

Adapting to a new environment is an extremely difficult task for older Korean immigrants who lack English proficiency and primary modes of transportation. Furthermore, due to immigration, older Korean immigrants are forced to dissociate from personal and social relationships and supports, as well as previously accumulated resources. Immigration, in other words, means loss of familiar ways, familiar meanings, and the social network on which they previously depended. For new immigrants who have resettled on a permanent basis, their survival and livelihood are largely dependent on their ability to acquire new learning and to perform according to the standards and practices of the host society (Kim, 1989).

Inkeles (1968) recognized that the ecological settings of human environments affect the nature of one's identification as a member of a larger community. Immigrants, for instance, will commonly encounter an identification crisis after their immigration.

Immigrants with different physical appearance and/or ignorance of the host language may be forced to locate their identity exclusively in their own ethnicity as a result of discriminative behavior as well as self-imposed isolation in the host country. Thus integration of ethnic minorities is curtailed when such groups withdraw into the ethnic community, where personal identity can be asserted without conflict. Studies have revealed, however, that as immigrants gradually adapt to a new culture, their relational ties become increasingly mixed with individuals outside their own group. The relational networks of newcomers gradually include an increasing number of ties with the natives (Yum, 1983). Bar-Yosef (1968) identified this “deculturation” or “desocialization” from one’s own ethnic group as a cultural discontinuity in immigrants' internal cultural identity and attributes. When integration occurs in immigrants, unlearning or undoing of some of the old cultural patterns also occurs. How then do cultural preservation and integration take place, and what are the factors that influence immigrants in these processes?

Ethnic Identity Preservation

Ethnicity is created by common race, religion, national origin, history, or a combination of these (Gordon, 1964). Ethnic identity therefore is formed when immigrants in the same ethnic group identify themselves with and by other members of the group (Hutnik, 1991). It is based on an identification with a group conscious of its language, religion, history, tradition, and ways of life (Sarup, 1996) and results from individuals’ acquisition of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors associated with those elements (White-Stephan & Stephan, 1989). Because identity is negotiated, established, and maintained through constant interactions with others, ethnic identity is not a fixed

and necessarily singular concept, but is constantly defined and placed by individuals in the context of relationships and meanings (Barth, 1969; Sue, Mak, & Sue, 1998).

Phinney (1990) reviewed empirical literature on ethnic identity published since 1972. Although the material was limited to published journal articles, the extensive literature review focused on definitions and components of ethnic identity. According to Simic (1987), ethnic identity is constructed through an active process of decision making and self-evaluation. The construction of ethnicity very much depends on culture, appearance, language, ancestry, religion, or regionality (Nagel, 1994). De Vos (1995) emphasized the significance of sustaining one's own religion and language to preserve ethnic identity. Differences in linguistic patterns and styles of gesture can influence group identity. Clothing or food can also become emblems for ethnic identity by showing others who one is and where one belongs. Hutnik (1991) demonstrated that ethnic identity is related positively to both income and age, but is negatively correlated with educational achievement. However, attitudes about one's own ethnicity in relation to these factors, broadly speaking, have been paid little attention by researchers, who are generally members of the white majority culture.

Several researchers have identified constraints, challenges, and stressors during the immigration process that may increase the need to preserve ethnic identity among immigrants. The challenges include economic survival, social discrimination, cultural conflict, competition, and the erosion of identity (Cha, 1977). Berry, Kim, Minde, and Mok (1987) identified stressors during integration as lowered mental health status (specifically confusion, anxiety, depression), feelings of marginality and alienation, heightened psychosomatic symptom level, and identity confusion. Black, Mendenhall,

and Oddou (1991) argued that the uncertainty, ambiguity, and loss of control caused by international relocation are expected to relate negatively to cross-cultural adjustment. In other words, these factors may lead immigrants to a strong attachment to their ethnic identity as a matter of self-protection. It is not a surprise to observe that first generation immigrants, regardless of their ethnicity, often demonstrate stronger ethnic attachment to their traditional culture and society than do their descendants (Hurh & Kim, 1984).

Hurh (1977) suggested the value of establishing strong ethnic communities in the dominant majority country. He observed that America is a nation of immigrants where race is still the most powerful factor in limiting structural integration. He suggested that Korean immigrants need a sense of belonging (community), recognition (identity), and common origin and destiny (ethnicity). Those older immigrants who experience difficulty adjusting to the "American way of life," either because of their customs and language or because of institutional racism directed at them, find themselves further isolated as "minority aging Americans." (Fujii, 1976). Hurh and Kim (1984) emphasized that although the length of stay can explain the level of integration in the United States, ethnic attachment is often unaffected by this variable. Furthermore, their research demonstrated that three-fourths of the Koreans who participated in the study in Los Angeles were involved in Korean voluntary associations. Also, according to Mangiafico (1988), Koreans maintain a distinct ethnic identity that does not appear to be affected by length of residence, socioeconomic status, and cultural and social integration rates.

Highly personalized familiar relationships are more likely to reinforce identity than are relationships with relative strangers. Korean immigrants want to identify with other Koreans because they can share their culture and language, and through the

interaction they identify with each other. The attempt to preserve continuity in a new environment may add to the need to connect with members of one's own ethnic group. Familiar activities and interactions with the group may provide a sense of comfort, security, and predictability.

Integration

Gordon (1964) distinguished between cultural and structural integration. Cultural integration takes place when immigrants accept and learn the language, values, customs, and attitudes of the dominant culture, and structural integration happens through organizations and institutions where immigrants interact with the majority. According to Gordon (1964), a minority can achieve a high level of cultural integration, but such cultural integration does not guarantee a high level of structural integration. This theory may aptly describe the social reality of minority immigrants in American society. Kim (1977) confirmed that structural entrance is difficult to achieve, and that cultural integration is likely to occur only in the form of superficial acceptance. Recognizing structural limitations in the host society, I will discuss difficulties and challenges Korean immigrants may face in the integration process.

In general, integration theorists argue that many immigrants have become blended into the host culture without changing their personal culture significantly (Gordon, 1964; Hirshman, 1983; Yinger, 1981). Berry et al. (1987) introduced five categories of changes as a result of acculturation: physical changes, biological changes, cultural changes, new social relationships, and psychological changes. New immigrants encounter physical changes by moving to a new place with different housing situations, density of population, and often more pollution. Biological changes expose them to new nutritional

statuses and new diseases. Changes in political, economic, technical, linguistic, religious, and social institutions require cultural adjustment. Indistinct boundaries between in-group and out-group networks invite immigrants to form new social relationships. Berry et al. (1987) contended that integration occurs when individuals neglect their culture and identity in seeking daily social interaction with the dominant culture. However, gradual integration and ethnic attachment are not mutually exclusive (Hurh & Kim, 1984). Hurh and Kim (1984) identified factors that influence levels of integration of immigrants: racial and cultural similarity between the dominant and immigrant groups, demographic and socio-economic characteristics, nature and area of immigrants' settlement, proximity to homeland, mutual attitudes of the dominant and immigrant groups, and the length of immigrants' residence in the United States. According to Hurh and Kim (1984), the length of residence and level of education are important factors in immigrants' development of social interaction with American friends and American organizations and institutions.

With respect to integration, Gudykunst and Hammer (1988) speculated that there are two "basic" causes of intercultural adaptation: the reduction of uncertainty (about how to behave) and the reduction of anxiety (from the feeling of lack of security). The combination of the two (reducing anxiety and uncertainty) is assumed to provide both necessary and sufficient conditions for intercultural adaptation of immigrants in a new culture. Hence, the more immigrants are assimilated, the more they demonstrate feelings of comfort and confidence, and anticipation for the future in the majority society. Among many contributing factors, lack of communication skills can easily lead immigrants to anxiety and uncertainty in a foreign country. It is commonly assumed in previous

research that immigrants with high proficiency in English tend to assimilate more easily than do immigrants without proficiency in English. De Vos (1995) added religious conversion and appropriation of language, clothing styles, and food preferences as vehicles of integration as well. Considering that older immigrants have longer-held habits and attachment to patterns of their own, their integration to the host society is likely to be limited accordingly.

Using three generations of Mexican Americans, Padilla (1980) examined cultural awareness and ethnic loyalty in relationship to integration. Dimensions of cultural awareness include host language familiarity and use and cultural heritage. Dimensions of ethnic loyalty were the maintenance or lack of maintenance of ethnic pride and identity, the degree of inter-ethnic interaction and inter-ethnic distance, and perceived discrimination. The findings of the study demonstrated that integration correlates with four factors: generation, education, income, and ethnic density of the neighborhood. Those who were more assimilated were younger, better educated, more economically secure and less likely to live in an ethnically dense neighborhood. Unlike other researchers, Padilla (1980) found no correlation between gender and level of acculturation.

Berry, Trimble, and Olmedo (1986) noted that ethnic loyalty could be distinguished by four factors--language preference and use, cultural pride and affiliation, cultural identification and preference, and social behavior orientation. Conversely, these factors also influence level of integration. For instance, a culturally-assimilated older Korean American will prefer to speak English rather than Korean, join a country club

rather than a Korean American organization, consider himself/herself American rather than Korean, and demonstrate Americanized behavior and attitudes.

Leisure and Ethnicity

For the past 30 years, as ethnicity has become a key concept for research on diverse populations, leisure scholars have produced a number of studies on leisure and ethnicity. Contributions on race and ethnicity in leisure were reviewed recently in a special issue of the Journal of Leisure Research (1998). Relevant studies will be further discussed in the following section.

Leisure is not an isolated context of life or culture, but derives from complex social and interpersonal relationships and interactions. Leisure is usually experienced through social relationships, social interactions, a sense of community, and the relationships between individuals and their environments (Stokowski, 1994). As demonstrated in the quotations in chapter one, Ms. Lee expresses identity diffusion as a result of being in an isolated environment, Ms. Park's routine seems to be extremely limited to other Koreans or to Korean organizations such as a Korean church, while Ms. Yoon and Mr. Choi are less constrained by barriers such as language and transportation. Nevertheless, they all seemed to choose leisure activities that reinforce their roles and identity as Korean. Kelly (1982) added that in most leisure situations, freedom to choose is constrained by role, identity, values, and personality factors, and this could be extended to personal background, social structure, and inherited culture. Some studies (Edwards 1981; Floyd, Shinew, McGuire, & Noe, 1994; McGuire, O'Leary, Alexander, & Dottavio, 1987; Stamps & Stamps, 1985; Washburne, 1978) have demonstrated significant cultural and ethnic differences in leisure activity patterns and experiences.

Being involved in leisure activities in a social setting is particularly important for immigrants because they can easily identify with and be recognized by their ethnic group in such contexts (Kelly, 1996). In that sense, leisure is more than just discretionary activity; it is a bridge to "social worlds" (Kelly & Godbey, 1992) through which immigrants rediscover and cultivate histories, cultures, and identities. People negotiate, define, and produce ethnic boundaries, identities, and cultures through social interaction inside and outside their ethnic communities (Nagel, 1994). For instance, Ms. Yoon and Mr. Choi's quotations demonstrate that their daily leisure activities take place in both the Korean community and the dominant society. It seemed that these interactions between the two cultures help them to identify where they belong and to draw their boundaries in the dominant society.

Hurh and Kim (1984) asserted that immigrants' strong attachment to their native culture and society does not change much as a result of progress in time, status, and acculturation. Thus, while Ms. Yoon and Mr. Choi seem to negotiate their relationships with the dominant society when they go to a mall or McDonald's, their ethnic identity may not be compromised in this process. Nevertheless, Kelly (1996) suggested that personal and social identities are formed through a dialectic of self and society and are subject to change throughout life as roles change.

Considering the enormous changes that accompany immigration, a closer examination of the "social worlds" of immigrants is warranted. One simple way to portray individuals' experiences in a new culture is to observe the dynamics of daily activities and interactions, which often occur in leisure contexts. In the following, I will

highlight some of these factors to discuss the role of leisure and recreation as a hindrance or aid in the ethnic identity preservation and cultural integration of ethnic groups.

Ethnic Identity Preservation in Leisure

According to Cheek and Burch (1976), leisure involves social bonding that is developed, strengthened, and expressed through interactions with others. People learn to interact with other members of their culture through socialization. Socialization is a way individuals become members of a society, embracing the society in their own experience and acting it out in their learned behavior, in turn becoming a part of the culture of that society (Schwartz, 1976). Culture unconsciously controls individuals' perceptions, thoughts, and behavior and is deeply embedded in our daily lives. Immigrants' daily activities in which they experience a degree of freedom may thus provide a reliable means, or a window, for understanding how culture is personally interpreted.

Clearly, identity emerges and is reinforced in social interaction, and leisure provides an important context for that interaction. Social psychological theorists (Mead, 1934; Erikson, 1980) have emphasized the social nature of identity formation. According to Mead (1934), we are not born with a self; the self starts to develop only when we begin to socialize. Identity, therefore, is negotiated and established through constant interactions with others. Leisure contexts are fertile grounds for identity negotiation because they open up the range of behaviors that may be expressed. (e.g. Haggard & Williams, 1992; Kelly, 1983; Kleiber, 1999; Taylor, 1992).

Although ethnicity is often viewed as biological, people's conception of ethnic identity is situational and changeable (Waters, 1990). One's ethnic identity is a combination of one's own view and that of others. In everyday life, people can change

their ethnicity, depending on the environment or circumstances they encounter, whether this is a situation or a person. For instance, an older Korean American man can claim that he is a Korean while interacting with other Korean Americans in a social setting. However, he may present himself as an American when encountering a government policy problem. How is this flexibility of ethnic identity reflected and negotiated in a leisure setting? How do leisure activities and interactions facilitate or impede immigrants and ethnic groups in negotiating their ethnic identification?

McGuire et al. (1987) argued that it is more important to consider an individual's personal identity than his or her group identity when designing leisure programs and services for older people. This study rejected a presumption of ethnic difference between older whites and blacks in leisure preferences. Individual differences were found to be more predictive than race and ethnicity when relatively few constraints exist. But the reality is that immigrants, particularly older immigrants, face a variety of constraints related to language limitations, lack of mobility, and different cultural practices and thus may require special leisure programs and services.

Many older Korean Americans seem to satisfy their needs by engaging in activities and programs within their own ethnic group. O. Kim's recent study (1999) demonstrated that older Korean immigrants with stronger ethnic attachments had more social support (both emotional and tangible) from their networks and a lower level of loneliness than those with weaker ethnic attachment and limited social network size. Through these ongoing relationships within the Korean community, Korean immigrants sustain reciprocal interaction, communication, activities, and business with other Koreans. They attend Korean senior schools and Korean churches, and join Korean

organizations and various informal clubs to interact and communicate with other Koreans. The sense of belonging and solidarity might be the leading factor in encouraging older Korean Americans to spend more time within their own ethnic community.

As was discussed, immigrants typically feel more comfortable with their own language, cultural traditions, and practices than those of the new country. However, we should acknowledge that most first generation immigrants after 1965 chose to come to the U. S. of their own accord (N. Kim, 1995). To that extent, they have brought with them a desire and ambition to assimilate quickly into the dominant society. The next section will discuss how immigrants' daily leisure activities are used in this process.

Integration in Leisure

Unlike immigrants with strong ethnic identity, some immigrants detach themselves completely from their ethnic communities and attempt to assimilate entirely into the dominant society. For instance, adult Korean Americans who have determined to assimilate into American society would choose not to mingle in a Korean community with other Koreans, but would prefer to interact with Americans to learn and practice English, American values, lifestyles, and the culture. Such learning and practice may occur more easily in leisure settings, where communication and social interaction with others take place casually with limited evaluation anxiety (cf. Samdahl, 1988; Shaw, 1985). Kelly and Godbey (1992) considered leisure as action that people take toward and with other people in various social contexts. Social interaction in leisure is possible only through communication. Hence, English proficiency is an important determinant of integration into the majority society.

Stodolska (1998) contended that immigrants with insufficient language ability often experience uneasiness in the mainstream culture. In contrast, more assimilated immigrants with a better command of the official language will be less restricted by language difficulties in leisure choices and experiences. This factor again reminds us of the different leisure activity patterns demonstrated by the older Korean Americans introduced in chapter one. Ms. Yoon and Mr. Kim enjoy shopping at a mall and eating at McDonald's, where it is necessary for them to interact with the majority culture. Hence, casual dining experience provides an opportunity to apply language and interaction skills that facilitate cultural integration. Similarly, Yu and Berryman (1996) found that recreation activity participation of recently arrived Chinese adolescents reflected levels of integration (termed "acculturation" in their study) and self-esteem. Again largely as a function of language facility, adopting mainstream religion, food preferences, or observation of holidays of the dominant population are often exercised in the context of leisure (Stodolska, 1998). Therefore, it seems that the level of integration of immigrants is closely related to patterns and preferences of leisure activities and experiences which themselves influence and are influenced by language and other forms of cultural learning.

Obviously, the Korean Americans who went to McDonald's with Mr. Choi, their spokesperson, experienced integration to some degree, albeit passively. They chose to expose themselves to American people and American styles of eating, whether the attempt was out of curiosity or a conscious step toward integration. Integration occurs most rapidly and thoroughly with active involvement of course, but exposure alone creates awareness and some degree of understanding.

While there is very little research on the relationships of leisure and cultural integration in older immigrants, research on older populations more generally offers some additional possibilities. According to Scales (1996), leisure activities frequently seen among older people are reading and TV watching. Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi (1990) stated further that television viewing occupies the largest segment of people's leisure time. The researchers considered family viewing a more positive experience than solitary viewing. TV viewing may be an equally important leisure activity across diverse ethnic groups. The difference, however, can be found in which programs, with whom, for what reason, and in what language people watch TV. Because TV programs and reading in English are a means of learning the language and culture of the dominant society (Allison & Geiger, 1993), involvement in these activities may provide some indication of the integration process in older immigrants. Older immigrants who are motivated to assimilate to the dominant society probably benefit by reading and TV viewing activities that provide an opportunity for them to learn the language and practices of the majority culture. In this study, I will pay closer attention to such leisure activities as one way of gauging older Korean Americans' level of integration in the American society. Keeping in mind common leisure activities among older Americans, in the next section, I will introduce particular leisure activities often found and practiced by older Koreans in Korea.

Characteristics of Culture and Leisure among Korean Americans

According to Bourdieu (1984), people in the same culture share the same kind of music, the same taste in food and clothes, and the same leisure activities and hobbies. People's lifestyles and their preferences are characterized in everyday life as a mode of

activity and way of thinking (Bourdieu, 1984). Independence, privacy, and emotional restraint characterize individualist cultures; dependence, attachment, and relationships with others distinguish collectivist cultures. People in collectivist cultures such as Korea are accustomed to living in a tight social framework in which in-groups (family, relatives, clan) are distinguished from out-groups (strangers) (Oddou & Mendenhall, 1984). Different expressions for personal relationships between in-groups and out-groups can be easily found in the Korean terms "*Ga-Kka-Un-Sa-Yi*" and "*Chin-Han-Sa-Yi*." Although both terms are translated as "close relationships," "*Ga-Kka-Un-Sa-Yi*" is used for "close but rather formal kinship" whereas "*Chin-Han-Sa-Yi*" is used for "close informal friendship" (Chun, 1984). The discussion of "*Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi*" in the following section will demonstrate a case for '*Chin-Han-Sa-Yi*' relationships. This is one example of how common expressions in daily life are grounded in cultural norms and expectations.

As we have acknowledged, culture unconsciously regulates individuals' perceptions and behaviors and is deeply grounded in their daily lives. Hence, integration of adult immigrants into the new culture will not occur as smoothly as their childhood socialization because of the distinct cultural identity and communication patterns internalized in their childhood. Koranyi (1981) asserted that older immigrants do not identify with the spirit, language, traditions, and political ideology of the host country and thus do not gain a sense of belonging. A similar phenomenon is noticeable among older Korean immigrants, because their culture and value systems are quite distinct from those of European immigrants.

Adult Korean immigrants become members of their cultural group and are thus able to obtain status in the world of the Korean community. Korean immigrants develop

and strengthen their identity through daily activities in which social interaction takes place. "*Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi*" (informal visiting behavior) and "*Kye*" (rotating credit association) meetings represent culture-specific leisure activities. Therefore, changes in the leisure environments of immigrants, especially those who express their identities through leisure engagement, may have a great impact on identity negotiation (or preservation), as well as on interpersonal relationships.

Korean immigrants in the United States maintain a high level of attachment to their own ethnic identity. As noted, humans learn and maintain a sense of identity in a process of communication that often takes place in a community through various organizations (Kelly, 1996). Min (1991) stated that most Korean immigrants speak the Korean language, eat Korean food, and practice Korean customs most of the time. Many are affiliated with at least one Korean organization and are involved in active informal ethnic networks. Through networks such as churches, business organizations, alumni organizations, and senior schools, most Korean Americans maintain and strengthen social interaction with other Koreans.

If leisure is of culture, as Kelly and Godbey (1992) suggested, looking at culture-specific leisure activities in Korean culture is critical to understanding how older Korean Americans make sense of their daily actions and interactions in another cultural background. It is important to study leisure behavior in its context, because the meanings and experiences of leisure behavior may vary across cultures. In this section, I will explore two traditional Korean activities (*Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi* and *Kye*) that seem to preserve ethnic identity of Korean Americans and how these activities are adapted and transformed in a different culture.

Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi

"*Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi*", or "informal visiting behavior" (Chun, 1984) contains a unique cultural meaning. In rural areas of Korea, older Korean women visit a neighbor's house after dinner for socialization without invitation from their host. A normal "*Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi*" among villagers and neighbors is generally viewed as a gathering among the same gender and same age group. Women visitors take a small amount of food (vegetables or steamed potatoes), cigarettes, or *Mak-Keol-Li* (liquor fermented from grains or potatoes) to consume during their visits. Although hosts do not require visitors to bring food, it is a culturally learned, reciprocal behavior which is naturally expressed in interpersonal relationships. Sometimes, grandchildren accompany their grandmother. Conversations at the gatherings usually start on family matters and move to gossip, jokes, or entertainment (singing and dancing). When one of the group members feels sleepy or tired, instead of heading for home, she falls asleep in the corner of the room in spite of the noise. One seldom leaves the gathering earlier than other members except in an emergency. It is not because she likes to sleep in that uncomfortable condition but because she perceives that other members want her to stay with them. Their sense of socialization requires a physical as well as a collective presence with the group members. Breaking the group atmosphere by taking an independent action is not acceptable. This is a good example of the way Korean women learn and develop other-oriented behaviors rather than self-oriented behaviors in their cultural and social settings.

Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi activity takes place similarly among adult men. Centralized gathering places for middle aged and older men are shops or bars, where they can chat, drink, smoke, and sing until late at night. Unlike women, when men say, "I am going to

Ma-Sil," they are going to go to a bar. Without making any appointment, they assume that they will meet acquaintances at the bar. Rarely will you observe a man sitting and drinking by himself without company. The basic etiquette in drinking requires that someone pour a liquid into another's glass when he notices the glass is empty. One never refills his own glass. That means that he is disrespected or ignored by other group members at the table. Therefore, being aware of another's glass so that it is not left empty at a party is a very important tactic for men to learn. This drinking custom provides an excellent example of social interactions, which implicitly requires attentiveness to the other.

A Korean man drinking with a friend has to be aware of his friend's glass all the time. He cannot be free from the etiquette that might constrain his perceptions and thoughts during the social interaction. Would he be bothered by the constant attention that may prevent him from enjoying communication and interaction with his friend? He would probably say "no" because what he enjoys comes from the whole context of the leisure setting. His personal inconvenience and discomfort are ignored in favor of social interaction and attentiveness to others. This simple example provides an indication of how leisure interactions may reflect the preservation of ethnic identity in older Korean Americans.

Kye Meeting

Another example of a unique leisure activity in Korean culture is a *Kye* meeting, also known as a "rotating credit association" (Chun, 1984; Light, Kwuon, & Zhong, 1998). The Korean word "*Kye*," meaning "contract" or "bond," has a centuries-long history in Korea. According to Light, Kwuon, and Zhong (1998), *Kye* was started as a

nonmonetary association for mutual aid among peasants in rural areas. It later became very important with industrialization in urban cities as a form of "money *Kye*." Briefly, *Kye* is an informal social group in which a certain amount of money from each member is collected at a meeting every month. The sums of money are given to one member at a time in random order, until everyone gets the chance to receive them (Ahn, Brewer, & Mooney, 1992). Apparently, *Kye* is based on trusting relationships among *Kye* members. Light and Bonacich (1988) reported that *Kye* was very popular among Korean Americans because the substantial sums of money supported the capitalization, expansion, or cash flow of Korean-owned business firms. However, many more Korean Americans used the *Kye* to save money for consumer goods, traveling, or housing (Light, Kwuon, & Zhong, 1998).

Although previous researchers have paid little attention to *Kye*, I believe the whole context of the *Kye* meeting demonstrates very critical elements of human behavior that are consistent with leisure. The following description is a behind-the-scenes synopsis of a *Kye* meeting that I attended as a participant observer in the United States. A group of 24 older Korean Americans (16 females and 8 males) met in a Korean restaurant on a Sunday noon. As usual, older females occupied two tables, sitting apart from older males (even married couples seldom sit side by side in public). One older Korean female brought her grandchild to the meeting to baby-sit. While the participants were chatting, the president of the club walked around collecting money to pay for lunch. Everyone contributed the same amount of money for lunch, and the remainder was carried over to the next meeting. While participants waited for lunch, the room became somewhat noisy, as interactions and communications among group members continued. After lunch, the

prospective recipients of the summed money went to the front to draw lots out of a hat. When two recipients were decided, everyone clapped and congratulated them. The president made some announcements for plans for the next meeting and a tour. He also presented information about a male member who had serious surgery and collected money from the members, delivering it to the man's spouse, who was present at the meeting. After the president's report was finished, one male member went to the stage and took the role of MC for entertainment. Using Karaoke (music box), he called members randomly to come to the stage to sing or dance. In the midst of noise and disruption, some kept talking with friends, visiting others at another table, or listening and watching members singing and dancing on the stage. Almost everyone was called and had to sing. Some people refused to get on the stage when their turn came. Probably because of their old age, they were not forced to take their turn, whereas group peer pressure forced younger people to go. When the MC asked me to sing, of course I could not refuse. Refusal by any younger person would have been rude, uncooperative, and even offensive to the elderly. My refusal furthermore could break the rhythm of the amusing atmosphere. If singing were something I greatly wished to avoid, the singing period would have turned into a moment of embarrassment, a pain, and a torture for me. However, I was aware that the elderly at the meeting were not really interested in the quality of my voice or my ability to sing well; they just wanted to enjoy the time and interaction with others and stay in the same mood of collective enjoyment. After two and a half hours of meeting and entertainment, people began to leave. For older people who are retired from work, the *Kye* meeting seems to provide an opportunity to interact with peer Koreans in a leisure setting.

Participating in a *Kye* meeting of older Korean Americans helped me notice some differences in the patterns of the meeting compared to those with which I was familiar. In Korea, I remember my mother preparing food for the *Kye* members who were together in our house for the meeting. Every month a different member was in charge of providing a meeting place and food for the members. Often the *Kye* meeting lasted the whole afternoon with talking, singing, dancing, playing Korean cards, or drinking. Although the differences in the structure and conditions of the *Kye* meeting in the United States were relatively minor, the experiences and perceptions of older Korean Americans at the meeting invite speculation about cultural adjustments and integration made by the members through that activity. This voluntary mutual aid or *Kye* meeting provides some intriguing components for further investigation. Questions may focus on the purpose and meaning of joining a *Kye* meeting in the U. S. versus Korea, expectations of a *Kye* meeting, and relationships with other group members. In the following section, I will discuss factors that may have some influence on leisure experiences of older Korean Americans in relation to both ethnic identity preservation and cultural integration.

Significant Influences on Leisure Experience of Korean Americans

There are several key factors that likely have a significant impact on the degree of ethnic preservation and integration of Korean immigrants in a leisure context. Focusing on leisure constraints, Stodolska (1998) contended that immigrants' leisure experiences are different from those of the mainstream population. The findings of her study suggested that constraints experienced by recently-arrived immigrants would diminish with their adaptation to the new environment. With respect to leisure opportunities, the older ethnic minorities often confront obstacles such as inaccessibility of existing service

delivery systems, social isolation, financial and transportation problems, lack of language proficiency, food differences, and lack of knowledge about how and where to use services (Lee, 1986; Fujii, 1976; Tsai & Lopez, 1997). In his research on variations and determinants for cultural assimilation of Korean immigrants in the U.S., Yu (1977) used ten major factors as variables: educational background, occupation in Korea, age at entry into America, number of family members, length of residence in America, present occupation, income, religion, English proficiency, and intention to stay in America. In this section, I will highlight some factors that are likely to influence interpersonal interactions in various leisure settings: living arrangement, gender, language barriers, lack of transportation, involvement in ethnic organizations, gender, age, and religion.

Living Arrangement

As a result of immigration, immigrants are detached from most of their immediate friends, family, relatives, and coworkers with whom they shared social and interpersonal daily activities. Although new immigrants bring cultural meanings and social practices that shaped family structures in their homeland, they are faced with creating a new living structure and acknowledging social, economic, and cultural forces in the new country (Foner, 1997). Changes in structures of immigrant families occur gradually during the immigration transition period (Parrillo, 1991).

Stodolska (1998) noted characteristics of living arrangement among immigrants. Polish immigrants in Canada have tended to congregate in certain areas of the city in which low-rise and high-rise apartments are concentrated (Statistics Canada, 1991). People who live in an apartment complex are more likely enclosed in their ethnic community, often because of English deficiency and lack of transportation, and are thus

more likely to be restricted in their leisure choices and experiences as a result. Elderly Korean Americans in metropolitan areas also choose to live mostly in apartments where they can interact with peer-Koreans (Min, 1998). On the other hand, more and more elderly Korean Americans prefer living arrangements separate from their adult children. This appears to be something of a trade off. Although living in a single house provides better opportunities for some leisure activities such as gardening, other options for leisure activities require living closer to friends and peer-groups.

The significance of living arrangement was addressed in studies done by Mui (1996, 1998). Mui (1996) contended that older Chinese immigrants living with others reported good health and were less depressed and more satisfied with help received from family members. In contrast, older Chinese Americans living alone rated their health as poorer, experienced more stress, and were dissatisfied with help provided by family members (Mui, 1998). Lee, Crittenden, and Yu (1996) further showed that older Korean Americans who maintained close and frequent contacts with family members and friends exhibited less depression. Their study also concluded that emotional support was more critical than instrumental support in decreasing life stress among the elderly. It seems that the critical issue raised by previous studies is the difficulty immigrants have faced in adjusting to a new living arrangement and family structures.

Gender

Under Confucian values and traditions in Korean society, gender differences may also have a great impact on choices and decisions women and men make in their daily leisure activities. Confucianism de-emphasizes individual values and encourages social roles as father, mother, wife, son, brother, and so on. Women in particular may

experience culturally-imposed limitations on their access to resources and to opportunities for personal growth through leisure and recreational programs. The lack of English language skills is one of the major barriers confronted by immigrant women (Rublee & Shaw, 1991) as I demonstrated in the examples of Ms. Park and Ms. Lee in chapter one. We can also speculate from the example of Mr. Choi that his fluent English may allow him more choices of activities and programs within the majority society.

On the other hand, as noted earlier, women with modest language skills may feel less inhibited in experimenting with language than men who seem to have a greater risk of losing *Che-Myeon* (embarrassment) in misusing the language. Prerogative clearly belongs to the male in Korean society. In older populations especially, gender distinctions and discrimination against women, in opportunities, choices, and decisions are commonplace. Nevertheless, my observations and experience lead me to speculate that Korean women adapt to a new environment faster and easier than Korean men do. Social status, authority, power, and superiority over women historically bestowed by the society seem to prevent men from risking loss of face. How this affects the relationship between leisure and ethnic preservation or cultural integration warrants further attention.

Language

As previously noted, one of the main determinants of integration is a different communication system. The language barriers Korean immigrants encounter at first help them maintain interactions with Koreans and their community. Korean immigrants who cannot communicate outside their language tend to isolate themselves from the host culture. Lacking familiarity with the language of the host culture, many immigrants are unable to adjust to changes in communication or assimilate into a new environment

(Chang, 1977). Some immigrants, especially the elderly, may choose to spend their immigrant lives in their "ethnic enclaves," separating themselves from the host culture and language. Hurh and Kim (1988) reported that 90% of Korean immigrants in Chicago speak mainly the Korean language at home and that 82% are affiliated with one or more ethnic organizations. A comparative study of three Asian ethnic groups indicates that a much larger proportion of Korean Americans (75%) than Filipino (50%) or Chinese Americans (19%) have joined one or more ethnic associations (Mangiafico, 1988). Three major reasons Korean immigrants maintain a high level of ethnic attachment are affiliation with Korean churches, concentration in small business, and their use of the Korean language. (Min, 1995).

Language is an important tool that enables people to establish and maintain relationships as well as to think about the world, to interpret their experiences, and to convey information. In the context of integration, language is a key obstacle to social interaction because people who cannot communicate tend to isolate themselves from the host culture. Language conveys important messages above and beyond the actual meaning of words. According to Chang (1977), communication and interaction systems function not as a simple composite of independent elements, but coherently and as an inseparable whole. Findings indicate that younger adults tend to acquire English more quickly and attain a higher proficiency than do older adults (Furnham, 1984). Gal (1978) found a strong rank correlation between an immigrant’s age and his or her preference of speaking in the original language. De Vos (1995) stressed that some differences in linguistic patterns and styles of gesture can be a major characteristic feature of maintaining ethnic identity.

When Korean Americans attend recreational activities and programs organized by Koreans, they have little difficulty communicating and interacting with others. But while this action results in the maintenance of ethnic identity, it can have a decelerating affect on integration. It is obvious that an older Korean American who is unable to speak English will never be able to socialize with a peer American neighbor. Well-developed programs and services in senior centers and recreational service agencies will only exacerbate the issue of language barriers among the older immigrants. Allison and Smith (1990) added language to the psychological, cultural/intercultural, and institutional barriers that keep minority elderly from participating in leisure activities.

People not only learn who or what they are, but also acquire certain attitudes and feelings about themselves as part of their social identity (Inkeles, 1968). In the case of Korean immigrants in an English-speaking society, language is the prime tool of social interaction and is therefore extremely critical in developing social identity (De Vos, 1995). For instance, older Korean Americans attend a Korean senior school in which they participate in various activities. The involvement in activities provides older Korean Americans a sense of belonging. In a music class, they sing Korean folk songs, which can easily bring them to memories of past life in Korea. The Korean food served for lunch every day reminds them of who they are, and they enjoy interacting and conversing with friends. Participating, even in silence, makes them feel comfortable and helps them identify with others in that social context. But such activities will not facilitate cultural integration.

Age

Age is another factor to be considered. When Korean immigrants enter the United States, they are in most cases in their adulthood, which implies that their personality and identity have largely been established in the old culture. Older Korean immigrants in particular may prefer to remain in their own ethnic community, keeping a distance from others because of language barriers and cultural differences (Lee, 1986). The relationship between age and adaptation was observed even among American tourists in Africa during a six-week tour (Cort & King 1979), in which the older tourists experienced greater culture shock and were observed to be less tolerant of host environmental ambiguities. While the age of participants in this investigation will be limited to a range of about 65 to 80, the age at the point of immigration may prove to be significant.

Involvement with Ethnic Organizations

Almost every Korean American is a member of at least one or two Korean organizations for their business or social life. Business-related organizations include the Korean American Grocers Association (KAGA) and the Korean Dry Cleaning and Laundry Association (KDCLA). Social organizations Korean Americans regard as important are high school and college alumni associations, various sports clubs, Korean senior school, Korean American welfare center, Korean American Association, the Elderly Korean American Association, *Kye* associations, and small groups in church congregations. Although every organization has its own purpose, each one regularly offers social activities for its members. For instance, seasonal picnics and special holiday celebrations offered by various social organizations are also organized by such business organizations as KAGA and KDCLA for members and their families on a regular basis.

Some organizations are particularly sensitive to providing social activities, especially seasonal picnics and special Korean holidays, for the elderly Korean Americans. Others recruit the elderly for trips to tourist places in other countries as well as in the U.S. Such involvement would seem to contribute to both ethnic preservation and cultural integration.

Religion

The devotion to religion, especially Christianity, among older Korean Americans is a common phenomenon (Kim, I., 1981; Min, 1998). Korean churches in the United States have served Korean Americans for many purposes beyond religious practice (Min, 1991). Korean-speaking pastors assume significant roles not only in the religious growth of Korean Americans, but also in providing various kinds of assistance with difficulties faced in everyday life. For many Korean Americans, going to a Korean church on Sunday serves more purposes than to worship God. It is a place where they identify and interact with other Koreans who are familiar with the same cultural codes and the language. The only way for many older Koreans to communicate and interact with other Koreans is through church gatherings. It seems that church activities have at least as much of a social as a religious function.

De Vos (1995) stated that religious conversion could contribute to weakening one's ethnic identity by encouraging one to adopt a transcendent world view. But for Koreans it may also be an important factor in maintaining ethnic identity. Korean Christian churches became the most important community organization for Koreans in the United States. For many Korean Americans, church is a place for making and meeting friends, forming support networks, exchanging information about jobs, business, social

service programs, and for sharing the same language, food, and tradition. And churches, unlike other institutions, often provide transportation.

Transportation

Many elderly are involuntarily confined to isolated environments because of lack of transportation. Korean immigrants are geographically dispersed in the United States. In a country where the automobile is a vital tool for mobility, few older Korean Americans have transportation to visit friends and neighbors, unless they live in a senior housing apartment complex where other older Koreans live within walking distance. Public transportation enables older Korean Americans to commute freely, but only if they live in big cities such as New York where a public transportation system is available and convenient. However, if they cannot read street signs or subway maps written in English, they cannot even use the public transportation. It is possible, therefore, that lack of transportation will influence the relationship between available leisure activities/resources and ethnic identity preservation or cultural integration.

Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed various factors that influence the connection of immigrant leisure to patterns of ethnic preservation and cultural integration. The review of literature also demonstrated something of what leisure activities and experiences may mean to older Korean Americans and how they might promote and/or deter cultural integration and ethnic preservation of older Korean Americans. "*Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi*" and "*Kye*" were discussed as culture-specific examples of how leisure activity may be influential in ethnic preservation in particular. In the next chapter, I will discuss the

method used for obtaining a clearer understanding of the meaning of leisure for older Korean immigrants.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Overview

The purpose of the study was to explore daily activities and interactions of older Korean Americans in leisure contexts and the relationship of these activities and interactions to ethnic identity preservation and cultural integration. While variations in living arrangements, language ability, gender, age, ethnic organization involvement, religion, and transportation were considered, this study focused on individuals who were at least 65 years old, first generation immigrants, had been in the United States for at least 15 years, held American citizenship, and had some perspectives on the immigration transition. The subject I explored in the study was the way in which older Korean Americans characterized their daily activity patterns and social interactions. The primary research questions of the study were: (1) what are the meanings that older Korean Americans associate with leisure (*Yeo-Ga*) and other social activities? (2) How are leisure activities (*Yeo-Ga-Whahl-Dong*) and social interactions related to previous (pre-immigration) lifestyles and to ethnic preservation in older Korean Americans? (3) How are leisure activities and social interactions related to the cultural integration of older Korean Americans? (4) How do living arrangement and gender contribute to the relationship between leisure activities and ethnic preservation or cultural integration of older Korean Americans? These questions were explored by employing an interpretive

qualitative approach that provided information-rich data regarding the cultural meanings of certain daily behaviors and actions from the perspectives of older Korean Americans.

To answer research question one, "What are the meanings that older Korean Americans associate with leisure (*Yeo-Ga*) and other social activities?," I focused on the following indications: (1) how older Korean Americans spend "*Yeo-Ga-Si-Gan*" (leisure time); (2) what they do as "*Yeo-Ga-Whahl-Dong*" (leisure activity); (3) what these activities mean to them; and (4) how they distinguish "*Yeo-Ga-Whahl-Dong*" from other social activities. The methods used to collect these data were a time diary, interviews, journals, and observations.

To answer research question two, "How are leisure activities (*Yeo-Ga-Whahl-Dong*) and social interactions related to previous (pre-immigration) lifestyles and to ethnic preservation in older Korean Americans?," I first looked for the following evidence on continuation of previous lifestyles: (1) the kinds of "*Yeo-Ga-Whahl-Dong*" older Korean Americans remember participating in previously in Korea; (2) any specific "*Yeo-Ga-Whahl-Dong*" they have continued since immigration and how and why? The data collection methods to examine these questions were: a time diary, interviews, observations, journals, and document review. Second, I focused on signs that demonstrated ethnic preservation: (1) leisure activities that demonstrate Korean culture (e.g., food, apparel, language, manners, and customs); and (2) leisure interaction patterns that are distinctly Korean, and (3) leisure activities that make them feel more "Korean." The methods used to collect these data were interviews, observations, field notes, proxemics, and journals.

To answer research question three, “How are leisure activities and social interactions related to the cultural integration of older Korean Americans?,” I looked for signs that demonstrate cultural integration in: (1) leisure activities that demonstrate social interactions with Americans; (2) leisure activities that require familiarity with American food and English language; and (3) leisure activities that make them feel more “American.” The methods used to collect these data were time diaries, interviews, field notes, proxemics, journals, and observations.

To answer research question four, “How do living arrangement and gender influence the relationship between leisure activities and ethnic preservation or cultural integration of older Korean Americans?” I looked especially for: (1) whether living with or separately from their children is related to patterns of leisure activities among the participants; and (2) whether cultural integration and/or ethnic preservation in leisure activity patterns is different for the men and women in the group. The methods used to collect this data were: interviews (including with family members), observations, journals, proxemics, field notes, and journals.

The sources of data I used for the study were interviews, time diaries, field notes, observations, proxemics (use of space and its relationship to culture [Hall, 1969]), journals, and document review (writings in newspapers), but I utilized interviews as the principal data source. Document review and observations were done to supplement and enrich the primary data, but acquiring such data very much depended on the extent to which participants were willing to share it. To further define the approach taken here, I will review the following in greater detail: research design, sample selection and

recruitment, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, researcher bias and position, and study limitations.

Research Design

The most important source of information in this study was the interview. Using a qualitative research interview method enabled me to capture cultural transitions and meanings of older Korean Americans' daily activities and interactions occurring in the complex phenomena of reality. Interviewing is a valuable method for investigating people's beliefs, attitudes, values, knowledge, and other subjective experiences (Gorden, 1987). The purpose of an interview is "to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena" (Kvale, 1996, p. 5-6). The interview method helped me step into the life world of the interviewee and situate his or her lived experience in social and cultural context (McCracken, 1988). Interview data provided direct quotations about experiences, opinions, stories, and feelings (Patton, 1990) of older Korean Americans. Family members, particularly spouses of the participants, were interviewed when appropriate, necessary, and available based on each individual situation.

Another source used, prior to the interview, was a time diary (see Appendix A). The time diary, kept by participants, laid out daily patterns, routines and experiences that could be missed by other methods. The purpose of recording the time diary before interviewing was to generate material for a conversational interview, which in turn used several guided questions in a semi-structured format (see Appendix B). Unlike survey research, qualitative research requires the researcher's extensive involvement in the lives of participants for a certain period of time. That means that participants would ideally

allow a researcher to talk with them about their experiences and perceptions, and to observe their daily life. Keeping a time diary for several days helped participants reflect on what they do and how they spend time every day. I also learned characteristic activities, behaviors, actions, and interpersonal interactions by observing participants directly. This observational evidence supplemented the other data collected. Field notes were used as raw data and written up after observations and interviews. These various techniques will be elaborated in the data collection section.

Journals, proxemics, and document reviews were optional data collection methods if participants were willing to share such things. Journals written by two participants helped me understand the bigger picture of how participants feel about their daily lives. The time diary also provided a place to reflect on and to write about personal feelings and thoughts of the day (see Appendix A). The possibility of obtaining written journals as a form of data very much depended on the willingness of the participants. Because the elderly had less education than younger generations, it was not surprising to encounter people with limited reading and writing skills. Partly for that reason, some older Korean Americans resisted any kind of writing task, including writing journals. These data were used as a secondary rather than a primary data source.

Proxemics is the collection of data by observing settings of the house, furniture, and decorations of the house that may demonstrate the culture of the participants (Hall, 1966). However, these data again depended on whether or not the interviews were held in the participants' house. I was able to visit homes of all participants except one male, who was reluctant to invite me to his house. Since the participant wanted to have the interview elsewhere, I generated a list of questions adapted from Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-

Halton (1981) to lead the participant to describe the characteristics of his home so that I could get some sense of various meanings reflected in his living environment (see Appendix C).

Sampling Selection and Recruitment

Specific criteria for inclusion in the study included the following conditions. First, research participants had to have lived in the United States for at least 15 years, which I considered to be enough time for adaptation to a new culture. This requirement was based on research findings that the longer people live in a strange culture, the more they acculturate (Hurh & Kim, 1984). This condition automatically separated first-generation Korean American citizens and permanent residents from other types of residents such as short-term, routine visitors. Second, first-generation immigrants with some level of English fluency were solicited for the research. The level of English fluency was determined by whether or not they could minimally communicate with Americans to ask directions, order food, and greet American neighbors, all basic to acculturation.

Research participants were recruited in a metropolitan area in the southeastern United States. Although no official census records are available on the Korean American population in this city, the Korean American Association in the city currently estimates about 50,000-60,000 Koreans residing there. The Korean American Welfare Center in the city considered about 10% of the Korean population as Koreans over 65 years old.

The six participants recruited for this study had lived in the U.S. for at least 15 years at the time of data collection. To find them I first contacted acquaintances whom I had known through my three years of volunteer work at a Korean American Senior School in the city. I also contacted the dean of the school and a student representative to

recruit possible volunteers. With their help in finding people who met the research criteria and were willing to participate, I made a list of people to call to confirm that they met the criteria and to ask if they would be interested in being involved in the research. To recruit eligible volunteers in a senior housing apartment, I stayed overnight with an older Korean woman who lived in the complex and with whom I continued the relationship after my master's research was completed.

Participants who met the criteria and were available and willing to participate in the research were asked to either sign a consent form or to give a verbal consent, depending on their preferences. The reason for giving this option was to protect them from a signature phobia that is a common phenomenon among Korean immigrants, unrelated to level of education (Hurh & Kim, 1984). In Korean culture, verbal agreements or promises are as effective as written contracts, which are used only for the most important matters. Korean immigrants living in a country where giving a signature is a common practice in daily life, seemed fearful and cautious about signing any documents to protect themselves from unexpected consequences. In fact, all the consents I received from my participants were verbal. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) in the University of Georgia's Human Subject Office reviewed the proposed research and approved a verbal consent from participants as acceptable (see Appendix D).

When I had the participant's verbal permission to meet for an informal conversation, I shared more specific information in person, explaining the general research purpose, research procedure, and the use of data. This process also helped develop rapport and trust between the researcher and the participant and ensured that participants had a common understanding of the whole research process. One approach I

used to develop rapport was spending some time with them doing what they liked to do at the moment. For instance, I realized that I spent more time watching Korean videotapes with some participants during my visit than audiotaping interviews. Also, on one occasion I provided a ride for a participant who needed to go to a mall for shopping.

Recruiting research participants for the study was challenging for the following reasons. First, older Korean Americans are seldom asked for research participation because few researchers are attracted to this specific population. This in turn means that older Korean Americans lack familiarity with the interview process. Second, unfamiliarity with being a research participant makes them indifferent to and unaware of the significance of participating in a research study. For instance, several participants in this study dropped out after the first or second meeting with no specific reasons despite demonstrating some interest in the research in the beginning. Several single women volunteers seemed to enjoy talking with me but did not want to commit themselves for a certain period of time. They either avoided making further appointments or did not keep the appointments. In addition to the lack of awareness and knowledge, they may not have been convinced of the contribution of the research to their community in the long run. Ongoing conversation and education may be necessary to help the participant enhance the quality and benefit of research involvement, and I was limited in my ability to provide such.

Third, the previous facts reinforced the cultural dictum: “Don’t reveal personal and familial matters to a stranger.” This disposition may have created a distance between the older Koreans and me since, even though I am Korean, I was a stranger. Also, two of my potential participants were discouraged from participating by their adult children.

Unlike independent older Americans, it is a very common phenomenon for older Koreans to depend on their adult children.

Another experience I had recruiting participants reflected some of the confusion, which seemed to be developed through living in two different cultures. A retired male volunteer who was well-educated and held a highly professional occupation in the U.S. and his wife were suspicious about my interest in his daily activities, even after I shared the research purposes and plans in our first informal, conversational meeting. After more detailed explanation of what I was looking for from his daily life, the couple became rather relaxed and enjoyed sharing their stories, mainly about their adult children. They even took me out for lunch to a nearby restaurant after the informal interview. After I received an envelope with his daily time diaries by mail, I reviewed and analyzed them before arranging our next meeting in their house. However, to my surprise, the following meeting ended up in disappointment and frustration. When I asked him to elaborate on the leisure activities written on the daily time diary he filled out for a week, he was suspicious about my questions. He said that I was invading his private life by such simple questions as, “Could you tell me more about how you feel when you go for a walk in the morning?” Then, he would bluntly answer me back in English “I don’t know. I cannot answer that question.” After repeating the same pattern with other questions several times and verifying his discomfort with my research involvement, I left their house politely, thanking them for their time. Reflecting on and analyzing the case afterwards, I could only conclude that my gender (female) or age (their children’s generation) may have made him uncomfortable about being asked to reveal his inner feelings and thoughts. Alternatively, his discomfort may have been rooted in his occupation, by which his

attitudes were shaped to some extent. Or, perhaps the resistance was a product of struggling to live in the two distinctive cultures for many years.

Fourth, some degree of "ego threat" (Gorden, 1987) may lead to exaggerating or understating such information as familiarity with American culture or level of education in order to save face or to defend their self-esteem (Hurh & Kim, 1984). Two interesting observations concerning *Che-Myeon* (face), a very important concept in Korean culture, suggested some reasons for unsuccessful recruitment. A suitable male candidate refused to participate in my research because he thought he had not successfully achieved his dream in the U.S. He repeatedly said, "Why don't you find someone who had successfully achieved their dream?" Another potential male participant was reluctant to share his daily life experience because he was ashamed of having divorced children, which indicated to him that his life was a failure. And fifth, the lack of knowledge about and experience with research processes and ethics may deter participants for fear of getting hurt or disadvantaged by what they have said. Personal experience of being hurt by others' gossip was another reason to avoid getting involved in the research, in case one's identity might be recognized by others.

My strategy to minimize these problems was to build trusting relationships through education and rapport. Considering the nature of the qualitative research, which requires "complete life exposure to a stranger," building a rapport with a participant was as significant as educating the person to feel comfortable as a valued member of the study. I trusted that this was facilitated by the fact that for the last several years, I have developed relationships with elderly Korean Americans through the Korean American Senior School, in senior apartments where older Korean Americans are the predominant

residents, and in Korean churches in this Southeastern metropolitan area. Although the individuals and groups with which I was acquainted were not eligible to be my research participants (e.g., less than 15 years living in the United States), their referral to other qualified older Koreans was very useful in recruiting participants. I also understood the importance of building trust and rapport. In Korean culture, people draw boundaries between relationships, depending on the closeness or familiarity to the other person. Once they are inside the boundary of the relationship, candid openness and support are easy to achieve. My connection to the older Korean American senior school and other acquaintances from the Korean community was an advantage in starting the project and in making connections to others. I approached 15 people by telephone or face to face, in inviting them to participate. Five people dropped out after the initial contact. Four people declined their participation after I made one or two visits with partial interviews. Reasons given for withdrawing were discomfort and unwillingness to share their daily life, often influenced by their adult children who discouraged their participation.

Data Collection Procedures

To capture the meanings of daily activities and social interactions of older Korean Americans, I regarded leisure as a "free time activity chosen in relative freedom for its qualities of satisfaction" (cf., Kelly, 1996). The participants were asked to complete their daily time diary for at least four typical days (two weekdays and a weekend) if willing. The daily time diary consists of "When, where, with whom, and what" to plainly describe everyday life (see Appendix A). The participants were asked to categorize each activity in which they participated as leisure ("*Yeo-Ga*"), work, both, or neither (cf. Shaw, 1985). This task supports Kelly's (1996) assertion that leisure is distinguished by the meaning of

the activity, not its form, and that the participants themselves are best able to assign activities to categories. I did not volunteer to share my definition of leisure with the participants. They seemed to have their own understanding of "*Yeo-Ga*," although some participants found it somewhat difficult to articulate that understanding. Although recording the daily time diary was suggested to every participant, two of the participants (one male and one female) did not feel comfortable with the writing task. In the two cases, I verbally invited the participants to talk about their daily routine in comparison to the activities of the previous day and filled out the form for them.

After the participant recorded the daily time diary for four days in a week, I arranged a meeting to collect the written time diaries and to conduct a preliminary survey on biographical information (see Appendix E). The preliminary biographical questions, adapted from McCracken (1988), helped me better understand the context of the interview that would follow and provided basic information for a profile of each participant (see Table 1 on p. 83). Unlike research conducted with survey instruments, a qualitative research interview technique requires the researcher's extensive involvement in the lives of participants for a certain period of time. That means that participants allow a researcher to talk with them about their experiences and perceptions. Thus, sharing personal biographical information was the first informal and conversational interview conducted for each participant. The length of each interview varied depending on the circumstances at the time. The opportunity to share personal and familial backgrounds helped to establish a rapport that enabled participants to focus on interview questions with minimal distraction during the conversational interviews.

The second interview was conducted to further investigate the written daily time diary and to allow participants to elaborate feelings, thoughts, and experiences associated with specific activities identified in the diary. The time diary information was used to initiate and develop the conversational interviews, using several guided questions in a semistructured format. I arranged interviews with participants in locations they preferred. Several formal and informal follow-up interviews were conducted in different places, but primarily in homes of the participants for their convenience. Most chose their homes because of the privacy it afforded and the absence of distractions in tape-recording. Choosing the house for the interview also contributed to the collection of data on proxemics. However, some drawbacks of interviewing participants in their homes were discovered later, during fieldwork.

Often the wives of my male participants wanted to sit beside their husbands and to engage in the conversation during the actual interviews. Although I always tried to welcome them to speak if they desired to do so, this sometimes disrupted the flow of the interviews. For instance, one participant's wife did not seem to care about tape-recording. She would often make noise during interviews and asked us to stop talking so that she can watch Korean videotapes with us. This problem has something to do with social space in a Korean house. In general, the living room is used as a multi-purpose social space common to all the family members. Closer observation demonstrates that family members often spend most of their time in the living room, even when each has his or her own room in the house. Privacy is not a term that is familiar and respected among Korean family members living under the same roof. Hence, it was very natural and common for me to interview a participant in his or her living room with other family members coming

and going all the time. Although I knew it was not the best place for taping interviews, I was also aware that it was a comfortable and informal setting for the participant to engage in conversations. Once, when I stayed overnight in a participant's house, I found a chance to interview the youngest son, who was still living with his parents. While I was audiotaping the interviews in the dining room surrounded by my participant's grandchildren, I suddenly realized that the older son, in his mid forties, brought his camcorder and started to videotape our interview scene. He was even proudly showing the rewound tape on the camera screen to his nieces and nephews. I was stunned by his action but continued the interview. One might wonder about his nonsensical behavior, but it seemed obvious to me that he was merely enjoying his spontaneously chosen activity without any awareness that I was a researcher and the family members the researched.

Empty classrooms in the Korean senior school were used from time to time as a mediating place for interviewing. Other interview locations were a McDonald's restaurant, Korean restaurants, an office in the Korean Welfare Center, and even a car in a parking lot of the Korean senior school. Several participants allowed me to stay one or two nights in their houses in order to develop rapport, make closer observations, and conduct in-depth interviews. The one participant who did not want to invite me to his house insisted on meeting at McDonald's near the senior school. Meeting in a fast food restaurant was challenging because of constant noise in the background. On one occasion, while I was recording the interviews in a rather quiet environment, a group of children rushed in and created a great deal of noise for a while. We finally had to move to another table to find a quieter seat, but my participant did not seem to be bothered by the noise and interruption.

I conducted follow-up interviews to gain more information and to further probe unclear and inexplicit statements by participants from the previous interviews. Although the numbers and the amount of time for face to face interviews varied, each participant finished three to four interviews with a total of six to nine hours of audiotaping, depending on the individual circumstances. I shared interpretations of the interview data with participants as a form of member-checking to establish trustworthiness (Patton, 1990). Four participants shared thoughts and opinions by telephone. To follow up some specific questions that emerged during the data analysis process, I also conducted telephone interviews when needed. At the beginning of each telephone interview, I asked the participant's permission to record the interview.

All information collected through interviews was kept confidential. Participants were invited to converse freely. The interview protocol (see Appendix B) consisted of three main questions and several subquestions to give participants "something to push off against" or to "discuss phenomena that do not come readily to mind or speech" (McCracken, 1988, p. 35). For instance, I encouraged them to elaborate on their experience with a specific event or incident. Each interview question dealt with one or more research questions during the series of interviews. Research questions explored through the interview questions were listed in the parentheses in the interview protocol.

All interviews were conducted by the researcher and took place over a period of four months in 2000. Data were collected via audio-taped, open-ended interviews, daily time diary, field notes, and other documents such as journals. Observations were preserved as field notes, and I gave special attention to proxemics. For instance, during interview visits, I noted the style of furniture and house decoration. With participants'

permission, I also took photos of cultural artifacts (e.g., Korean dolls, Korean paintings, or Korean furniture) displayed in the house. The interview data included Korean transcripts of experiences, opinions, and feelings. I maintained a journal to record my own reflections, as well as to comment on nontaped verbal and nonverbal behaviors and the environment. Direct and closer observation of participants' daily leisure activities (e.g., watching videotapes, attending Kye meetings, Korean senior school, community picnics, etc.) allowed me to describe their activities, behaviors, actions, and interpersonal interactions. I kept field notes about my observations, proxemics, and the interview process and wrote them up as promptly as possible after interacting with participants. I kept my field notes in English for convenience.

Data Analysis Procedures

As Hurh and Kim (1984) acknowledged in their study, a translation between different languages, particularly between Western and non-Western languages, has been an issue for cross-cultural and ethnicity research. With no specific guidelines to follow to lessen linguistic and conceptual problems in translating, my personal struggle and experiences with translation issues have provided some direction. First, I believe that the best way to keep the meaning of what was said in the original data would have been to use the original Korean transcripts for data analysis and avoid translating. Nevertheless, I ended up translating a big portion of the raw data transcribed in Korean for the English reader. Communication was particularly important between the researcher and the committee chair, who was closely involved throughout the research process, but did not know the Korean language.

Some participants introduced short English phrases themselves while speaking in Korean. After living in an English-speaking country so long, they found some ideas or expressions easier to express in English. I myself am more comfortable using certain English words even when conversing with Koreans. I therefore analyzed data in both languages, in a way that preserves the original meanings and expressions. Most of the time, however, I analyzed raw data as translated into English for coding and categorizing. Second, specific sentences and paragraphs of original data in Korean were translated to English on a coding table for each participant (see Appendix F) for the purpose of organizing data and illustrating the data with direct quotations. To code, categorize, and generate themes, I employed what I called a "gradual language translation process" since it moved gradually from Korean to English. The primary intention was to stay with Korean transcripts as closely as possible during the data analysis process. Hence, the initial data analysis began with Korean transcripts, using both Korean and English for coding and categorizing. I kept Korean words for coding and categorizing until I came up with an equivalent English translation. If an English translation did not seem to capture a cultural meaning of the Korean word, I remained with the original word, as will be seen in such examples as *Jeong* and *Nun-Chi* in Chapter 4.

To manage data effectively and systematically throughout the research process, I first made a profile table that contained, for each participant, a pseudonym, age, year of immigration, living arrangement condition, education, occupation before and after immigration, number of children, religion, and meeting place (see Table 1). This provided me with easy access for any given purpose during data analysis and interpretation. I made a file folder for each participant that contains data from time

diaries, interviews, field notes, journals, and photos of proxemics, as soon as they were collected. My thoughts, ideas, reflections, insights, and hunches were kept in memos to be used for data analysis and interpretation.

I applied the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) for data analysis. The basic strategy of the method is to constantly compare data from one participant to another and from one time to the next. In other words, a set of data from one participant in my study contained time diaries, interviews, field notes, and proxemics with journals and documents as optional data. This data set was first analyzed within each individual case and then compared with each subsequent case analysis. Therefore, constant comparison of the data occurred within and between data sets. For this study, I first employed “within case” analysis and then “cross-case” analysis. Accordingly, the codes and categories generated for each case were revealed as a result of considering each subsequent case.

Since data analysis in qualitative research is an ongoing process (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984), mine started after the first biographical information was collected from the first participant. The data were recorded on a log table for convenience. As soon as the daily time diary was returned from the first participant, I began to read the time diary to familiarize myself with the activity patterns and routines of the first participant. Questions were generated from the time diary to prompt interpretations during the following interviews.

The interviews were recorded on audiotape. Following is the specific description of a data analysis process adapted from Taylor and Bogdan (1984). Codes for each participant were used to provide anonymity and protect privacy (e.g., PF1, PM1). After

finishing each interview, the tapes were first transcribed by a paid-transcriptionist in the language spoken in the interviews. While listening to the tapes myself, I checked the transcripts and corrected any mistakes. I then read through the completed transcripts again to get to know the data thoroughly prior to engaging in intensive analysis. I read them repeatedly, underlining, memoing, and coding in the margins. During this process, I wrote general thoughts, ideas, themes, or hunches, mainly in English and occasionally in Korean. While writing memos and coding, I used various colors of highlighters to mark on quotations that have relevance to daily activities, particularly focusing on free time leisure activities.

While looking for tentatively emerging themes, patterns, and clusters in the data, I paid attention to vocabularies, recurring activities, meanings, perceptions, feelings, stories, topics of conversations, and proverbs (cf. Spradley, 1980). The constant comparative method helped me construct subcategories when starting to read the first interview transcript or the first set of field notes (Merriam, 1998). After engaging in some preliminary data analysis, I categorized all themes, concepts, and clusters identified and developed during the initial analysis. After I derived a number of coding categories, I went over the category structure again to combine or eliminate overlapping categories. I then assigned a number or letter to each coding category to use in the data analysis process. During this initial data analysis process, I listened again to as many audiotapes as needed to identify meanings and expressions revealed by tones and pitches of voices.

I started more intensive data analysis by coding with the assigned numbers or letters to all transcripts, field notes, documents, and other materials. Colored markers were used to visually distinguish assigned categories, which were later sorted out by

grouping each category. While coding the data, I refined the coding categories by adding, expanding, collapsing, and redefining as necessary to accommodate the data. The categories changed several times from the original list. For instance, the original category for "experience of *Jeong*" was "shared experience." More subcategories such as caring, friendship, shared information, attachment, and shared bonding were added to the original category and developed, but later all were combined into one final category, experience of *Jeong*, a meaning shared by all subcategories.

Some data were coded in multiple categories, depending on the richness and inclusive meanings of the data. Because no computerized data analysis program was available in Korean, I manually sorted and assembled all the data by category. I then went over the remaining data that were excluded from the analysis to confirm their irrelevance to other categories and to create new categories to accommodate these data as appropriate. The refined categories of themes and concepts, systematically sorted, helped explain and interpret the data.

I also created a coding table for each participant that contained four columns: (1) activity, (2) coding and interpretations along with relevant quotations, (3) cultural significance, with relevant quotations, and (4) defining conditions (language, transportation, age, gender, living arrangement, religion) with relevant quotations (see Appendix F). Categories were identified from codes generated within each case and then were compared with those of other cases in creating new categories. Finally, data were sorted by activity. Each activity was then analyzed separately. This was done to triangulate the meanings associated with each activity with the meanings generated within and across the individual cases.

In paying special attention to cultural meanings implied in the research data, I kept in mind an observation by Altheide and Johnson (1994) that tacit knowing is inner understanding of human experience that language cannot articulate, “when action is taken that is not understood, when understanding is offered without articulation, and when conclusions are apprehended without an argument” (p. 492). I used experiences, insights, and reflections that I have developed by living in the cultures of Korea and America. Tacit understandings and intuition helped me interpret the behaviors and actions of older Korean Americans who also have lived in two different cultures. Although I depended on stories and direct quotations from interview data provided by the participants for data analysis, I further employed an interpretivist approach (*verstehen* understanding) to look for “culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 67) of older Korean Americans.

Negative or discrepant case analyses were used to shape and refine the findings that were added to the main themes that emerged (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & Steinmetz, 1991). For instance, the data first revealed that “freedom from *Nun-Chi* (intuitive speculation) and *Che-Myeon* (face)” in Korean culture were translated as “sense of freedom” in American culture. On other occasions, the data demonstrated that the sense of freedom was constrained by the cultural notions as an inhibiting factor. Nevertheless, this negative case (the *diminution* of a form of cultural influence) in the same category helped enrich the categories and data representation.

To increase trustworthiness of the data, interpretations of research findings were also shared with participants. Due to geographical distance, I arranged telephone interviews as a form of member-checking (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). I had doubts as to

how participants would respond to my requests for further phone interviews, but four of the six participants agreed. These four were generally comfortable with my interpretations.

The credibility and rigor of the analysis was further strengthened by an additional source. A Korean fellow researcher who has been educated in both Korea and the United States assisted in exploring cultural interpretations of the data throughout the research process. He and I met weekly for several months to discuss my interpretations of the data. I used coding tables on each participant in order to clarify our conflicting thoughts and cultural ambiguities. This discourse was particularly beneficial for confirming observations and exploring uncertainties.

Researcher Bias and Position

One advantage of studying older Korean Americans as a Korean researcher is that I understand the culture, norms, and history of this ethnic group, speak the Korean language, and share the same physical features. These conditions and shared experiences may have encouraged the research participants to feel comfortable with and trust me and to share more details about themselves and experiences, providing considerably more in-depth data than they might have with a non-Korean researcher (cf. Matsuoka, 1993). Tennekes (1971) asserted that research focusing on human behavior in a foreign culture should be investigated and understood in the context of that culture. In other words, to understand the cultural context of human behavior, a researcher should live and share the same cultural codes, feelings of empathy, meanings, and experiences.

However, no researcher can be free from his or her own biases and subjectivity. Admitting that the researcher brings a “cultural self” into the field, he or she is required

to bring sufficient reflexivity to minimize biases (Olesen, 1994). As I share the culture and language of the research participants, my intention was not to avoid but to be aware of these issues during my involvement in the research process. Specifically, I needed to pay special attention to my thought process in filtering through interview data and their interpretations. Though I attempted to be objective in my interpretation, my belief in the value of ethnic identity preservation and some skepticism toward cultural integration in the beginning had to be carefully managed while looking for categories and themes in the data analysis process.

My potential biases also reflected my gender, race, ethnicity, and culture. A main issue in relation to bias may begin with my "emic" view. As an insider in the Korean culture, I may not have been very circumspect about my own assumptions and predispositions. My familiarity with the culture, language, and people may have led me to overlook the feelings, meanings, and experiences of the participants with the assumption that "We are in the same boat." Vague and unarticulated expressions by participants were often followed by a sentence like "You know what I mean," an assumption that they share implicit cultural understandings. Therefore, I tried to maintain an "objective" distance from the culture and language of the Korean participants to help me moderate the bias of assumptions and generalizations based on personal experiences or indirect knowledge. As Dilthey (1976) noted, researchers can moderate their bias and subjectivity by learning and knowledge about themselves and their world.

I endeavored to manage my biases in two ways. First, I planned to form an advisory group consisting of several older Korean Americans who were unwilling to be research participants but demonstrated some interest in my research. However, I later

discovered that establishing an advisory group was unrealistic with this population due to the lack of understanding, support, and knowledge for the research. I instead formed a discussion group with a Korean fellow researcher who has been educated in both Korea and the United States. This cooperative approach helped to further strengthen the credibility and rigor of the research. Second, I kept a diary and used a memoing process to continuously ask myself how my biases might be affecting my interpretations.

In spite of these necessary safeguards I felt that my experience with Korean culture and people, both in the past and since I have been a graduate student, provided a clear advantage for conducting this research. Since the beginning of my graduate work in leisure studies, my deep interest in lifestyles of older Korean immigrants has increased. I had some interaction with this population during the survey data collection for my masters' thesis. I was able to get involved in activities and programs designed for the elderly in a senior housing complex for several months. Because of the research questions for my masters' study, I did not need to enter individuals' daily lives in detail (c.f., Kim, 1994). Moreover, although I am Korean, I was still very much like a stranger to them. Some reluctance was no doubt due also to gender and age differences. Cultural norms and traditions for this population would make me, a younger woman interviewer, somewhat of an anomaly. I perceived that some of participants, mostly males, felt uncomfortable because I am a female and comparatively young. They demonstrated defensive reactions to questions about very ordinary matters, such as their daily routines. For example, when I asked a male participant to describe his daily life, he demonstrated a suspicious reaction characterized by either circuitousness or displeasure, as if something very private and secret in his life were being probed by an intruder. Nevertheless, gender

and age issues notwithstanding, I discovered through my volunteer work that older Koreans are mostly very open and cooperative once they know you personally.

During my master's research, I had participated in activities and programs offered by the senior center in the apartment complex. At other times, I went door to door to ask them to answer my survey questions. I tried to develop a rapport with them and also wanted to hear more about their daily life experience in the United States. I developed and continued the relationship with several older Koreans in the apartment complex and visited personally several times after completion of the data collection. These relationships were strengthened further when I started to work as a volunteer at a senior school for older Korean Americans that was established a year later. At the senior school, I recognized the faces of many people with whom I did my master's research. This volunteer work enabled me to continue and strengthen the relationship with many older Korean Americans at the school. Every Saturday morning I drove 90 minutes to the senior school to attend a general meeting at 9:30 am. and teach English from 10:00 am-11: 30 am. Lunch was served between 12:30 and 1:00 p.m. I also taught an aerobics class for the students for several months. I developed a rapport with the students by helping with lunch preparation, having lunch with them, and giving them rides home after school. Through my observation of and interaction with the population, I was gradually able to replace my status as a total stranger with a somewhat more familiar and comfortable one.

Delimitations

While generalization is never the purpose of qualitative research, it should be noted that the participants in this study were from a select group based on age (65+), time in the U.S. (15 years), first generation immigrant status, levels of English fluency, and

legal status (American citizen). These selection criteria enhanced and strengthened the internal validity of the research process for purposes of analyzing and interpreting the daily leisure experience of these older Korean immigrants, but they will need to be considered when drawing conclusions about the experiences of older Korean immigrants more generally.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter begins with individual profiles that introduce readers to the study participants, providing information on background characteristics and daily leisure activity patterns of each. Next, data are presented to answer the study's four research questions: (1) What are the meanings that older Korean Americans associate with leisure (*Yeo-Ga*) and other social activities? (2) How are leisure activities (*Yeo-Ga-Whahl-Dong*) and social interactions related to previous (pre-immigration) lifestyles and to ethnic preservation in older Korean Americans? (3) How are leisure activities and social interactions related to the cultural integration of older Korean Americans? and (4) How do living arrangement and gender contribute to the relationship between leisure activities and ethnic preservation or cultural integration of older Korean Americans? And finally, the most prominent leisure activities are analyzed separately to identify individual and situational variations in meanings. Thus this chapter will consist of six sections: individual profiles, specific responses to each of the four research questions, and further analysis of variations in the meanings of specific leisure activities.

Individual Case Profiles

Individual profiles of six older Korean American participants contain the following information: immigration history, family relations, living arrangement, personal characteristics, and daily leisure activities (see Table 1). Although several participants provided their choice of an American pseudonym, I finally decided to stay

TABLE 1

Profiles for Research Participants

Gender	Age (Year)	Immig. Year (age)	Living arrang.	Living with	Education	Before/After Occupation	Children	Religion	Meeting Place
Ms. Kim (F)	65 (1936)	1984 (48)	House	Husband, sons, & grand-Children	High school (vocational school)	Beauty shop=> Beauty shop at home	2 Sons	Christian	House visit, Korean restaurant
Mr. Suh (M)	72 (1929)	1980 (51)	House	Wife, & two sons	College	College Instructor, business => Building cleaning	5 Sons 5 Daughters	Christian	House visit, Korean restaurant, Korean welfare center
Ms. Park (F)	67 (1934)	1976 (42)	House	Husband	High school	Housewife => Grocery store	2 Sons 1 Daughter	Christian	House visit

Gender	Age (Year)	Immig. Year (age)	Living arrang.	Living with	Education	Before/After Occupation	Children	Religion	Meeting Place
Mr. Han (M)	73 (1928)	1975 (47)	Senior Apt. (1994)	Wife	College	Engineer => Assistant engineer	2 Daughters 1 Son	N/A	Apt. visit, Senior school
Ms. Lee (F)	71 (1930)	1973 (43)	Senior Apt.	Alone	High school	None => Factory	1 Son	Buddhist in Korea, Christian	Apt. visit, Senior school
Mr. Song (M)	77 (1924)	1965 (41)	House	Wife	College	Engineer => Engineer	2 Daughters	Christian	McDonald's, Senior school

with Korean pseudonyms (e.g., Chul-Soo Kim or Young-Hee Lee), because applying American names to first generation older Korean immigrants seemed somewhat awkward and even demeaning. Although non-Korean readers may have difficulty in matching unfamiliar Korean names with each individual, this approach will hopefully enable readers to develop a more personalized understanding of each participant as individual stories unfold. The individual profiles are introduced in order of the year each participant emigrated to the U.S., starting from the latest (1984) to the earliest (1965) year, disregarding gender and age.

Ms. Soon-Hee Kim

Ms. Kim came to the U.S. in March of 1984 at the age of 48. She is the first daughter of eight siblings, all of whom are living in Korea. Her husband decided to emigrate to the U.S. at the invitation of his best friend, who runs a small business in the U.S. She and her husband have two sons, 37 and 30 years old, who still live with them. The older son is divorced with two daughters, seven and nine years old, who are taken care of by Ms. Kim. Although the house sometimes is noisy and messy because of the children, Ms. Kim likes to live with her granddaughters because she does not feel lonely that way.

Ms. Kim has lived in her American neighborhood for 15 years. Although she does not have any American neighbors with whom she keeps close contact, she seems to know almost everybody living around her house. She can describe each neighbor and knows what kind of car he or she drives. In spite of the language barrier, which limits social interaction with her neighbors, she is able to communicate with her neighbors by using body language to get help in an emergency, such as when she locked herself out of the

house during her husband's hospitalization. Although answering the phone is her biggest fear when nobody is at home, Ms. Kim said that she would learn the language to the extent necessary, such as if she had to take care of her sick husband in a hospital.

Ms. Kim, now 65 years old, earned a beautician's certificate in Korea when she was young. As a hobby and a way to interact with Koreans, she runs an informal beauty shop in her living room, particularly for older Koreans who don't have enough money to go to a more expensive beauty shop. Sometimes Ms. Kim's husband provides a ride for older Korean women who live in a senior housing complex apartment so that they can come to her house to have their hair done. She often fixes lunch for her older Korean customers if they come during the mealtime. In the past, Ms. Kim worked as a cleaning woman in the evenings for 10 years and in a plastic factory as a night shift worker for two years until her husband opened his own business in 1991.

Ms. Kim claims that she and her husband had great fun until her husband got sick with a heart problem several years ago. Currently, her daily lifestyle is essentially limited to her home because of her husband's health. She remembers her life in Korea, where she did everything she wanted because her husband was atypically liberal and did not control her private life at all. Ms. Kim had freedom to visit her friends whenever she wanted, which was not common for Korean housewives in the past. She remembers that they were financially well off and traveled a lot.

Ms. Kim starts her day with morning prayers and spends some time doing housework, including cleaning. She casually said that although she has a vacuum cleaner, she still prefers to clean her wooden floors in the old Korean way, which means she has to kneel down and wipe the floor with a small piece of cotton fabric. Around 11 a.m. Ms.

Kim goes for a walk with her husband around their neighborhood. Sometimes, she goes shopping with him and has lunch out. Afternoon hours are often filled with various social activities such as attending a *Kye* meeting in a Korean restaurant, attending a wedding in the church, stopping by her son's work place with her granddaughters, or seeing a doctor for a check-up. After dinner, Ms. Kim regularly spends her time watching one or two Korean videotapes and goes to bed about 11 p.m. after night prayers. On Sundays, she goes to a Korean church with her family and is an active member of several volunteer groups in the church. Ms. Kim has a good singing voice, and in the past when there were parties for older Korean Americans, she used to be invited to sing for them on the stage. One thing I noticed during my visits was that either the Korean radio channel or Korean videotapes were on all day in the house.

Ms. Kim seemed to have a very optimistic and warm-hearted personality, which was shown by her care and kindness for other people. Ms. Kim lives like a Korean with respect to food preparation and lifestyle, although at breakfast she usually has cereal or a sandwich for convenience. She is very attached to other Koreans and the Korean culture. Even though she seldom interacts with Americans in daily life, she does not want to isolate herself from the host culture. She feels very comfortable, enjoys both cultures, and has a good impression of American culture. Currently Ms. Kim depends on her husband for many things, such as writing checks, but she is confident that she would learn how to do it if she had nobody to depend on. Nevertheless, Ms. Kim mentioned that "although I live in the U.S., I have kept and live by Korean lifestyle within the boundary of American society."

Mr. Man-Ki Suh

In 1980 Mr. Suh, a father of ten children, was invited to the U.S. by his brother-in-law, who had acquired American citizenship. To provide a better educational opportunity for his children, Mr. Suh, then 51 years old, flew to Chicago with his wife and seven children. Soon afterward, two older sons and their families joined the rest of the family. The oldest son, who was left behind to take care of family matters in Korea, finally reunited with the family several years ago.

At first the family lived in a suburb of Chicago, where they found no other Koreans. They spoke little English. After two months they moved their large family into a three-bedroom rental apartment, in violation of rental codes. They had very little money, but had many Korean neighbors in this urban section of Chicago. After three years of hard work, they had saved enough money to buy an apartment complex where the family could live and also lease seven of the apartments to other people. During the next six years they gradually changed the tenancy to Korean.

In the mid-1980s, after visiting his oldest daughter and her family in the study city, Mr. Suh decided to move to the city, particularly to enjoy warmer weather. After selling the Chicago apartment complex, he settled down, where they live now. Once a college instructor in Korea, Mr. Suh first got a job operating a sewing machine in a sewing plant in the U.S., where he often socialized with other Korean workers. In 1989, he got a job sorting mail for an American company, which he held for 10 years. Subsequently he took on a second job. After working from 6 to 2 p.m., he would go to work with his oldest son, who had recently immigrated to the U. S., with Mr. Suh's youngest son, and a grandson. They cleaned buildings until 8 p.m. each evening and then

they returned home and generally had dinner together, since the oldest son lives in an apartment only several blocks from Mr. Suh's house. Mr. Suh said that he asked his oldest son to move out after one year of living in his house so that his son and grandchildren would learn to be independent, as is crucial in the American lifestyle. At the age of 71, Mr. Suh retired after working for 10 years, being an age that allowed him to receive Social Security benefits.

Mr. Suh and his wife have very close relationships with all of their children. Except for the third son in Chicago, all of his married children live nearby, from several blocks to 30 minutes distance from his house. His youngest son, who is unmarried, still lives with Mr. Suh. He helps with daily chores and errands that require a certain degree of English language ability and takes care of sorting the incoming mail. During my visit, the weather worsened and a snowstorm warning was issued. Mr. Suh's wife called each of her children and told them not to go out to drive because the roads were very dangerous. She seemed to spend most of each day on the phone talking to her adult children.

Mr. Suh and his wife were very comfortable people to interact with, and I felt they had not changed much even after living in another culture so long. In his physical appearance, Mr. Suh is the typical Korean male--conservative and authoritative, with no facial expression. His face hides emotions very well, but his words and behavior show care for the other person. During my visits to Mr. Suh's house, including two nights staying, I experienced the hospitality that is familiar and common to guests in the Korean culture.

As a result of living in two different cultures, preserving old Korean traditions and adjusting to American culture, Mr. Suh sometimes expresses contradictory thoughts and

ideas that were noticed in other participants as well. He is currently serving as president of a Korean American senior organization and *Kye* club, and he is a member of a funeral organization for church members who pass away. Mr. Suh seemed fortunate in that all of his adult children are well, without any major problems or issues except one son's divorce. He seemed to be a mixed figure: a person of authority as a head of the family and one of humility as a servant of the Korean community in several capacities.

A leisure activity Mr. Suh frequently enjoys nowadays is watching Korean videotapes with his wife in the evenings. With modern technology almost all current Korean TV programs or Korean movies are available in the States after they are released in Korea. The kinds of videotapes Mr. Suh and his wife often enjoyed watching were soap opera melodramas or mini-series TV programs. Mr. Suh would go to stores or farmers' markets run by Koreans to rent videotapes and would exchange them with his adult children. In the store, almost all kinds of recent videotapes are available, from headline news to home dramas, movies, and music. Most videotapes are melodramas copied from TV programs currently airing in Korea. One tape takes about two hours to view, and he watches five to seven tapes a week. During my stay with them, I spent more time watching Korean videotapes than conversing and interviewing**.** As noted earlier, Mr. Suh helped organize a monthly *Kye* meeting several years ago for both social and financial purposes. He still participates mainly for socializing. Playing golf is another activity Mr. Suh enjoys, mostly with friends but sometimes with family members on weekends. He is registered as a member of a golf club, consisting of older Korean Americans. The members meet every Saturday morning to play golf. Mr. Suh participates in a monthly golf tournament to compete and socialize with other Korean seniors.

After a couple of phone calls, I was invited to Mr. Suh's house, which was about one and a half hours from where I live. Mr. Suh very considerately met me at a nearby gas station to lead me to his house. Eight of his ten children lived in his six-bedroom house, moving out after marriage. The moment I entered the house, I could smell Korean food. The couple casually invited me to their dining room for lunch. Everything happened very naturally, and I felt comfortable. Although it is very common in Korean culture to prepare the meal for a guest if the person visits around the mealtime, I did not expect the custom to be observed by Korean Americans who were partly accustomed to American culture in which a formal invitation is often issued. Their hospitality demonstrated to me a degree of attachment to Korean culture. It was obvious that they were taking the role of parents with regard to me, as it is a common relationship between the old and the young in Korean culture. This relationship continued throughout our interactions. For instance, when we went to a Korean restaurant after an interview, I wanted to treat him to thank him for his time, but he did not allow me to pay because he regards me as a poor student. It is a Korean custom that the older or the oldest person usually takes care of the bill if a group of people goes to a restaurant together to eat. There is no such word as "Dutch treat," in Korean, though this tradition may have changed somewhat, particularly among the younger generations.

Ms. Young-Ja Park

Ms. Park was born in 1934 in Korea. She has only one older sister, living in Korea. With her husband and mother-in-law Ms. Park emigrated to the United States in 1976, at the invitation of her husband's younger brother. Her husband is the oldest son of eight siblings, six of whom live in the U.S. and two of whom are dead. Ms. Park's

husband was the last sibling to come to the U.S. Without any specific plans for living in a new country, Ms. Park said that they just came to join the other siblings because it became too lonely to live without any immediate family members in Korea. Ms. Park was a housewife before immigration, and her husband was a high school teacher in Korea. After immigration Ms. Park worked in a sewing factory for 11 months, and her husband performed manual labor. Later they opened a grocery store that turned out to be very successful. Unfortunately, Ms. Park's husband had a stroke two years ago, immediately after he retired from running a grocery store for over 16 years.

Ms. Park's mother-in-law lived with them until she recently passed away after living a healthy and contented life for over 90 years. The couple has three children: two sons and a daughter. Although Ms. Park now lives only with her husband, for many years four generations of the family lived under the same roof: her mother-in-law, her husband, her oldest son and his wife, and several grandchildren. The oldest son wanted to live with his parents even after his marriage for seven years, but decided to move out because his children's teacher recommended a nuclear family environment for them. He eventually moved to New York for his business. Currently, Ms. Park's second son lives near her house and helps out with any errands or problems his parents encounter in daily life, such as sorting out mail and doctor's visits. Although Ms. Park has never written a check with her own hands, she did not show any worry and said that she will learn how to do it when time comes to be independent. The second son visits his parents every weekend with his wife and children and spends time with them. Ms. Park commented that although she enjoys having her own time for reading and prayers and being free from caring and obligations, she thinks living only with her husband in the house is too quiet and lonely

and feels no joy in life because she no longer hears the loud and noisy voices of her grandchildren.

For over 16 years Ms. Park has lived in a house in a predominantly white American neighborhood. She does not yet have any close neighbors with whom she interacts. Although she has little meaningful interaction with her American neighbors, Ms. Park says they do greet her politely, with kind smiles. Most of her friends are Korean church members. Recently, Ms. Park limited her daily activities because of her husband's health; she used to be a transportation provider for her friends whenever they went shopping. Although she is free from the transportation barriers that many other older Korean women face, language does present difficulties for her. She said that she still has difficulty in answering phone calls from hospitals about doctor's appointments for her husband.

When I visited Ms. Park's house for the first time, she and her husband were very genuine and showed interest in sharing their life. Ms. Park kept one of their rooms as a "Korean room" decorated with all traditional Korean-style paintings, pictures, ornaments, and bedding. Ms. Park seemed to be a devout Christian with a generous and considerate personality. Although she seemed to be a very private person, she knew how to appreciate what she had earned and liked to share with other people. That must be one of the reasons for their financial success running a grocery store in a poor African American neighborhood. Ms. Park remembered that she and her husband never hesitated to give out food or gifts whenever the neighbors came to ask for donations for their special events or for help with personal needs, especially on holidays. In return, the African American neighbors watched over and protected her store from strangers or robbery.

Ms. Park's daily routine varies depending on the schedule for the day, except for several daily activities in which she seems to be very regularly involved. She gets up at 6:00 a.m. to attend daily mass at an American church near her house. The couple used to attend the Korean church at a distance, but Ms. Park said that they chose the convenience over language comfort after her husband's illness. Because the order of the service is universal around the world, Ms. Park takes her Korean daily missal book with her, which helps her feel comfortable during the service. She sits together with a few other Koreans who come for the mass. But they prefer to go to their Korean church on Sundays so that they can speak Korean and interact with their friends. After having bread for breakfast, Ms. Park, with her husband and a friend, goes to the YMCA for a water aerobics class. After lunch she spends time doing household chores and has some quiet time for herself. In the afternoon, she goes out to the backyard to water vegetables in their small garden where her mother-in-law used to grow various vegetables as a hobby. Ms. Park loves to listen to religious audiotapes while working in the yard. In the evenings, she watches one or two Korean videotapes with her husband and goes to bed after night prayers. With very close bonding with their adult children, Ms. Park and her husband often spend time traveling with their children and grandchildren. Through her church Ms. Park and her husband have traveled to well-known pilgrimage sites in several foreign countries.

Mr. Nam-Soo Han

Mr. Han, a 72-year-old man, lives in a senior housing apartment complex where the largest population of Korean older Americans resides in the city. When Mr. Han talked about the Korean residents or their lifestyle, he would usually distinguish himself from other older Korean residents. For instance, Mr. Han seemed to enjoy talking about

how other Koreans in the complex spent their time, but he considered himself different from the rest in almost every respect. Mr. Han often liked to use English terms and sentences, while speaking Korean.

Before retiring, Mr. Han was a well-educated mechanical engineer, among the so-called elite in Korea. At the age of 46, he decided to emigrate to the United States with his wife and three children, who were in elementary, middle, and high school by then. Unlike other immigrants, Mr. Han had an opportunity to live in the U.S. for a short period for his work. Later, that experience helped him decide to emigrate to America. Somewhat frustrated by the social and political system and situation in Korea and with other personal dilemmas and conflicts, Mr. Han seemed to have no affection for his motherland nor regrets about leaving, as shown in the fact that he never returned there again, although he still has several siblings living in Korea.

Mr. Han arrived in Chicago in May of 1975 and worked as an assistant engineer in an American company. In addition to his full-time job, Mr. Han held a part-time job as a cleaning and maintenance man in the evening. Not surprisingly, his children would go to work with him after school. Unlike Mr. Suh, who disclosed his cleaning job from the beginning of our meeting without showing any shame or embarrassment, Mr. Han never brought up this subject independently. Through the series of interviews with Mr. Han, I discovered that the “office work” from 5 to 7:30 p.m. on his daily time diary meant a cleaning job. Once it was unraveled, Mr. Han voluntarily explained the differences in his duty from other cleaning and maintenance jobs. He further shared his knowledge of the history of cleaning and maintenance jobs among Korean immigrants. Mr. Han’s wife ran a dry cleaning store to support the children’s education in prestigious private universities,

and Mr. Han joined her after his early retirement. Because of growing competition among cleaning businesses, their business was not successful. Then they moved to the study city.

Mr. Han has three children: two daughters and a son. The son, a lawyer, is apparently married to a Jewish American lawyer and has two children. Although Mr. Han showed great pride in his son, he did not reveal his son's interracial marriage at the beginning of our conversation, just as he did not mention his part-time cleaning job. Once it emerged during the interview, he demonstrated a very positive attitude about interracial marriage and did not have any complaints or unhappiness about his daughter-in-law. In a yearly reunion, immediate family members get together in a summerhouse owned by his son in another state. Strangely, Mr. Han seemed not to have any contact with his own siblings in Korea after his immigration to the US. More specifically, his relationship to other siblings is completely disconnected, although he claimed to be the oldest son in the family, a role that normally entails duties and responsibilities in Korean culture.

In 1994, Mr. Han moved into a senior housing apartment complex with his wife. He organized a community meeting for residents, among whom 150 out of 500 are Korean. He served as a community leader for about two years, in addition to helping out Korean elders who live in the apartment complex. Mr. Han usually settles problems other Korean residents encounter in daily life and provides them an assistance that involves help with English language barriers. Mr. Han was very informative in that he has a very good understanding and knowledge of Korean immigrants' history and their lives in America. Although Mr. Han consciously differentiated himself from other Koreans living in the same senior housing complex, he said that he visited all the senior housing apartments with older Korean residents to find a place for him and his wife to move into.

Mr. Han is recently very aware of culture-related issues and knowledge as he teaches on the subject with older Korean Americans at the Korean senior school. Mr. Han feels very comfortable at American parties and knows exactly how to interact with Americans. He does not like to go to Korean gatherings because he said the guests come late and are too talkative and noisy.

Mr. Han was one of only two participants who filled out the daily time diary in English. Leisure activities Mr. Han enjoys are reading at home or at the mall while his wife shops, exercise at the YMCA, traveling with friends, watching American TV programs, listening to music, and singing. Mr. Han considers reading his greatest joy in life. Exercise is another leisure activity on which Mr. Han puts a lot of emphasis. Although Mr. Han seemed not to value watching Korean videotapes, particularly melodramas, as a free time leisure activity, the record on his daily time diary written for the particular week demonstrated that he spends at least one to two hours per day watching Korean videotapes with his wife.

Ms. Yoo-Mee Lee

When I first met Ms. Lee at a Korean senior school, she allowed me to drive her back home so that we could have time to talk in her apartment, one of the high-rise senior apartments. On the way back, Ms. Lee and her friend stopped by a mall to shop. They seemed to enjoy window-shopping, feeling somewhat comfortable walking around in the sea of Americans. When necessary, Ms. Lee approached someone to ask for directions. Daily communication does not seem to be a big barrier to her interaction with other Americans, as she has lived in the U.S. for 28 years and has acquired basic English communication skills through work experiences in different American factories and by

taking English classes through community programs. After working for 18 years, Ms. Lee was involuntarily retired by the company and depends on her pension and Social Security for living. Her monthly income, about $500, barely covers her living expenses, without leaving any room for saving. Ms. Lee wishes to find any kind of part-time job in order to save some money for traveling, the activity she had enjoyed very much in the past. Partly giving up hope and partly accepting the reality, she fills up her day with different activities. She seldom shows feelings of excitement about these activities but seems content.

Ms. Lee married at the age of 20, but her husband disappeared soon after. She stayed with her parents for nine years and remarried. In 1973, after her husband's business went bankrupt and she found out that he had another woman, Ms. Lee came to the States at the invitation of her brother. She worked in a factory for six years in Chicago before moving to California. When Ms. Lee made a visit to Korea, she was introduced to a man whom she married, but her third marriage lasted only three years. Ms. Lee moved to the study city after working for ten years in California. She lived with her married son in a one-bedroom apartment for two years, but then her son moved out to an apartment, even though she cried at the thought of separating from her son. Ms. Lee now lives in a high-rise senior apartment building with about seven other Korean households, mostly single women. Ms. Lee is considered to be the spokesperson for other Korean residents in the building. Ms. Lee seems to be enjoying her role, although she humbly says that her English is not so good.

Ms. Lee has five siblings: two older brothers who died in Korea and one younger brother and two younger sisters living in the States. Her only son from the first marriage,

who is 50, picks her up every Sunday to go to church and drops her off after church. This seemed to be the only interaction between them. Unlike other family members, they seldom go out for lunch after church. The grown-up grandchildren do not speak Korean much, and the relationship with them also seemed to me to be very distant.

Ms. Lee, 71 years old, looks very young from a distance because of her still pretty face and a slim body that is attractive when she dresses up. She seemed reticent at first and has a very quiet voice and manner, but once she started to talk, I did not have a problem encouraging her to continue. Ms. Lee was Buddhist in Korea but became a Christian after her immigration because she said everybody goes to church in this country. Although she started to go to a Korean church for practical reasons--to ask for help and support from pastors and church members--she became very active in her church and has accumulated knowledge about the Bible.

I had an opportunity to closely observe Ms. Lee when I spent a night with her in her apartment. Ms. Lee starts her morning by tuning into a Korean radio channel. She loves to listen to a program called “Mr. Oh’s English Conversation” and takes notes about new English expressions to learn. Ms. Lee seemed to have a routine schedule for weekdays, watching videotapes with other older Korean women residents in the morning and afternoon. After breakfast, Ms. Lee and other Korean residents make their routine visits to the apartment of a Korean resident who owns a quality VCR, where they watch Korean videotapes together. Usually everybody goes back to her apartment for lunch after watching one videotape, which takes about two hours. Right after lunch, they gather to the same place one by one to watch more videotapes until dinnertime. In general, the Korean women residents watch three or four Korean videotapes, spending a total of six to

eight hours in this activity every day. In the evening after preparing dinner for herself, Ms. Lee spends time reading Korean newspapers, listening to Bible audio tapes, reading the Bible, talking with friends on the phone, doing calligraphy for the Korean senior school class, or watching American sports TV programs such as wrestling. Ms. Lee spends her Saturday morning hours in a Korean senior school, attending English, calligraphy, music, and aerobics classes. After classes lunch is served for the students in the school. The lunch menus are always very much traditional Korean food. The school offers students special activities, events, and food for major Korean holidays such as Full Moon Harvest Festival or New Year (in the lunar calendar). Ms. Lee spends her afternoons and evenings shopping, talking with friends, or watching videotapes. On Sundays, Ms. Lee spends most of her morning and afternoon hours in church, attending the service and meetings for the older group. In the evening after dinner, Ms. Lee listens to Korean radio programs and sometimes calls the radio station to answer the Bible quiz question given to the listeners. In fact, when I visited her apartment, Ms. Lee was very excited and proud to tell me that she had called and provided the right answers twice in a row the previous day.

Mr. Han-Sik Song

Mr. Song was born in 1924 in Korea. He emigrated to America in August of 1965, at the age of 41 with his wife and two daughters. My first impression of him was that he did not seem to enjoy talking with people. He was very quiet or rather reserved. But after spending more time talking with him, I learned that he enjoys answering questions, although he is not talkative. In a word, Mr. Song is sincere and serious, but

somewhat reticent in expressing his thoughts and opinions. He is a very private person and likes to spend time alone.

Mr. Song worked in the army in Korea as an English interpreter for 13 years and had an opportunity to come to the U.S. for training in the U.S. army for eight months. When Mr. Song speaks Korean, he naturally mixed in short English terms. However, he admitted that he still had difficulty in expressing emotions in English. Even without language barriers, Mr. Song did not feel that he could have close American friends. Mr. Song has lived in the U.S. for 36 years and has been an American citizen for 28 years. When he worked in an American company, Mr. Song and a Chinese worker were the only Asians among over 300 workers in his department. After living in the U.S. so long, Mr. Song feels that he is half Korean and half American. He added that if a Korean asked his nationality, he would say he is Korean, and if asked by an American, his answer would be “American.” With much awareness of his distinctive physical appearance, he concluded that he is 75 % Korean and 25 % American.

Mr. Song remembers that in Korea he had a hard time learning and adjusting to interpersonal interactions and relationships, particularly with regard to drinking at social gatherings with coworkers. For him, being forced to drink at such gatherings was a matter of such great pain that he would never be able to adjust. He concluded that his personality fits better into the American way of life, in which individual choice and privacy are appreciated. Currently, his two grown daughters live independently in the same city. The older daughter sometimes visits her parents with her American boyfriend. Mr. Song showed neither disapproval nor excitement about the possible interracial marriage.

Mr. Song's daily timetable demonstrates some routine regular activities. In the morning Mr. Song rides an exercise bicycle and does sit-ups. In the afternoon he jogs in his backyard and works with his fruit trees and plants. He spends two hours gardening and weeding. He mows the grass himself. Mr. Song always goes to McDonald's for lunch alone and reads American newspapers there. Other afternoon hours are filled with golf practice by himself, learning computer programs from his nephew, listening to classical music, reading books and newspapers, watching American TV, sorting out mail, going to mass, attending special seminars in his church, and sometimes watching Korean videotapes with his brother. Mr. Song seems to participate in almost all the daily activities alone. On Saturday mornings he devotes his time to teaching English in the Korean senior school. On Sundays, he goes to a Korean church and participates in church activities. He enjoys helping other older students in the Korean senior school who bring their mail for him to read and translate for them. Mr. Song is also a member of a Korean mountain climbing club. He loves to spend time reading, through which he learns new things. He likes to wear a hat with Korean letters on it when he goes out.

In Indiana for 20 years, Mr. Song attended an American church only on Sundays and did not engage in any other church activities. After moving to a southeast metropolitan city in 1993, he began going to a Korean church, where he became involved in church activities and now enjoys interacting with other church members. After his retirement, Mr. Song was looking for some volunteer work to contribute to society. But to his disappointment, it turned out that the American company to which he offered his services did not want him as a volunteer. He also tried to get into the mainstream society by attending an American senior center, but he felt uncomfortable there and eventually

stopped going. Currently he is involved in volunteer work for a Korean senior school and Korean service center. Mr. Song is gradually becoming more attached to the Korean community and is now interacting and spending more time with Koreans. For instance, he says that he now prefers to take his car to Korean rather than American mechanics because he enjoys interacting with the Koreans, who allow him to stay with them and ask questions while they fix the car.

Response to Research Question 1

To investigate research question 1, "What are the meanings that older Korean Americans associate with leisure (*Yeo-Ga*) and other social activities?" I elicited leisure experiences by reviewing a time diary that participants kept for three to seven days. A series of interviews conducted with each participant further elaborated and explained the daily activities listed on the time diary. Through coding and re-coding, several categories of experience were distinguishable. Collectively, these fall into two groups. The first is a personal psychosocial group that reflects the psychological and social uses of leisure that were not particularly culturally-oriented. In other words, while these experiences may have been culturally conditioned, they appeared to be more personally than culturally significant. In the second group, while the experiences described may have had some special psychological benefit, their significance seemed to be more clearly associated with matters of culture. After a brief overview of each of these categories, each will be considered in more depth in relation to the data that suggested these meanings.

Psychosocial Meanings

Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan

Older Korean Americans in this study seemed to enjoy various daily leisure activities as a means for "*Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*." *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* is an "emic" category (Geertz, 1983) in that the term was offered by a participant and consistently recognized by other participants. Literally, "*Ki-Bun*" means "a state of mind or atmosphere" and "*Chun-Whan*" means "transformation, change, or shift." Therefore, *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* can be interpreted as "shift in the state of mind" as a result of engaging in various activities, the changes could be simple or complex, deliberate or spontaneous. A similar expression people often used is "*Ba-Ram-Ssoi-Da*," meaning, roughly, "go out to get exposed to fresh air or atmosphere."

Although there is no research that has explored the relationship between *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* and leisure in Korean society, the data, to be discussed shortly, suggested that for older Korean Americans *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* is a meaningful part of their daily leisure activities. To some extent, the older Korean Americans in the study described their leisure activities as a tool for *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*, whether created intentionally or spontaneously. The research participants identified a variety of activities that may lead to *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*. They used both solitary and social activities for *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*, and activities could be intense and absorbing or casual and light-hearted. One participant (Ms. Lee) stated that she sometimes enjoys singing alone for *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*. Nevertheless, she admitted that "it is better to have *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* with other people than by yourself" because "it is better to talk and laugh with others." This statement suggests that social interactions occurring in a group setting may contribute

more effectively to *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* than solitary or self-focused activity. As one of the participants put it, *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* in a social gathering can be like "becoming tipsy and losing one's inhibition."

In short, activities people use for *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* could be anything from well-prepared and organized social activities to spontaneous, unplanned involvement in solitary activities. *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* can be characterized as a way of escape from a routine life, stress reduction, or relaxation through which people are refreshed and rejuvenated. People can achieve *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* in most active, social, and collective activities (e.g., drinking, singing, and dancing in a social gathering) but also in passive, personal, and solitary activities (e.g., reading, singing alone). For purposes of organizing the data that were generated, Figure 1 depicts four combinations of emotional intensity and social interaction. Each combination will be discussed as it reflects the meanings elicited through the interview process.

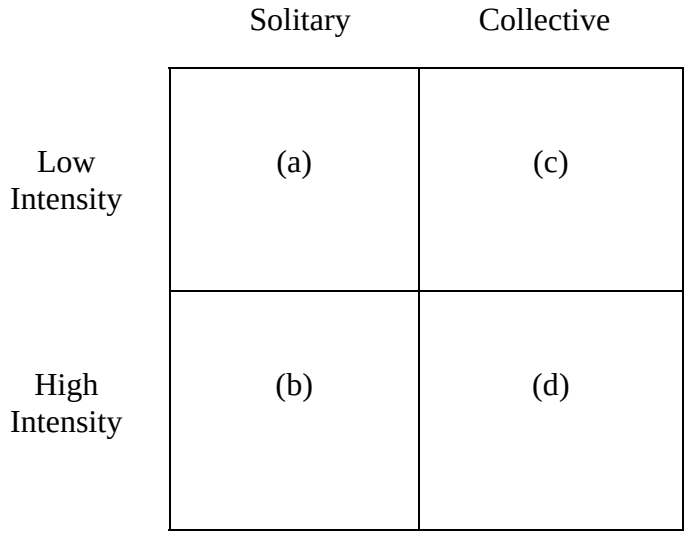

Figure 1. Types of *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*

Solitary *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* contains individual leisure activities that are self-focused (e.g., reading) and that do not necessarily require direct interactions with other people (e.g., window shopping alone, singing alone). Collective *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*, on the other hand, demonstrates involvement with other people or significant others (family members or close friends) in which the self is submerged and the individual identifies and unites with the significant others (e.g., traveling with close friends, informal social gathering with friends, visiting children). For instance, Ms. Park commented that playing with grandchildren turned out to be one of her husband's favorite daily activities for *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*.

Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan also varies in intensity. Some activities are rather casual and passive, but nevertheless provide satisfaction and some sense of transformation. Other activities create *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* in more intensely involving ways. In high intensity activities, an individual is so immersed in the activities that she or he often loses track of time and becomes unaware of him or herself while concentrating on the activity. Such activities can be either solitary or social, but intensely emotional *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* in social activities is a kind of collective exuberance, what Durkheim (1965) referred to as "collective effervescence." Intense and active involvement in activities can lead an individual to *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* followed by high satisfaction as an unexpected outcome. For a better understanding of the various characteristics of *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* in each category, I will review the data that indicate that interactions, intensity, and activities of individuals work together to create the experience of *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*.

(a) <u>*Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* in Solitary Activities of Low Intensity.</u> While *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* is often generated socially, an individual can experience *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*

through solitary or self-focused activities with no social interaction with other people. For instance, an individual goes window shopping alone with no interest in socializing with other people in the activity. Often, the activity was chosen to fill spare time or to relieve boredom or stress in the daily routine. One participant, Ms. Lee, said that she goes window shopping or watches videotapes alone when she gets bored during the day. She also sings for the same effect: "I feel *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* when I listen to good music on the radio and feel like singing along with the music…. Sometimes, singing alone is very good for *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*." She noted that singing keeps her young and said that she "forget[s] everything for the moment of singing."

Similarly, Mr. Suh shared an effective and simple method of experiencing *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*:

> When I accumulate stress, I do something like driving, walking around to relieve my stress. After you go somewhere else and get some fresh air (*Ba-Ram-Ssoi-Da*), you feel you have *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*.

Reading is another instance of solitary activity in which Ms. Lee spent her free time. Ms. Lee indicated that reading becomes a source of *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* "when it is fun" and added that she would "finish reading books that are fun and enjoyable." Another self-focused activity that contributed to the experience of *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* in these participants, was traveling. As Ms. Lee put it:

> A leisure activity I enjoy now is traveling. I like it very much. The preparation for traveling excites me several days ahead. I enjoy those feelings. I already feel different even before the trip. During the trip, I love sightseeing, beautiful scenery, and fresh air.

As the quote suggests, Ms. Lee's attention focuses on the preparation for traveling and her feelings and expectations about the activity to come. Companions for the trip are not of obvious concern. As Ms. Lee mentions, she starts to experience *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*

during her preparation for the trip as she recognizes changes in herself, and the experience continues during and after the trip. This statement leads to the interesting conclusion that *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* can be achieved not only by participating in an actual activity, but also through anticipating and preparing for it. In the case of Mr. Han, going to a health club to work out is "to release all the fatigue and to let go of problems and issues." Mr. Han is convinced that "doing exercise is the best way for *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*."

(b) *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* in Solitary Activities of High Intensity. Solitary *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* was also experienced in self-focused activities that were intensely involving, whether they were done alone or with others. Such activities have some of the characteristics of "flow" discussed by Csikszentmihalyi (1978, 1990) and others. Solitary or self-focused activities in which participants demonstrate intensive involvement included listening to music during prayers, reading, singing, outdoor swimming, watching videotapes, and traveling. Mr. Han confessed that reading is his joy in life:

> I would die if I were not able to enjoy reading. Reading is the joy of my life…. When I am immersed in reading, I completely forget myself and feel the joy of life. I feel extremely joyful.

Ms. Kim listened to music in a way that differs from others' more casual listening experience:

> When I have my own time, I listen to music that I like, listen to music during prayer or church hymns. Sometimes, when I listen to hymns quietly, I get so immersed in the music that I become part of the music, and warm tears flow from my eyes. I get emotional.

In the case of Mr. Suh, singing was a way to let "youthfulness return to [his] heart." Mr. Suh referred to a social gathering in which he and his friends often ended up singing and dancing. Singing alone was also an activity Ms. Lee often enjoyed when she got lonely

and bored. She would listen to radio programs or audiotapes and write down verses of songs she wanted to learn, and she would practice until she memorized the songs. Ms. Lee admitted that she always felt better and refreshed after singing loudly in her apartment alone. Sometimes, she would demonstrate the songs she mastered to a friend on the phone.

Unlike watching television more generally, which has been shown to be associated with low intensity, watching videotapes is often done passionately by older Korean American participants. They watch videotapes alone or as a group, depending on preferences or environment, but the experience was deeply involving for some. Ms. Kim explained how watching videotapes alone had made a strong impression on her.

> The old lady had all the tapes on a historic drama that was a hit at the time. It was 50-60 videotapes for that one drama the old lady owned. You just watch that drama for the whole day. Watching only that program. The whole day. I was also so immersed in it… that I did not want to do anything, but watch those tapes. As the old lady understood how to enjoy watching videotapes, she brought noodles for my lunch so that I could continue watching videotapes without interruption. By doing that, I was almost thinking that I was living in the period of the history in the video…. That lady really knew how to enjoy watching videotapes.

Ms. Kim spoke further of the emotional impact of the experience.

> It is great fun to watch Korean drama that makes me cry or sympathize on stories…. Watching Korean videotapes adds some zest in our daily life.… I watch Korean video because it is fun. I like the stories that make me laugh and cry.

Traveling created a variety of experiences for the participants in this study but for one individual travel alone to natural settings was a source of intense emotional involvement:

> I feel most free when I enjoy nature. Then when do I enjoy nature? When I swim in the ocean, I look at myself in contrast to the immense ocean and feelings of happiness arise when I perceive that I live within nature. When I ride a horse running through fields and mountains, I experience real happiness…. All nature becomes mine. But, I don't often have that opportunity, so I go to a swimming

> pool in a health club. Although the swimming pool is man-made, I feel very good when I float my body in the water and swim freely and I sense I am part of nature. (Mr. Han)

(c) *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* in Collective Activities of Low Intensity. *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* was identified among some respondents in activities in which they enjoy effortless, casual, and relaxed involvement with other people. These activities involved social interaction, either with or without a particularly shared focus, such as window shopping, traveling or attending church with friends, a spouse, or family members. Mr. Han provided a good example in describing how he spends free time with his wife:

> We have breakfast at home, and usually lunch and dinner out…. Walking around, shopping, often window shopping at a mall…. We often walk around window-shopping, drink coffee, have lunch, then relax, drop by a bookstore to look over new books. We eat at a restaurant, but often use fast food restaurants for convenience…. I don't know, but time flies very fast while my wife walks around window-shopping.

Mr. Han seemed to enjoy strolling around with his wife at a mall. This activity for him was a way of experiencing *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*. It is obvious from the statement that he enjoyed what he was doing with his free time. Although the purpose of the activity was not *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*, the experience of *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* was a result. He added, "After we come back from the mall, we feel like our appetite comes back and feel great because we feel like we had *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*." Ms. Lee also pointed to the effectiveness of window shopping for *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*. And, Ms. Kim confirmed that "going for eye [window] shopping with my husband" was a kind of *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*.

For Ms. Lee Korean senior school was another source for social *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*: "It is a place to meet people for socializing and to learn various things." *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* may not be the purpose of these occasions, but it is often an outcome. Other participants (Ms. Kim, Ms. Park, Mr. Song) pointed to Korean church as a place where

they have an opportunity to meet and socialize with other older Koreans. Mr. Song referred to interaction with God, in addition to interaction with other people as a defining part of his experience.

> Going to church for me is to fulfill my duty and obligation. So, I don't go to church for *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*. But as a result, I feel very good after coming back from church. Although I did not plan to have *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* in the beginning, I ended up experiencing *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*…. I talk with God, when I go to church I communicate with God. That 's what I like.

Mr. Song pointed out that he used mountain climbing to create *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* in the past. And while he admitted that he is too old to do that, he still loves interacting with young people in the fresh air. Going to McDonald's for lunch, for Mr. Song, is a way to make an occasion for *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* when he feels like his daily routine is confining. He stated:

> I used to go to McDonald's and stopped going for a while, but recently I started to go there again. Maybe I would say it's good for *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*. Because I can drive there. That proves that I am still capable of doing something. I go there and have lunch. Sometimes, I talk with other elderly who come there, so I would say it's *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* since I feel like I am rejuvenated.

Water aerobics class at the YMCA provided a somewhat more formal venue for *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* for Ms. Park. She said that she meets other Koreans in that class, and although she does not interact much with them, she feels more comfortable having them in the class, a point that I will return to when I discuss the cultural significance of these activities.

According to Ms. Kim, traveling makes her happy when she is accompanied by friends, particularly close ones. Relationships with friends from Korea continued to grow for two of participants, even after immigration, because they kept in touch with each other. Living in the same city with a close friend from Korea was very important to life in

the United States for both of them. They travel and have a good time together, laughing and talking about funny episodes they experienced during the trip. Interestingly, Ms. Kim said that going on a trip with only her husband was not fun at all because they did not laugh and talk as she did with friends.

For Ms. Kim, going to an American sauna with friends was another way of spending leisure time for *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*: "[I] feel refreshed, [my] body feels very light, and the air smells good after the sauna." She admitted that although she enjoys being completely by herself, she likes it better when she can converse with her friends. After the sauna, they stop by Dunkin' Donuts to talk. She feels great and relaxed while talking with friends over a coffee, and even her homesickness disappears at the moment. Ms. Kim remembered a similar experience in the past in Korea:

> One of my friends in Korea was a well-known intellectual. She sometimes would say to us, "Let's go to have some 'mood'…. Nowadays, things are very different, but then that meant that we would go to a coffee shop to listen to music… So, we went to a coffee shop to get some 'mood' while talking and listening to the music. At that time, if you went to a stylish and famous coffee shop, a well-dressed woman would play a saxophone on the stage. Then we would enjoy listening to the music.

Ms. Kim regarded that activity as *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*, adding, "You know you feel great when you get together with close friends, holding each other's hands." For Mr. Han, going to a ballroom dance with friends once in a while was a way to have *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*:

> If you are not a good dancer you sit and wait until you hear good music you like to dance to…. We change partners exactly as other Americans ("foreigners") dance…. We have a group of (Korean) friends who are good dancers. Dancing is very good exercise to alleviate stresses. My wife likes it very much, too…. I never danced before in Korea. After coming to the States, I slowly started to go with other friends who dance… I love music.… If you have a sense of rhythm, you simply move your body around to the music. We go to a dance hall only for

> special occasions such as New Years, Christmas, or Thanksgiving holidays. At other times, we enjoy singing with *Karaoke*.

According to Mr. Suh, playing golf was a good activity for socializing with friends in his peer group. He added that "for *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*, I go out to the golf course to play golf twice a week, Wednesdays and Saturdays." He further explained how the golf club was organized about two years ago, saying that "the purpose of having a senior golf club was to socialize and share "*Jeong*" in daily life experiences with one another once a month, and not to spend time meaninglessly." *Jeong* refers to a special interpersonal bond of trust and closeness and will be considered further in the section on cultural meanings.

Ms. Lee shared her experience of singing with her friend on the phone. Taking turns singing for each other, they converse, laugh, and generally have a good time together. Ms. Lee commented:

> We sing on the phone…. My friend was singing hymns that I am not familiar with, so I suggested that we sing something else. I sang pop-songs, folk songs (laugh)…. So next time we were talking on the phone, I told her I would sing for her and sang "Maze of love' that I have been practicing. (laugh)…. I like to spend time laughing and conversing with someone rather than sitting alone and being lonely at home.

The shared experience does not have to involve physical activity, however; conversation alone can be focused on discussing enjoyable topics:

> When we meet, we just talk about our daily routine, but it is very important to meet, laugh, and talk with each other. I like to do it. It's a good way to get the stress out. In fact, we seldom have time to meet, talk, and laugh with each other. Of course, in Korea, we used to visit our neighbors all the time, this house or that house, but here in the States, we don't have that opportunity. So, when we get together, we like to talk about lives in the past in Korea. (Ms. Kim)

As Ms. Kim noted, Koreans often visit their friends' houses informally in Korea, but in the United States, living arrangements, distance, or transportation barriers prevent them

from getting together as much, thus making this kind of interaction all the more important. During a social gathering, older Korean participants got involved in various leisure activities such as singing or dancing.

(d) *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* in Collective Activities of High Intensity. Older Korean participants experienced collective *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* with high intensity when the focus on the activity is equally compelling to all participants. It is also experienced when the relationship between the individual and the activity gradually becomes a primary focus of the group activity, as in playing *Mah-Jong* or watching videotapes together. When activities are done together as a group, the emotions that were experienced together sometimes reach a high level of intensity comparable to Durkheim's (1965) "collective effervescence." According to Durkheim, collective effervescence is an excitement in the air that creates a sense of solidarity, unity, and spirituality. This component transforms individuals, helps them lose themselves, and blurs boundaries between people. According to Carlton-Ford (1992), collective effervescence implies two dimensions, intensity and degree of collectiveness. The emotional intensity is actually shared by virtue of a shared focus and shared action, which may also contribute to the experience of *Jeong*, a point I will return to in the section on cultural meanings.

Ms. Kim remembered time spent with her friends watching videotapes, where they lost track of time: "We watched Korean videotapes and that's why we did not know the time was already late. When we came out it was already very dark, so she went back home." Another activity that seemed to provide flow-like experience was game playing, *Mah-Jong* in particular. Although *Mah-Jong* is a social game, it becomes an extremely

focused activity when the players get so immersed in the game. The experience of Mr. Suh was a clear example of this:

> It [playing *Mah-Jong*] is a way for a social gathering. Rather than talking with each other face to face, it is easy to lose track of time while playing the game. The day will pass as swift as an arrow while playing *Mah-Jong* four or five games…. I think playing *Mah-Jong* is something that can be better focused when betting money is involved. It is said that while you play *Mah-Jong*, if someone tells you that your house is on fire, rather than rushing to your home, you would ask him to be quiet, that you will be home later, after the game ends.

Another example that shows emotional investment with others in the activity was a birthday party Ms. Park remembered:

> I had my husband's sixtieth birthday party in our house…. My husband played an accordion in our yard. We danced, folk dance (laugh) like the young people at the church.…We have many grandsons and granddaughters. The entire family, including my mother-in-law, held hands to dance, folk dance, and play. We had great fun that way.

Another informal social gathering that seems an example of collective effervescence was discussed by Ms. Park. In the past she had parties every weekend with Korean church members. They took turns visiting each other's houses and spent time talking, singing, and drinking, through which *Jeong* was developed and strengthened:

> On weekends, we party, going around from this house to that house…to socialize and to get to know each other better…. Usually we take turns, but we often got together in our house right after we immigrated.... We stayed up partying until two or three o'clock in the morning.… When friends came to our house, we often sang, we spent time doing something sound and constructive. We did not engage in card games or gambling at all. Singing hymns, Korean songs while drinking…. During the period, almost every house had *Karaoke*… so when we got together in a home, we had fun with *Karaoke*…. While singing you remember happenings from the past. It's good, you know…. You feel good while singing. But, singing alone is a different story. You feel good when you socialize and have fun with friends…. You feel close "*Jeong*" by doing it. You feel "*Jeong*" through close interactions and relationships with others. After social gatherings with neighbors, you find yourself feeling closer "*Jeong*" to them.

Ms. Park's statement demonstrated the connection between *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* and the role of social activity in developing and strengthening the feeling of *Jeong*. While this quote suggests that these activities (talking, *Karaoke* singing, dancing) are somewhat informal, they all are done in a way that creates a common and shared focus that is experienced with intense emotion and contributes to a feeling of *Jeong.* This can also happen in a more formal social gathering such as a *Kye* meeting, as Mr. Han suggested:

> In the beginning, we organized this "*Kye*" meeting for those who are very lonely but want to meet and enjoy themselves together once a month…. When there is a *Kye* meeting for their wives, a social gathering for husbands is created spontaneously. While husbands eat, drink, and joke with each other in a room, wives gather in another room to have fun.

This scene implies a gender difference among the participants in choosing activities for *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*. Wives liked to talk about family matters with female members. They often made their husbands the subject of fun and ridicule, while husbands spent time drinking and talking about politics and other social issues. Depending on the mood of the members, they would often engage in talking, singing, and dancing, switching from one activity to another during the social gathering, but usually with full engagement.

In sum, solitary *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* demonstrates self-focused activities in which people experience personal enjoyment and zest through less interactive, personal involvement. These experiences are very personal and private, as opposed to shared and collective experiences. Collective *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* focuses on social activities with collective involvement and shared experiences. In many cases, the participants created *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* collectively by engaging in activities that require interaction in a social setting. Whether individual or interactive, intense or casual, activities producing

Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan seemed to be intended for relaxation, escape, or relief from stressful daily routines. Others activities, however, were chosen primarily for some advantage they provide for self-development. In the following section, activities that contribute to promoting self-development are further examined. On many occasions, the activities chosen for self-development led participants to the experience of *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* as well.

Self Development

Some activities people enjoy enable them to grow intellectually, physically, psychologically, or spiritually. This study revealed that some participants were educating themselves intentionally by engaging in certain activities while others were concerned especially with physical health and/or spiritual growth. The self-development activities performed most frequently by participants were reading, traveling, listening to audiotapes, listening to an English language program on the radio, and watching TV. Mr. Han said that for him reading is a hobby through which he cultivates his life philosophy and feelings of happiness. He uses it as a personal discipline to enhance the quality of life rather simply to create the experience of *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*.

Traveling is another activity that seems very beneficial for self improvement. Even though I have already associated it with *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*, some travelers had a clear purpose in mind beyond just getting away. For Ms. Lee, traveling was an opportunity to feel refreshed, thrilled, and even transformed.

> When you stay home all the time you envision only a small world, but you achieve wider perspectives when you go to foreign countries to observe how they live. You open your eyes and ways of thinking through traveling. You gain different perspectives from people who don't travel at all and always stay home… I find a lot of changes in my life after coming back from traveling. I live with a lot of stress at home, but traveling around other countries among different people, I

> feel relaxed…and feel proud of myself and want to tell somebody about my trip and experiences (laugh).

Traveling was an opportunity for learning for Ms. Park as well: “When I go on a pilgrimage, I learn how our ancestors lived their lives in faith. It is a great study for me.” Ms. Lee suggested that learning in travel experience often encourages further reading.

> After I visited Helen Keller’s house, I wanted to know more about her, so I went to a Korean bookstore to buy her book written in Korean…. I read it in three days because it was fun to read…. I would finish reading books that are fun and enjoyable.

Reading was a means of collecting information and knowledge and keeping up with the changing society for several participants. For the purpose of gaining information, watching TV and listening to the radio were also popular options. Ms. Lee reads a Korean newspaper, particularly columns related to health issues. Other participants read the Bible and religious books. Ms. Lee and Ms. Park enjoyed copying the Bible into a notebook. Ms. Lee, who copied the Bible in its entirety into a notebook three times, demonstrated her knowledge by calling a radio station to provide an answer for the Bible quizzes.

Listening to radio programs was also used to learn English for Ms. Lee as she stated, “I usually get up at 7 am. The first thing I do in the morning is to turn on the radio. There is an English program called ‘Pop English’ from which I learn a lot.” Ms. Kim also listens to the Korean radio channel for current events. By keeping up with Korean and American news via Korean radio channel, she felt she keeps in touch with the world and knows what is going on around it:

> Yes, I turn on that [Korean Radio] channel for the whole day at home. I just listen to the news or other programs, but there is no special program that I favor.… I listen to the Korean language. By listening to Korean news, I get local news or Korean news as if I am in Korea…. I listen to the radio always. That helps me not

> to develop suffocating feelings that I don't need to feel like I am blind or confined…. I know what is going on in Korea as well as in this region. I like it.… The news is in Korean, talking about both American news and Korean news.

This was then also a means of ethnic preservation, a point to which I will return. Watching TV for news or other programs such as a traveling channel was another way of keeping an eye on what is going on in the world. Although Ms. Park does not understand much about CNN news, as she admitted, she can grasp the gist of the discussion. Ms. Park added further that "we don't watch American drama, but we watch the travel TV channel. We watch travel programs on the Discovery channel. Many people go on pilgrimages. We usually watch that kind of program." Ms. Lee further emphasized the significance of keeping up with information and knowledge in relation to acquiring self confidence.

> If you don't know what is going on in the world, it is depressing. You have to know so that you can communicate with others. If you don't know, you cannot participate in the conversation. Knowing is power. You accumulate confidence when you know more. It is better to spend your time for self-improvement. You should know more to be confident of yourself, and others will acknowledge and respect you.

Mr. Han described a similar effect from reading: "I may have been a useless human being, but when I read, I feel that I am a very significant person. It stimulates my interests…" He emphasized further that it is very important to be selective in choosing books that help to cultivate knowledge.

Attending Korean senior school was an activity that brought an abundance of benefits for Ms. Lee.

> I go to senior school because first I can meet many people, get to know them, and learn many things. That's why I attend the school… to learn and hear about a lot of things…. Of course, I enjoy going to the senior school more than staying home. It is a place to meet people for socialization and to learn various things.

This example reflects a leisure activity that functions with multiple purposes, in this case socializing and self-improvement. Gardening was another such activity. By combining it with listening to audiotapes while working in the yard, Ms. Park amplified its meaning.

> For my leisure time I go out in the yard to weed…. Whenever I work outside in the yard, I always listen to audiotaped lectures by theologians or priests. Hence, I consider this time of listening to the tapes as leisure. I like that way better than listening to the tapes just by sitting and doing nothing. I can concentrate better without getting bored at all…

Multiple experiences associated with specific activities is the subject of the last section of this chapter.

In addition to activities that promote self development in intellectual, psychological, and spiritual growth, *Yeo-Ga* was used for developing physical health. Maintaining physical health through regular exercise was for Mr. Han a source of confidence and enthusiasm that made his life happy and enjoyable. Mr. Han stressed that:

> I develop my strength through exercise. I am over 70 years old, but I am confident that I can keep my health for 10 or 20 more years, and that makes me very happy…. That's the zest of living. That's my lifestyle. My style comes from that source.

In sum, in this section on psychosocial meanings of leisure activity I have provided evidence that older Korean Americans, at least those interviewed here, experience *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* through various daily leisure activities and seek self-development through some of the same or other activities. In the next section, the focus moves from the psychosocial meanings of activities to the sociocultural meanings that are derived in the context of *Yeo-Ga* (leisure).

Sociocultural Meanings

In this section attention is turned to the sociocultural meanings indicated and suggested in the daily leisure activities of older Korean Americans. Kelly and Godbey

(1992) viewed leisure and culture as mutually reinforcing concepts: Culture is created and reshaped by leisure, on one hand, and leisure is shaped and limited by culture, on the other. The data showed that the leisure of the older Korean participants in this study was influenced by the culture in which they were born, raised, and educated as well as by that which received them as immigrants. The three categories that captured the sociocultural meanings that were revealed in the interviews were (1) the expression of *Jeong*, (2) experience of solidarity, and (3) freedom from *Nun-Chi* and *Che-Myeon*.

Experience of *Jeong*

The Korean word "*Jeong*" has no English equivalent but contains a unique cultural meaning concerning a special interpersonal bond of trust and closeness. This category encompasses attachment and closeness that older Korean Americans feel, develop, and strengthen in interaction with other Koreans in various leisure contexts. *Jeong* is slowly developed through the period of interaction, adding other elements such as empathy and care. According to Kim (2000), *Jeong* brings about the special feelings in relationships including togetherness, sharing, and bonding. *Jeong* is what makes us say "we" rather than "I," "ours" rather than "mine." Koreans consider *Jeong* an essential element of interpersonal relationships in their daily life. Involvement in leisure activities, particularly social, cultural, and collective gatherings promote these elements of *Jeong*. Ms. Kim recollected her experience of building up *Jeong* with other Koreans when she was a member of a cleaning and maintenance staff:

> Members of the cleaning and maintenance staff would sometimes get together for socializing... We would call each other and get together on Sundays for social gatherings. Probably because we were in the same position, we understood each other very well. So, we went to picnics often on Saturdays or Sundays…. Through these activities [we] got to know each other and continue close relationships. Then when weekends approach, [we] would invite each other home for dinner and

> socializing…. It seems that because of [our] similar situation at work, [we] feel closer to each other and develop *Jeong*.

This statement demonstrated the fact that *Jeong* can be developed not only by family members and friends, but by any Koreans who share the idea of Koreanness. Sharing *Jeong* among Korean immigrants becomes a significant source of unity and identification with each other while living in a foreign country. However, people share deeper *Jeong* with family members or close friends. Ms. Park described how much her husband enjoys playing with his grandchildren and how he experiences emotional identification and joy of life through their entertainment.

> Our granddaughter has many talents. When she reached the age of four, after coming back from her school, she would let grandpa and grandma sit. Then, she would pretend to be their teacher. We used to have fun in such atmosphere with our family members. Because of such fun with our grandchildren, we would easily get rid of our stress and fatigue from the hard work in the store, even after having such incidents as arguments with black customers. My husband used to say that he would forget everything from the work as soon as he saw his grandchildren and their playful tricks. There is great benefit from living in an extended family setting.

As Ms. Park described, living in an extended family setting provides greater opportunities for grandparents to strengthen *Jeong* with their grandchildren through frequent daily interactions.

Ms. Kim talked about her close friends, consisting of seven couples with whom she has shared *Jeong* at their monthly social gathering for over ten years. Unlike *Kye* meetings, her group is very informal and spontaneous in terms of setting a date and place for the next gathering. Ms. Kim mentioned that they often talk with each other on the phone, and someone will say, “I will invite our group for next month.” They sometimes go to Florida together for a vacation. The bonding built among the members over ten years may be stronger than relationships with siblings, considering their separation from

other family members in Korea. Ms. Kim reflected on the intimacy and enjoyment in the relationships:

> Since we have been friends for a long time, we make all kinds of jokes to each other. By doing that, we relieve stress. Wives laugh at husbands' loud conversation. They just laugh and laugh. That's what we do in our gathering. I feel most comfortable when I meet my friends. We are like family. We discuss and share anything with each other without hesitation…. All of us are living in Georgia. We talk and laugh. Several times a year, we would go to *Karaoke* after dinner to have fun.

She noted further that they used to go to *Karaoke* ten years ago, but nowadays they preferred meeting and talking with each other. She jokingly admitted, "Maybe we are getting old." According to Ms. Kim, the activity is less important than that they are together socializing and maintaining their friendships and a sense of *Jeong*.

Exchanging information on any happenings in the community was another purpose of the informal social gathering. They also shared difficulties they faced, and the other members would seek ways to help out.

> I treasure our gathering with friends for over ten years. I feel like I have a strong backup… because by maintaining our group for over ten years, our relationship is more than just friendships. We have lived through our pains and sufferings together with support and care…. For example, it is very helpful when we encounter a difficulty. If you need a sponsor or a signature, you could not ask someone whom you don't know very well, but it is possible with your friends. My best friend is the one whom I have known from home in Korea…. Because of our busy lifestyle, we usually telephone so we won't take up each other's time. Sometimes, we meet to talk about what we have been doing since the last time we got together. Time has passed by and we got older… I have known one of my friends since my marriage…. We have passed "*Whan-Gap*"(meaning 60th birthday) and are approaching our seventies. I think that has a great meaning already.

As Ms. Kim showed, the primary purpose of informal gathering was to socialize but the regularity of it suggests a greater commitment to something more meaningful.

Mr. Han spoke to the value of socializing in more formal "*Kye*" meetings. As introduced earlier, *Kye* is a very common social gathering in Korea through which people satisfy their needs for financial support ("Money *Kye*") and interaction ("Social *Kye*"). Mr. Han acknowledged *Kye* as distinctively Korean. Exchanging information on any happenings in the community was another purpose of the social gathering:

> Like Joy Luck Club, *Kye* meeting is a cultural tradition for us to socialize…. It provides a motive to socialize. It's necessary in our society. It's part of our culture and life style in our daily lives. That's the *Kye* meeting…. Without this gathering, we seldom have an opportunity to communicate with other Koreans… In the gathering they exchange information useful in daily life…. They share tips on where and how to buy inexpensive items without a rip-off. They can exchange information about happenings in daily life such as a particular doctor who is very kind (or rude) is in 'such and such' hospital. Or, herb medicine is good for health. All the invaluable information related to daily life comes from the *Kye* meeting.

Kye meeting is one of the most distinctive cultural activities through which *Jeong* is created and strengthened among the members. In addition, Ms. Kim introduced other social gatherings in which *Jeong* is the product of interaction with each other:

> When we meet, we just talk about our daily routine, but it is significantly important to meet, laugh, and talk with each other. I like to do it. It's a good way to get stress out. In fact, we seldom have time to meet, talk, and laugh with each other. Of course, in Korea, we used to visit our neighbors all the time, this house or that house, but here in the States, we don't have that opportunity. So, when we get together, we like to talk about our lives in the past in Korea.

The informal gathering that took place in Korea that Ms. Kim recalled is *Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi*. *Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi* was referred to earlier as an activity especially common in agricultural societies where people settle down in the same place for generations. In the rural area of Korea, people would visit their neighbor's house after supper without any notice or invitation in advance. They would spend most of the time talking, but dancing and drinking could follow. As Korean society became modernized, the pure form of *Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi* virtually disappeared in the urban area, but it is still reproduced in different forms

of activities that demonstrate similar meanings. Ms. Kim represented this idea in the following:

> Not everyday, but when I feel like my stress was accumulated and it was time to get some fresh air ("*Ba-Ram-Ssoi-Da*), I would go to my friend's house. Also, my friend would come to me when she had any issues or problems to discuss. Then I would listen to her complaints. Was not that the way we had lived in Korea?

As these examples demonstrate, *Jeong* is created in such settings by closeness in personal relationships. *Jeong* can occur by sharing empathy about a situation or about people. Even watching Korean videotapes can sometimes generate *Jeong*, as Ms. Kim demonstrated:

> I watched videotape about Dr. Cho who went to North Korea to meet his brother…. The brothers met each other and cried. I was crying, too…. I felt bad and sad so I wept with them while watching the program…. We can go back home any time to meet our family if we want, but their case was different; so I had pity for them.

This example demonstrates that watching Korean videotapes, for Ms. Kim, helped nourish and recreate *Jeong* by attaching to and identifying with the Korean drama.

Ms. Kim described still another example of *Jeong* in a close relationship with a friend from the past. She shared a story of a male who was the leader of their social *Kye*, but died in service of other *Kye* members.

> The elderly of similar age were living in the same apartment building, keeping close with each other. We decided to meet once a month. The leader of the group announced that we would start the "*Kye*" meeting the following month. Then the leader went alone to Savannah to catch clams to make clam soup for the "*Kye*" members at the first meeting. It is said that while he was collecting clams on the beach he had a heart attack and the waves swallowed him. After two days of searching by plane, they found him floating on the sea. So, we were never able to start our social gathering…. We were about ten people who met each other through cleaning maintenance work.

Jeong and care was shown in another example in which Ms. Park interacted with a female friend who just lost her husband. Ms. Park called her Korean friend whenever

she went to the YMCA, to keep her from being lonely: “My friend Maria recently became a widow, living alone. Because she is alone, it is better to go with her for swimming and aerobics.” Mr. Han described activities of other residents in his senior housing complex who share *Jeong* and care in their morning exercise walking around the apartment complex.

> While walking around in the morning, they greet each other and share news and information. That’s how they start off their days. If one of their friends has delicious food to share, they all go to eat later, don’t they? They share food such as rice cakes with each other. If Mr. or Mrs. so-and-so got sick and had surgery in a hospital, it will be spread around while walking or jogging in the morning.

This example showed a daily leisure activity as an arena in which *Jeong* is gradually developed and cultivated by caring for each other. Participating in morning exercises with other Korean elderly provided an opportunity to interact and show care and concern for one another as *Jeong* grew deeper.

Different people in various activities demonstrate other forms of *Jeong*. Ms. Park talked about a young man in her church who was a former (Korean) national diver and who volunteered to give swimming lessons to older Koreans in the church out of “*Hyo*” (filial piety) to his mother living far away. Because of the feeling of *Jeong*, he identified other Korean elderly with his own parents. Feelings of *Jeong* to the motherland were expressed by Mr. Han while listening to music he listened to in the past. Mr. Han said that he feels great because “it takes me back to feelings and memories of my childhood that I had forgotten and now seldom think about…. It’s reminiscence.” In the case of Mr. Song, a feeling of attachment toward his motherland is expressed by his act of hanging a Korean national flag on the wall in the living room. Although Mr. Song considered the national flag simply as decoration, his bonding (*Jeong*) to the motherland was revealed in

his behavior without his being aware of it. Involvement in religious practice on a regular basis is another influential factor in building up *Jeong* with other Korean church members, as Ms. Park noted:

> In our church we often met with church members to socialize and had fun without getting involved in social *Kye*. We did not get involved in any social *Kye* like other people who miss other Koreans, meet, and socialize. Other people might need it, but we did not have much to do with it…. We often had social gathering with our church members. We like it much more than social gatherings with other friends…. Maybe because we see each other every Sunday and keep in close touch.

Experience of Solidarity

While *Jeong* is created and developed among Koreans through steady interactions with others on a personal level, feelings of solidarity can be established simply by being in the same ethnic group in an unfamiliar environment. Older Korean Americans identify with other Koreans and create and strengthen solidarity by being members of a Korean community. They interact and socialize with each other, sharing the same culture, tradition, values, language, and physical appearance. The sense of belonging to the Korean community was illustrated directly by one of the participants (Mr. Han):

> We cannot live apart from the Korean community. We belong to the Korean community…. It's just natural. We share the same color, same intention, same thoughts, same food, and same language…. Our community means the Korean community. Our friends we meet are friends from the Korean community.

Interestingly, Mr. Han said, "It became my source of enjoyment to meet and converse with friends from my hometown in Korea because we understand each other with the same philosophy, life styles, and thoughts." Mr. Han admitted that he stayed away from the Korean community for a long time. But once he retired from an American company, he realized that he could not find his place in the mainstream. He emphasized, "It is

human nature to come back to the origin. Just as birds and fish do, humans are longing for and coming back to their home. It is meant to be that way."

While having the various psychological effects referred to in earlier sections, many leisure opportunities also promoted a sense of solidarity and community for these older Korean participants. These included traveling, attending Korean senior school, or observing Korean traditional holidays. Traveling is an important activity through which the participants experienced mixed and complicated feelings of who they are. By traveling together some were reminded of the non-Korean world "out there" and conversely of their own common culture through the reactions of others to them. Participants possessed two views of their own identity: legal and cultural. These older Korean participants were well aware of their legal status as American citizens. However, they also knew that they were Korean. In exposing themselves to others through travel, participants acknowledged their own identity as Korean. Ms. Lee shared a specific example:

> While traveling, people ask me 'what's your nationality?' I say, 'I am Korean.'…. Although I acquired American citizenship, I am originally Korean… Who would think me American? My skin color is different. Americans have white skin color and yellow hair, shouldn't I have it, too?…. Even in my apartment, if somebody would ask my nationality, then I would say, "I am Korean." Who would believe me as American? Nobody. I've been recognized as Korean. Look, our skin color is different from Americans…. With lack of fluent English language ability, how could you say you are American?

This statement pointed out several determinants for further discussion: awareness of different physical appearance, lack of fluency in English, and advantage of being a legal American. Differences in physical appearance may influence Korean immigrants to sustain their ethnic identity, not by choice but by psychosocial pressure. Language barriers determine ethnic identification. As expressed in Ms. Lee's statement, to be truly

American, one should possess an American accent and fluency in English, in addition to an American appearance. One participant (Ms. Park) emphasized that "Americans are different in physical appearance. They have a big nose, blonde hair, and different shapes of eyes, everything is different." Like others, Ms. Park limited her definition of the term "American" to that segment of American people who possess these physical characteristics. The limiting, itself, becomes a barrier. Regardless of how these constraints were experienced by older Korean participants during involvement in leisure activities, they were also aware of being American citizens as an advantage in legal and formal living settings such as airport entry ports. Nevertheless, their status as American citizens was usually invoked only when necessary.

Whether or not these constraints have an impact on ethnic identity maintenance, some activities older Korean participants enjoy with other Koreans in their community reinforced their identity as Korean. Observing Korean holidays reminded participants of their culture and traditions in a foreign country and provided an opportunity to get together with other Koreans as a community who understand and share the meaning and significance of the holiday celebration. During my participant observation at the Korean senior school, the school celebrated two major holidays in Korea, the New Year (in the lunar calendar) and the Full Moon Harvest Festival (August 15 in the lunar calendar), by playing a traditional game, "*Yut*." Some students were nostalgic enough to wear their traditional dress, *Han-Bok*, worn in Korea for major holidays throughout the year. After playing "*Yut*" as a group, prizes were distributed, followed by singing and dancing. Students enjoyed lunch with a special menu of foods which were eaten for the holiday. Ms. Lee shared her experience of another Korean holiday celebration:

> A couple on the 6th floor invited us for dinner to celebrate "January Full-moon day." They make '*O-Gok-Bab*' (rice with five different grains)…. Everyone in the building will come…. After dinner, we might watch Korean videotapes. The husband of the dinner invitor always rents about ten videotapes with his own money for us. That's why we all can watch them all the time.

By watching Korean videotapes at a gathering in which a traditional Korean holiday was remembered and observed, older Korean Americans experience the same language, culture, and understanding of the stories. Ms. Park explained that she watches Korean videotapes because she shares the same nation and race.

For Ms. Lee, attending Korean senior school had great meaning in her daily life. Ms. Lee remembered her feelings of the first day at the senior school:

> When I attended this senior school for the first time I was very moved by the fact that I can take a music class here in another country. Staying at home everyday alone I had nobody to talk and laugh with, but now I am at the school, sitting in a music class, singing and thinking, 'This is great…'

Another way of connecting with other Korean Americans was to join a Korean-American organized sports club. Mr. Song shared his experience of being a member of mountain climbing club. His purpose in joining the Korean-Americans only club was more for the activity itself; his choice of the Korean American group speaks to his attachment to his own ethnic group regardless of the age differences. He was very aware of being older than other club members, which inhibited active interaction with them. Thus, *Jeong* was not particularly generated in this case, but a sense of collective identity was reinforced nonetheless:

> Here we (Korean Americans) have a mountain climbing club. With the club members on weekends, I go to mountains nearby. The one-day course starts in the early morning for 4-5 miles and then come back home after lunch. I've done it for three years…. We have about 20-30 members as a group climbing once every month…. Everybody in the club is young…. I don't hang out with other young members. I just go to the mountain with the group. After coming back from mountain climbing. I seldom get together with them to visit their houses.

Freedom from *Nun-Chi* (intuitive speculation) & *Che-Myeon* (face)

This category represents activities through which people feel and experience freedom and independence from cultural constraint. Mr. Song remembered the pain he experienced drinking in a social gathering when he was not allowed to skip the rotating glass among the group of Korean coworkers. He thus learned to appreciate the value of individual choice and privacy of American lifestyles. In beginning to live independently from her son, Ms. Lee learned that "living alone means freedom…. Nobody bothers you if you jump around dancing or singing in your own space." In Korean culture, *Nun-Chi* is a very important concept people have adapted and developed in human relationships. Interpersonal relationships are, without exaggeration, determined by how good people are at *Nun-Chi*. There is no direct translation of the Korean word "*Nun-Chi*" in English, but it can be interpreted as an "ability to perceive unexpressed emotions, attitudes, and thoughts of another person or sensitivity to implicit norms and conventions." *Nun-Chi* also means the ability to read a situation, or environment and know what to do before being asked. For instance, Mr. Suh shared his experience of using *Nun-Chi* to compensate for his limited listening ability when he has to attend social gatherings for American employees in his company. Ms. Kim shared her experience of using *Nun-Chi* when she had to order a meal during a cruise trip with other Korean friends. Ms. Lee similarly admitted that she sometimes relies on her *Nun-Chi* during her travel to different places.

For Ms. Lee traveling is a very important leisure activity to which she looks forward while she saves enough money for the next trip. The work opportunity Ms. Lee experienced in the States was especially important in providing her a chance for social interaction:

> In Korea, I never had an opportunity to make money for living. I was a housewife. But here in the United States, I can make money and even save some by working hard. That's what I like most of all. Old people like me can be employed to work and save money. I could use my savings for what I want to do and where I want to travel. That's what I like…. In Korea, I had to stay home all times, so I could not make friends at all. After living in the U.S. I can make friends either at work or at church. My lifestyle has become more open and free.

After living separately from her son, Ms. Lee started to feel freedom in her daily life. Ms. Lee confessed that in the beginning of living alone she had a hard time adjusting to the new lifestyle, but gradually she started to enjoy her freedom and independence, which opened her up to involvement in daily activities. She said, "Now, nobody would nag or bother me. I don't need to think about *Nun-Chi*. I can go out whenever I wish and come back home late without being asked by someone where did I spend my time and money." Ms. Lee considers shopping a way of relaxation or exercise. She enjoys walking around in the mall for window shopping. She shares her experience of living alone, saying, "I can deal with everything by myself, even going to a bank for saving or withdrawal…. I became independent by living alone after several years of living together with my son."

Che-Myeon (face) is another cultural concept with which Koreans **are** raised. It means that an individual's behavior and attitudes always reflect on the name of the family personally and the country collectively. Hence it is critical to preserve family dignity and pride by focusing on "we" rather than "I." Living long enough in an American culture in which "I" is the central focus, older Korean participants must have experienced some changes in their attitudes and perceptions. Mr. Song shared his experience of being free from *Che-Myeon* in the following statement: "Here in the States, nobody will tell you what to do, I can do whatever I want to do and wear anything I want. There is no *Che-Myeon* to worry about." In other words, Mr. Song's statement demonstrated an

expression of self by proclaiming freedom from a bounded system, culture, and tradition. Feeling and conducting oneself free from *Che-Myeon* and *Nun-Chi* seemed to provide older Korean participants with an experience of freedom in daily activities in American culture.

Nevertheless, while the participants felt relatively free from *Nun-Chi* and *Che-Myeon* with respect to their Korean culture, they seemed to be caught up again by the concepts in formal and informal social interactions with Americans in everyday life. Mr. Song clearly remembered his confusion at a party in his American friend's house. Because of the difficulty in reading *Nun-Chi* from the American host, Mr. Song could not decide whether he could stay longer or had already stayed too late. Other participants also struggled with similar experiences, because Koreans and Americans respectively employ their own cultural norms, as seen in the example of Mr. Song. It is ironic in that Korean Americans learned to adapt and be open to American culture through daily leisure activities and that they unconsciously apply such cultural codes as *Nun-Chi* and *Che-Myeon* to Americans, expecting the same codes and interpretations of theirs in response. On the other hand, the foreign context also gave participants some freedom from the usual dictates of *Nun-Chi* and *Che-Myeon*. Hence, it seemed that applying *Nun-Chi* and *Che-Myeon* in daily activities had mixed implications, depending on the people involved in an activity.

In summary, in this section on sociocultural meanings of leisure activities, evidence was provided to show that participants often chose daily activities that provide an opportunity to express *Jeong*, to strengthen solidarity, to feel reconnected to their "Koreanness," and to learn and practice independence and freedom by distancing

themselves from *Nun-Chi* and *Che-Myeon*, which are essential ingredients in Korean culture. The findings related to research question 1, particularly on sociocultural meanings of leisure activities, will be revisited in the following sections on ethnic preservation and cultural integration.

Response to Research Question 2

This section addresses research question 2: How are leisure activities (*Yeo-Ga-Whalh-Dong)* and social interactions related to previous (pre-immigration) lifestyles and to ethnic preservation in older Korean Americans? The previous section, in response to research question 1, dealt with the psychosocial and sociocultural meanings of leisure activities. The meanings that suggested contributions to ethnic preservation were the expression of *Jeong* and the experience of solidarity. Ethnic preservation is also suggested by the extent to which leisure patterns engaged in while in Korea are continued in the U. S. The proxemics of leisure settings that were cultural **(**the food, apparel, language, manners, and experiences that are distinctly Korean**)** were closely observed and investigated. It is natural to seek familiarity and comfort particularly when people are suddenly situated in a strange environment. That is especially true for the elderly, such as my research participants, who had developed and established patterns of activities and interpersonal relationships for several decades before emigrating. Older Korean participants learned to minimize abrupt changes experienced in daily life by seeking sources of familiarity and continuity in relationships and activity patterns.

Thus, two categories being discussed in this section are preserving continuity and re-creating Koreanness. Although most social, cultural activities discussed in both categories may appear to contribute to cultural solidarity, some activities were solely a

continuation of the previous activities whereas others were a substitution for the absence of them. For instance, some participants participated in a *Kye* meeting for a sense of familiarity and continuity while others invested in this traditional cultural activity for the first time, thus providing them an opportunity to reconnect to other Koreans and recreate their Koreanness. Although both categories have the intent of using the same activity to preserve ethnicity, the activity may be familiar or new, depending on pre-immigration experience. Participants may thus choose the same activity (e.g., a *Kye* meeting) for purposes of either preserving continuity or re-creating Koreanness. A brief digression into the historical and sociological backgrounds of Korea and the U.S. during this century's period of immigration may offer some additional insight into this distinction.

Inquiring into patterns of continuity and discontinuity in leisure activities of older Korean American participants turned out to be a challenging task. What appeared at first to be limitations of memory became more clearly evidence of historical circumstances that made leisure a relatively uncommon experience. In their youth, all of my research participants experienced the Korean War, which began on June 25, 1950, when troops of communist-ruled North Korea attacked South Korea expecting to unify the country by force. The United Nations aided South Korea. More than a million civilian men, women, and children of Korea were killed. Several million were left homeless. The fighting ended on July 27, 1953 with an agreement to settle problems at an international conference. After the war, South Korea continued to maintain a large standing army. Defense costs damaged the country's economy. During the period from the 1960s to the early 1980s, when the research participants were in their 40s or 50s, Korea was in the process of economic development. It was during this period that they decided to emigrate to the U.

S. primarily to provide better educational opportunities for their children, as well as to achieve financial success and a better living environment. Dissatisfaction and instability with political, social, and working conditions during that period in Korea were other reasons for seeking a new world. While the work ethic was highly emphasized, leisure was not valued or recognized by Koreans. The historical background of the country during this particular period no doubt contributed to their limited recollection of leisure experiences. Nevertheless, leisure activities which were very culturally oriented were practiced by certain segments of the population.

Historically, Korea has been an agriculturally-oriented country in which people build small villages and organize a support system to help each other in various ways. Some cultural activities originating from this historical background were *Kye* meetings and *Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi*, introduced in previous sections. As noted in the previous chapters, geographical conditions made it possible for older Koreans to enjoy *Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi* with their neighbors within walking distance. In order to practice the pure forms of *Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi* today, however, older Korean Americans often face the problem of considerable geographical distance between residential areas, which makes the use of transportation essential. This becomes a big challenge for older Korean Americans who did not learn to drive a motor vehicle during their life in Korea. Public transportation has been the most convenient and inexpensive means of traveling in the lives of older Koreans. How continuation and re-creation of familiar cultural leisure activities helped older Korean Americans preserve and strengthen their Koreanness in American society will be addressed in the following sections.

Preserving Continuity

When immigrants are still new and trying to adjust to a new place, they must be very aware of familiar people, language, culture, and activity. This is necessary to create a social support structure. Activities of participants in Korea in the past were often related to interpersonal interaction. Such activities include informal visiting, formal and informal social gatherings, church-related activities, and playing with grandchildren. Probably because of living arrangements in the senior housing apartment complex, older Korean Americans were able to continue practicing *Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi*. During my visits to a senior housing complex where many older Korean Americans live, I often observed older Korean women informally visiting other older Korean women just to say hello and chat. A very distinctive behavior common to many Korean residents, to my surprise, was that they did not bother to knock on the door of the apartment they stopped by. The visitors were coming and going as if at their own house. Their behavior was so natural that I was almost thinking that I was in Korea.

Another way to stay connected with Koreans was to attend formal or informal social gatherings. Mr. Suh explained the birth of *Kye* meetings after immigration: “In the beginning, we organized this *Kye* meeting for those who are very lonely, and who want to meet and enjoy themselves together once a month.” As seen in the case of *Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi*, a *Kye* meeting was also used for participants to maintain and develop interpersonal relationships with other Koreans through various activities (e.g., singing, dancing) during the social gathering.

In the years immediately after her immigration, Ms. Park learned to continue to interact with other Koreans in a workplace. They ate Korean food and spoke in Korean

during the break. This must have given them a strong attachment to each other. Ms. Park recalled having lunch with other Korean workers in a factory in the past. She stated:

> During lunch time when we worked at a factory, Korean workers got together for lunch…We did not get together with Americans, and the food we ate is different. We were allowed to carry our lunch to work because we had many Korean workers in the factory.

Because she was able to continue interacting with other Koreans, speaking in Korean, and eating Korean food, Ms. Park did not recollect her early immigration period as such a frustrating and isolated experience. Similar experiences were shared by Ms. Kim and Mr. Suh. When Mr. Suh lived in Chicago during the early immigration period, he often spent time with other Korean workers who stopped at a bar for a drink after work. They would end up dropping by each other's house for more drinks until late at night. Mr. Suh acknowledged that this informal, social group activity strengthened the attachment and bonding of the Korean workers in the factory. This social interaction among male Koreans after work would extend to other social activities such as weekend picnics with their family members. Ms. Kim added her experience of going to a picnic with other Korean workers every weekend. They would also get together informally after work for dinner. These were all activities they remembered doing in Korea.

Some participants continued other activities that they had enjoyed in Korea before their immigration. Going to church, which has leisure qualities as established in earlier sections, was continued as a result of easy access to Korean churches in the U.S. These churches are actively involved in evangelization and particularly reach out to non-Christian Korean immigrants who need help in the beginning of their immigration. These recent immigrants often maintain relationships with the church members afterwards, by attending church services and social activities. Going to a Korean church was a way of

keeping in touch with other Koreans. Ms. Park provided a reason for going to a Korean church: “I like Korean church… I like it because we can speak Korean, meet friends, and when we meet, we can hold each other’s hands. That’s what I like about going to Korean churches.”

Language familiarity reinforces older Korean Americans’ tendency to continue listening to Korean radio channels and audio tapes, and reading Korean newspapers and books, not to mention social interactions with other Koreans by speaking in Korean. Various quotations illustrate these tendencies. Ms. Lee reported that “the first thing [she does] in the morning is to turn on the Korean radio channel.” Ms. Kim also talked about her pleasure in listening to the Korean radio channel, saying, “I like it very much. I can listen to the Korean news broadcast in Korean in my car. I love to listen to Korean news. In fact, we older people like to listen to all Korean radio programs.” Some older Koreans, according to Ms. Kim, call a radio program in which callers are invited to sing on the phone.

Ms. Kim stated that she was able to continue a previous leisure activity, going to sauna. After living several years in the U.S., she accidentally found out that there were sauna facilities in the U.S., too. After she enjoyed sauna with her Korean friends, they would all stop by Dunkin’ Donuts to chat and have a cup of coffee. Although going to Dunkin’ Donuts was very different from going to a Korean restaurant or coffee shop, she greatly enjoyed a familiar activity, albeit in a different environment.

Preference for the familiar also influenced the choice of restaurants for participants. Ms. Kim explained why she prefers Chinese restaurants over American restaurants:

> First of all, I cannot go to an expensive and formal American restaurant because of language barriers. I cannot. We have many Korean restaurants as well as Chinese restaurants. When you go to a Chinese restaurant, you find people working in the restaurant speaking Korean very well…. I don't feel uncomfortable going to the Chinese restaurant because I used to eat Chinese food that I liked in Korea.

Playing with grandchildren, as seen in the case of Ms. Park, was another activity participants continued to enjoy, particularly in the case of those who lived with an adult child. For participants who lived independently or in a senior housing apartment, lack of interaction with their grandchildren caused them loneliness and loss of joy in life. Mr. Han shared his observation of older Korean residents in the apartment complex where some elderly Koreans spent their time looking out their windows and waiting for their children's visit. Although Ms. Lee did not express much about her lonely life during our conversation, it was very obvious that the independent lifestyle prevented her from having frequent interaction with her son and grandchildren. Thus, it was the absence of continuity of family interaction in leisure that was experienced as painful.

Recreating Koreanness

As discussed in the previous section, participants continued certain previously-practiced leisure activities, regardless of environmental, social, and cultural changes caused by their immigration. Other leisure activities were discontinued because of internal or external constraints faced in this country. Interestingly, however, some cultural activities that participants were never attracted to in their previous lifestyle in Korea were recognized and chosen for the purpose of seeking ethnic identity and cultural solidarity in this new context.

For Mr. Suh, the Kye meeting was a *new* cultural activity he learned to appreciate after his immigration. Mr. Suh confessed that he never paid attention to the activity in the

past in Korea and thought it was only for women, men being generally more preoccupied with matters of work and politics during that time. Now however, Mr. Suh serves as president of a Kye meeting. He enjoys their monthly gathering with other members, which is often followed by eating, drinking, Karaoke singing, dancing, and conversing. For him, it is a place he feels comfortable with his identity, Korean language, and Korean manners.

For those who are confined by transportation barriers, different activities were substituted as a form of *Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi*. Ms. Lee, for instance, often chats on the phone with her friend who lives several miles away. The Korean residents in a senior housing apartment learned to participate in various leisure activities together in the new living environment after immigration. As Mr. Han mentioned in the previous section, for instance, early every morning a group of older Korean American residents would walk around the apartment complex, sharing information and greetings with each other, and would occasionally end up stopping by one of their apartments.

For Korean Americans who keep close relationships with other Koreans through informal visiting, watching Korean videotapes turned out to be a very popular activity as we have observed in the previous section. Watching Korean videotapes with a group of friends seemed to work as a form of *Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi* behavior for Ms. Lee who lives in a senior housing apartment complex. Probably, visiting itself is a *Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi*-like activity for the participants, though they spend less time conversing with each other than watching the videotapes. Older Korean Americans who emigrated to the United States from different areas in Korea and those with various socioeconomic backgrounds may have had difficulty in finding common interests and shared experiences. For instance,

Ms. Lee admitted that she spent a lot of time watching Korean videotapes with other Korean residents living in the apartment. However, she reported that she could not find anyone with whom she could personally converse and share similar interests and thoughts. Nevertheless, seeking out others to establish some kind of Koreanness often occurred through leisure. Although some older Koreans developed very close relationships with particular Korean neighbors, they also embraced informal social visiting as a way of maintaining familiar relationships, language, and culture. Mr. Han explained why watching Korean videotapes was a popular activity among older Korean Americans:

> The reason the elderly enjoy watching videotapes is that these programs show how they lived out their lives in the past….The stories on tapes make them reflect on their life experiences… they miss, their *Han-Kuk-Jeok-In-Keot* (Koreanness) in their viewing of videotapes.

To some extent, watching Korean videotapes is a unique activity which can be found only among Korean immigrants living in other countries. As Mr. Han mentioned, every participant in my study spent some time each day watching Korean videotapes as a free time activity. Some participants consider watching Korean videotapes a continuation of watching Korean TV programs.

Familiarity with language also extended to watching Korean videotapes with other older Koreans. As noted earlier, watching Korean videotapes with Korean neighbors was a very common daily activity among older Korean Americans living in the same senior housing apartment complex and became the focus of their congregating. Ms. Lee said:

> My Korean friend living across the hall always asks me to come to her apartment to watch [Korean] video and laugh together… She will prepare fruits and tea for all Korean residents in the apartment. If you stop by her apartment you see

> everyone is sitting in her living room…. I feel easy and comfortable when I get called to her apartment. She knocks on my door and says to come to her apartment to watch videotape, so I finish my meal as fast as possible to go to her apartment.

I was also exposed to older Korean Americans watching videotapes as a group when I visited Ms. Lee's apartment for an overnight stay. She took me to a friend's apartment where everybody got together to watch the videotapes in the morning and afternoon every day. In the afternoon when we entered the apartment without a knock (it was understood that one did not knock when people inside might be watching videotapes, lest one interrupt their concentration), I saw about seven older Korean women sitting either on the sofa or on the floor near the TV. They did not talk much while watching videotapes unless they wanted to express or share their feelings about certain situations in the scene. Then they would soon go back to the TV screen.

In a living arrangement such as a senior housing apartment complex, watching Korean videotapes was regularly practiced on a daily basis as a group activity in that the Korean residents would gather as a group to view the videotapes. During my visits to a senior housing apartment complex, I was urged by a group of older Korean women to watch recently-released Korean videotapes that they enjoyed watching. Ironically, in my first visit to a prospective research participant, I ended up spending more time watching than conversing, as she was eager to talk about the main characters in the story. The woman even confessed that she kept one of the video mini-series tapes she rented from a Korean store because she liked the theme song in the story so much. She proudly said that she repeatedly watched it until she memorized them all to sing by herself.

Mr. Song had a somewhat different way of asserting his Koreanness. He wore a hat with Korean letters on it to attract the attention of other Koreans who would recognize the letters.

> I don't have a specific reason for wearing that hat.... When I wear a hat with Korean letters on it, I don't necessarily intend to meet Koreans who might talk to me to check on my nationality. But, when I wear that hat, some Koreans talk to me, so I was thinking that it is not too bad to wear my Korean hat. If somebody is Korean, he may come to me to talk. Who knows? Maybe Chinese think of me as Chinese, but then seeing the Korean letters on my hat, they might figure it out that I'm not Chinese, so they don't even try to talk to me.

Mr. Song does not admit to explicitly seeking familiar people in his daily life by wearing the hat with Korean letters on it. It is the same with choosing a mechanic for his car. After experiencing both American mechanics and Korean mechanics, he emphasized: "I used to bring my car to American mechanics, but now I go to Korean mechanics around [city]… Once we develop relationships we talk with each other, and, regardless of the distance, I prefer to go back there." As Mr. Song demonstrated in his statement, he likes to interact with people he encounters in his daily life. Hence, he goes to a mechanic not only to fix his car, but also for social interaction.

In sum, this section examined how leisure activities and social interaction of older Korean immigrants contributed to preserving their ethnic identity in the host society. As discussed, comparing current leisure activities to activities before immigration was limited by memory capacity as well as by the history of the researched generation. The findings of research question 2 demonstrated evidence that leisure activities are used as a way to maintain previous activities as well as to reconnect to Korean and Koreans and to recreate Koreanness. Activities done to preserve continuity were often social and cultural interactions, through which cultural preservation and solidarity often take place. The

Korean video watching activity was discovered as a uniquely situated activity which seemed to have a great contribution to re-creating Koreanness. Cultural activities such as *Kye* meetings were also used for the purpose of cultural attachment. Watching Korean videotapes requires further interpretation and will be considered later in this chapter and in the next chapter as well.

Response to Research Question 3

Research question 3 inquired: How are leisure activities and social interactions related to the cultural integration of older Korean Americans? Although lifestyles and daily activities of older Korean Americans in this study are predominantly colored by the traditions, culture, language, and food of their motherland, there is no doubt that they have struggled to fit between the two cultures. The tuning in to English language programs and the listening to the local news on Korean stations are examples of accommodation, done as much out of personal interest as necessity. Ms. Kim spoke of overcoming her homesickness during the early immigration period and learning to know and enjoy America after living here for 15 years. Ms. Kim added:

> It was not easy for me to become rooted in this country. But, I have lived here for 15 years, so I should say that some roots are growing under the ground…Yes I think my life has become grounded here. You know other people were observing that, too.

and Mr. Song described a similar realization:

> Since I was not raised in the U.S. I couldn't say I know American culture, but after living here for over 30 years, I could not say that I don't know much about American culture. Either statement could be considered untruthful to someone else.

While we have established the place of watching TV and shopping in *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*, watching American TV provides an exposure to the host culture as well.

> I don't watch American TV much, but sometimes I watch wrestling or skating. Wrestling looks very scary, beating each other with objects like iron chairs or lifting and throwing a woman… I just watch it because it draws my attention… They look like beasts rather than human beings. I don't enjoy watching, but it is entertaining. The other evening, I happened to turn on the channel and watched for quite a long time… (Ms. Lee)

Ms. Lee distinguishes entertainment from enjoyment in her statement by saying that she is entertained by the program, but she does not enjoy it. She seems to take the role of spectator rather than participant in the activity. Nevertheless, watching American wrestling on TV is one way to get familiarized to the host culture. Unlike Ms. Lee, Mr. Han and Mr. Song, who speak English fairly well and are retired from working in American companies, demonstrated their preference for watching American TV over Korean TV or videotapes. But, they only watch American TV to listen to the news.

Window shopping is another example of involvement in an activity as a spectator. Ms. Kim shares her experience of window shopping at a mall with her husband. They walk around with other Americans but do not interact with them: "We would sit there and watch Americans, with their big noses and blonde hair… watch them pass by because now we are not afraid of doing it." When Ms. Kim and her husband went window shopping, they would eat sandwiches from a snack bar in the mall.

Mr. Song goes to McDonald's every day for lunch not because he finds the food particularly delicious or is looking for active social interactions, but to maintain his daily routine of his previous work experiences before his retirement. He confirmed it in his statement:

> In the morning, staying home is somewhat boring, so I get out to get some fresh air, go to McDonald's to eat, and go back home. Then I feel relaxed and calm… Although I don't interact with others or sit and talk, coming to McDonald's for lunch and coffee is good diversion for me so when I go back home I feel at ease.… Coming to have coffee here at McDonald's makes me serene. Sometimes

> if I miss coming to McDonald's because I have to wait for a phone call or stay home, then I feel like I am missing something. I feel discontented…

Having worked in an American company for many years, Mr. Song used to have several close American friends from work. After his retirement, the relationships with American friends became gradually distant and finally disconnected. Mr. Song seems to use his experience at McDonald's to maintain some sense of connection to American society.

Adapting to the language of the host culture is demonstrated in participating in religious activities, too. Ms. Park shared her experience of attending mass in an American church near her house for convenience. Regardless of her inability to understand the English spoken at the mass, Ms. Park learned to adapt herself to fully engage in the mass. She remarked that

> They speak in English, but it's the same order at mass, exactly the same, but in a different language… However, I carry a Korean daily missal book with me to follow in the mass. I can follow the order of the mass, but cannot understand the readings.. I could not understand the whole preaching when it's getting deeper…I have no feeling of discomfort at the American mass… I feel exactly the same as going to Korean mass…At the 7am daily mass there is no homily given by the priest, but there is a preaching at 9am mass. I don't understand the homily, but with the Korean daily missal book, I understand the readings. That's why I can attend a mass in an American church. (Ms. Park)

As I demonstrated in several examples of daily activities, participants were apparently engaged in various leisure activities in the mainstream of U. S. society. However, the reasons for their involvement in such activities seemed to be practical and instrumental rather than simply intrinsically motivated. Activities that showed evidence of cultural integration included playing golf with an American partner and attending American parties during a cruise trip. Mr. Suh shared his recollection of playing golf, not long after his immigration, with an American who matched up with him in the field every week for three years. Once he stopped playing golf for another job, their relationship was

of course terminated, leaving a vague memory of having lunch together occasionally at McDonald's. Ms. Kim shared her experience of interacting with Americans only during cruise trips. Various parties held for the guests in the cruise were fun for Ms. Kim who was with her Korean couple friends. But, they were only exposed to the majority culture for a short-term period with no continuity and recurrence.

For a closer examination of the accommodation process, two categories are discussed in this section that reflect the reality of the world in which participants constantly interact with the host culture in daily life. First, the awareness of physical identity as Korean and the legal identity as American is discussed with respect to leisure activities. Participants demonstrated their struggle and conflict through interpersonal interactions in the leisure environment. Second, participants experienced a sense of freedom as they learned to become more independent in keeping with American lifestyles. Particularly for those who lived independently there was greater opportunity for and exposure to various leisure experiences.

American by Law, but Korean by the Look

This category demonstrates identity issues with which immigrants in general have struggled following immigration. Most of all, distinctive physical appearance as Korean in a majority white American society seems to have great influence on attitudes and behavior of older Korean Americans. Commonly observed attitudes on their identity are very situational as shown in such statements as "We are American citizen in the airport, but Korean outside of the airport" (Ms. Park). The participants, older Korean American citizens, considered themselves as American by law, but Korean by the look. Ms. Park confessed that she acquired American citizenship only for the convenience of it,

particularly when traveling to other countries. Ms. Park shared a specific instance she experienced at an airport in the past:

> If you are not an American citizen, you have to use different entrance and exit. When I traveled to Israel in 1985, I did not have American citizenship. In that instance, American citizens just passed the entrance, but we had to stand on the line. It is very inconvenient when you travel to other countries….

In spite of her American citizenship, Ms. Park said that she is not involved in any activities in American society and usually eats Korean food and associates with Koreans. Hence she emphasized, "Though I am an American citizen, I never say that I'm an American citizen." Distancing oneself from being American is easily shown in other participants, too.

The ways in which differences in physical appearance influence interacting with Americans in a social setting is described well by Mr. Song, who has lived in the States over 30 years. He worked in an American company for a long time and is now retired.

> Here near my house, there is a senior center, but all the members were Whites when I once went there. They welcomed me as a member. I paid $5 for membership fee, but I never went back again because everybody is White and I'm the only oriental. I couldn't know for sure that they welcome me or not… And furthermore, I couldn't feel comfortable.

Discomfort experienced because of differences in physical appearance among older Korean Americans is another issue. Mr. Song worries about appropriate clothing for jogging so as not to be mistaken by his neighbors as a stranger. The consciousness about his differences and lack of belonging confine Mr. Song's leisure space, as described in the following statement:

> Then, I don't need to worry about my outfit when I run in my own yard… If I run outside, shouldn't I change to jogging clothes?…. If I put on my jogging clothes when running, I will not feel like I'm a stranger, but if I run with ordinary clothing I feel that my neighbors may mistake me for a stranger. (Mr. Song)

Another example provided by Mr. Song demonstrates cultural differences in interacting and socializing with others in church activities. Unlike many other older Korean Americans, he doesn't face difficulties in understanding and speaking English. Nevertheless, he does not feel comfortable in interacting with American church members.

> I went to American churches, but for some reason I could not feel comfortable to make friends. So, gradually I did not go to church regularly. I should say that I did not try a great deal to be friends with American church members, but we would say 'Hi' or 'How are you?' to each other. That's all. I go to church to attend a mass and then come back home. I seldom participate in church activities with other Americans…. It's because both I didn't know much about what was going on in the church and American church members didn't invite me to actively participate.

Mr. Song mentioned that his American church members did not invite him to social activities. In American culture, if church activities were announced to the congregation, people who were interested in the activity would show up not because of repeated invitations, but because of individual decisions. In Korean culture, however, people often prefer to participate in activities as a group. Koreans are not used to going to any social activities by themselves, so repeated invitations are very common and familiar to them. When Koreans invite somebody to social activities, they really make the person come by issuing repeated invitations. In my preface I shared a similar experience as Mr. Song's: on such occasions as officially-announced department social activities, I was confused about the invitation process because my American friends would not invite me to come with them. Showing up at a party alone seemed so strange to me that I would not have had the courage to do so.

Sense of Freedom

As I have discussed in the section on "freedom from *Nun-Chi* and *Che-Myeon*" in response to research question one, one of the first and foremost elements older Korean

American participants in the study experienced and enjoyed about American culture was the sense of freedom. Having lived in a very different culture in Korea where collective behavior and interdependence were assumed in daily life, older Korean American participants in the new culture must have experienced relief from their old cultural codes and traditional customs. Living in a culture in which neo-Confucianism still has an influence on everyday life, Koreans learn to suppress individual thoughts, feelings, and emotions for the good of others. In such a society, the harmony of a group is an ultimate goal in fulfilling interpersonal relationships. Hence, it is natural for Koreans to develop *Nun-Chi* which is a key to social interactions. Koreans in general learn to read others' feelings, emotions, and thoughts to be able to know what to do so as not to distract the flow or atmosphere of the group. In this section, the sense of freedom participants experienced in their daily life, particularly during daily leisure activities, was further investigated.

By being free from conventional norms and expectations, some older Korean participants were able to enjoy a sense of freedom through self-expression in daily activities. For instance, participants seemed to be less aware of *Nun-Chi* while learning new leisure activities such as ballroom dancing. Mr. Han stated that he never tried to learn ballroom dance in the past in Korea because ballroom dancing was perceived as a negative and unhealthy, even immoral, activity. After coming to the U.S. Mr. Han became free from the old cultural value system and went along with new cultural activities which interested him. For Ms. Lee, living in a senior housing apartment by herself meant freedom from expected roles and obligations which may not have allowed her to participate in various daily leisure activities. She spent all her day doing as she

wished. She was in control of her daily schedule and was independent from external factors, including daily affairs of family members, which may have contributed to her experiencing a sense of freedom.

Window shopping also provided a sense of freedom when several participants (Ms. Lee, Ms. Kim and her husband, Mr. Han and his wife) strolled around without worrying about what other Americans thought of them. Their distinctive physical appearance, cultural norms, and social behavior may make older Korean participants stand out from the rest of American shoppers. However, participants also expressed that being around other Americans provided a liberating experience apart from their old customs and social expectations. Feelings of freedom from *Che-Myeon* (face) also helped older Korean participants experience a sense of freedom by participating in daily activities. By adapting to individual freedom older Korean participants learned to separate individual behavior and attitudes from social and cultural norms and expectations.

As a counterbalance to a sense of freedom, older Korean participants living independently had to learn to cope with the sense of loneliness in daily life. Mr. Han vividly described the reality of loneliness among older Korean Americans living in a senior housing complex. On the one hand, older Korean American residents are free from all the obligations, constraints, and immediate responsibilities of family. On the other hand, being free from familial roles can also lead to loneliness and isolation.

This section, in sum, explored leisure activities and social interactions for signs of cultural integration. Being exposed to freedom from traditional cultural norms, values, and expectations, the study participants learned to separate personal feelings, emotions,

and thoughts from such culturally-imposed codes as *Nun-Chi* and *Che-Myeon* while engaging in daily activities. The evidence of experiencing cultural integration was noticeable in various leisure activities, although the experience was not usually continuous, accumulative, repetitive, or intrinsically-motivated. The findings of the data dealing with two categories - American by law, Korean by look and sense of freedom - demonstrated that distinctive physical appearances may limit the experience of cultural integration internally and externally. The sense of freedom participants experienced and developed in the new environment clearly helped their involvement in and openness to new, unfamiliar activities in the mainstream culture, but it was often associated with a sense of isolation as well.

Response to Research Question 4

This section investigates research question 4: How do living arrangement and gender contribute to the relationship between leisure activities and ethnic preservation or cultural integration of older Korean Americans?

Living Arrangement

The location of the living environment seemed very important to the older Korean Americans I interviewed. For example, after living in a residential area for the sake of his children's education for many years, Mr. Han moved into a senior housing complex near other Koreans. All participants except Ms. Lee found themselves living in American neighborhoods, not so much by preference, but by the availability of a house at the time of the purchase. After his retirement, with no children to support, Mr. Han decided to move into a senior apartment. Mr. Han was not alone in making the choice. Ms. Kim and Ms. Park expressed their preference for living in a senior housing complex near other

Koreans in the future. Ms. Kim, who lives in an American neighborhood and runs a beauty shop in her house for older Korean customers, stressed that

> It is exactly like living in Korea. I don't feel lonely at all. You know you should have some people you get along with in the United States. That's why I keep doing my work as a hairdresser…to meet Koreans. My house is the only Korean house around my neighborhood.

Ms. Kim created her own space within her house with her Korean customers and seemed unaffected by the neighborhood environment. Because of constant interaction with other Koreans, living in an American neighborhood did not change her lifestyle. Rather, she seemed to be more open and confident toward American neighbors, probably because she is content with interpersonal relationships she shared with other Koreans.

Ms. Lee talked about the comfort and freedom she gained by living in the senior apartment:

> After I lived independent from my son, I felt most comfortable in the world. Everybody says that they did not realize the convenience and freedom until they moved out of their son's house and into a senior apartment complex. Almost everyone says that they would not live with their son anymore…. It is freedom. When I lived with my son, I had to clean the large house and cook dinner for them, then they complain about taste of the food. Gosh! It's like living with the mother-in-law under the same roof…

Mr. Suh echoes Ms. Lee, saying that elderly who live with their children in a residential area take care of housecleaning, baby-sitting, and cooking. Ms. Kim talked about her friends living in a senior housing complex:

> They don't necessarily need a ride. Many older Koreans live within the apartment complex. They can visit each other's apartment. Didn't I tell you about a person who went to her son's house, but could not stay because it was too boring and suffocating. Here in this apartment complex, older Koreans live alike in the same environment. They go visit each other to play Korean card games to alleviate their boredom, a dime or a quarter for betting for the game.

This statement also demonstrates the experiences of independence brought about by living arrangements.

The desire for a convenient environment seems to be another factor in the choice of living arrangement. Mr. Han confided, “I could not make up my mind because it [an American senior apartment] is located too far away from the Korean community. It is very convenient for us to live close to the Korean community... Korean food is easily available.” As Mr. Han mentioned, influential factors in his decision were not the opportunities to interact with other older Koreans, but the convenience and the availability of Korean restaurants, although he did not particularly favor Korean food any more. Mr. Han compared a high rise senior apartment with fewer Koreans to a duplex senior apartment with more Koreans:

> Hence, older Koreans in a high rise senior apartment without anybody to communicate with are like living in a real hell, surrounded completely by foreigners. How much would they have suffocated by lack of English language ability? [They] open windows day and night watching out and, waiting for their children who might show up. Such a lifestyle, that’s not a life…. because of loneliness, people became sick. But you don’t get that if you live this apartment complex [duplex setting]…

This statement also demonstrates that independent living may also cause loneliness among older Korean Americans, by reducing opportunities for interaction with their adult children and grandchildren. Ms. Kim admitted that she prefers living in an extended family setting because “growing up in an extended family system is an enjoyable way of life… always surrounded by bustling family members as well as hue and cry of a child’s voice.” Ms. Kim added that “because of my granddaughters living with us, I don’t feel bored.”

Living in an American neighborhood seems to be a somewhat different experience for older Korean Americans. Ms. Park has lived in the same neighborhood for over 16 years, but she does not interact very much with anyone else living there. She mentioned that “we always greet American neighbors whenever we encounter them in the neighborhood, but we never make a visit to their houses…. Mostly our neighbors are retired men and women, but they never come out of their house.” I made a rather different observation on my visits to older Korean Americans living in American residential areas, particularly one with an older Korean American couple who lived in a very safe and affluent area. Even though our appointment was at noon, it took time for them to open their door for me because they had to unlock several doors; they also had an alarm system in the house. Although they proudly said that they lived in a very nice neighborhood and would greet their neighbors when they met them on the sidewalk, it seemed obvious that they did not visit their neighbors informally. Their daily life was circumscribed within their house, and they were very much tuned into their privacy. Their sensitivity about protecting their privacy resulted in doubts and probably contributed to their ultimate unwillingness to be interviewed.

For elderly who have lived in a residential setting for a long period, changes in living arrangements in later life can be an especially challenging transition to make. Ms. Park remembers her husband saying that they should go back to Korea if they decided to live in a nursing home. But Ms. Park added that she couldn’t leave her children behind, so she would rather live in a place like California, where there are many Korean nursing homes. She understands that “living with Korean neighbors keeps closer relationship with each other by sharing *Jeong* in comparison to living with American neighbors.”

Through other older Korean Americans who live in the senior apartment complex, Ms. Park was informed that “living with other Korean neighbors is a great joy and fun.” She observed that “living with other older Koreans means interacting and mingling with each other.” She also recollected a time when four generations lived together in the house in the U. S., her mother-in-law, her older son, and her grandchildren. Interestingly, she remembered that a school counselor of her grandchild recommended to her son that they live independently for the sake of the education of their grandchildren. Now, living with only her husband in the house, Ms. Park sometimes feels lonesome and deprived of some of the joy of life.

One constraint of living in a senior housing complex was not being able to plant flowers or vegetables in their own yards. The residents could have used a very small plot of soil in front of their apartment door to grow plants, but the apartment office did not allow them to do that because of water waste. A leader of Korean residents in the senior housing apartment complex informed me that it was the only hobby for the elderly who used to spend their time in the field in the countryside of Korea. To occupy their free time with some activities, older Korean residents gradually spent more and more time watching Korean videotapes as a group and sometimes as individuals.

In sum, living arrangements appear to be influential in the lives of older Korean Americans. Those who lived in senior housing settings enjoyed more freedom of mobility and interaction with other Korean elderly on a daily basis. Those who lived in American neighborhoods experienced a degree of separation from other Koreans, but learned to appreciate privacy in a comfortable living environment. Each living condition

demonstrates benefits and obstacles, depending on individuals' expectations and circumstances.

Gender

Considering the generation of my participants, it was not surprising to observe gender distinctions in personal, social, and cultural roles. Regardless of the length of the period they had lived in the U.S., these participants had not abandoned gender role prescriptions learned from their old culture. Although the lifestyle of Korean immigrants in the U.S. pushed women out of their home to work for living, wives are still expected to take care of domestic chores and husbands are the heads of the family, authority figures who are responsible for the family. All women participants and wives of male participants had work experiences, either as manual factory laborers or as assistants for husbands' self-employed small business. Still, even in Korea, as a couple gets older, the woman gains more power and freedom in the family. And the context of U.S. society proved to be liberating in other ways as well.

Mr. Han remembers his social life in Korea, where the lifestyle was very much defined by gender. Husbands and wives participated in different social gatherings, and they would rarely accompany their spouses to a social activity. Mr. Han shared his experience saying, "In Korea, a couple rarely has an opportunity to attend social gatherings together. Men do not accompany their wives to a party. I would not join a party for women." As Mr. Han admitted, those gender roles changed after immigration to the U. S. He described the relationship with his wife as "thread and needle," partly because of his role as a transportation provider in everyday life. He participated in almost every activity with his wife. In some ways his daily schedule seemed to be bounded by

that of his wife. For instance, he drove his wife to a mall. While waiting for her to shop, he would sit on a bench reading. Mr. Han learned to adjust his own schedule to that of his wife and accept the reality as an American lifestyle. Mr. Han further added, "The only occasions my wife and I are not together are Saturday mornings, when I go to the Korean senior school for teaching, and Sunday mornings, when my wife goes to church." Unless a wife has her own car to drive, it was an unavoidable reality for a husband to serve as a transportation provider.

Generally, *Kye* (either money *Kye* or social *Kye*) is a common example of a gendered social activity in Korea. In the U.S., however, participants revealed that when wives go to their *Kye* meeting, husbands often drive them. This spontaneously creates a social gathering for the husbands who happen to be in the meeting to provide transportation for their wives. Naturally, the situation allows both wives and husbands to attend the *Kye* meeting. Nevertheless, when couples get together in the *Kye* meeting as shared by Ms. Kim and Mr. Han, they often separate in a different table or room by gender to talk about various issues and topics. This example demonstrates the fact that the social life of husbands in the U. S. is somewhat limited by the social life of wives. However, a closer observation of the activity itself does not seem to verify the changes in the gender-oriented activity. Mr. Han was well aware of and reluctantly acknowledged the cultural differences in gender roles in Korea and in the U.S. He stated:

> I would imagine that our lifestyle would stay the same even a hundred years later. For instance, Americans will accompany their spouse to any kind of occasions. But no Koreans will do that. Always, men get together with men, and women with women. It's the same here in the United States…. Korean men would not join women's gathering and women would not come for men's meetings.

This statement did not seem to be true for every participant. Depending on the kinds of social gathering, some participants, like Ms. Kim and Mr. Suh, always attended with their spouses. The informal social gathering with female friends of Ms. Kim was also for both husbands and wives by the nature of the gathering. However, as Mr. Han mentioned, some social gatherings were specifically distinguished by the purpose of the gathering. Mr. Suh mentioned he never accompanied his wife to American parties because he never felt comfortable and left the party early. But, Mr. Han used to go to a ballroom dance with his wife and a group of friends. Probably because ballroom dancing is a western leisure activity, he was consciously or unconsciously free from cultural codes and expectations of gender differences.

While men were willing to accept teaching roles if qualified, they were less likely to become students. Among the older Korean students participating in various activities at the Korean senior school, female students outnumbered males by about 5 to 1. Female students were more active and motivated in participation and in learning different subjects than male students. Male students were more subject to *Che-Myeon* than female students, which often led male students to be inactive spectators. For instance, it was always female students who volunteered to sing in front of other students in the music class. I also observed that in many activities including my teaching the aerobics class, male students preferred sitting or standing against the wall and watching female students involved in the activities. In my English class, female students were often less afraid of pronouncing difficult vocabularies and asking questions than male students who were more familiar with the English language. The research participants demonstrated similar patterns in practicing English language. Mr. Suh almost never spoke English in his daily

life, whereas Ms. Lee made a constant effort to improve her English ability and did not seem to have a problem with speaking English in simple daily interactions with Americans.

For Koreans, preparing food for a social gathering is particularly important and has a close relationship with women's role. In Korean culture, food is often a central focus of various social gatherings. Whenever Koreans get together as a group they are expected to share food, often including a well-prepared meal. As Ms. Park noted, preparing food for guests is an unquestioned and implicit part of the role of host, but it often became a burden for the women in this study. This was particularly true when inviting others into one's house.

Other leisure activities enjoyed especially by women participants included window shopping, watching Korean videotapes, copying the Bible, attending Korean senior school, and talking on the phone. Activities enjoyed by male participants were reading and exercise. Activities enjoyed by couples included listening to Korean radio programs, traveling, *Kye* meeting and informal social gatherings. Overall, women participants demonstrated a higher possibility of assimilating into the main culture than male participants because of different social expectations toward gender. Men are more conscious of *Che-Myeon* and *Nun-Chi* in daily activities than women because society has lower expectations of women, who were often less educated in the past. Women feel free to express themselves and are less afraid and aware of making mistakes in public.

In summary, this section addressed how living arrangement and gender influence the contribution of leisure activities to ethnic preservation and cultural integration of older Korean Americans. The findings demonstrated that living arrangement and gender

played significant roles in determining and shaping the leisure choices and involvement of older Korean Americans in every day life. Korean Americans in general prefer to live in American neighborhoods as demonstrated by the research participants who wish to integrate into the main society. Their interaction with American neighbors, however, was limited to formal greetings. With limited communication skills and different cultural codes in developing interpersonal relationships, the participants in the study nevertheless became comfortable with physical distance in American neighborhood**s** and learned to accept such cultural notions as privacy and social space. Korean Americans have achieved social integration only by living in American neighborhoods, carving out bigger and deeper portions of cultural integration as a matter of fact. Older Koreans living in a senior apartment complex with other Korean neighbors enjoy more opportunities of sharing *Jeong* through active interactions and relationships in daily activities which lead to experiences of ethnic solidarity.

Gender is another factor through which leisure experiences of older Korean Americans are shaped and strengthened. Dependent relationships of older Korean couples limit new experiences in the main culture. Social and cultural expectations of gender roles in Korean culture are another constraint on cultural integration. All three female participants in this study seemed to depend heavily on their spouse or children for transportation and language help in daily life. But they demonstrated more confident, energetic, and positive attitudes in adjusting to and embracing the different culture and environment. Ms. Kim and Ms. Park often said with confidence that when the time comes (to live alone), they will learn to write checks by themselves. Female Korean participants were clearly less constrained in adapting to opportunities for cultural integration.

Variations in the Meaning of Specific Leisure Activities

In the previous sections of this chapter, daily leisure activities of participants were extensively analyzed for the meanings that were common to all participants or distinctly different for some. In this section each activity is analyzed for all the meanings associated with it. That there are multiple meanings associated with each activity is immediately apparent. This cross-cutting activity level analysis is intended to further clarify the complexity of leisure experience for older Korean immigrants and to identify those activities that are more or less associated with ethnic preservation and cultural integration.

The data in the study showed that activities were done not only with others but also alone, and some activities were both solitary and communal. Examples of solitary activities include reading, exercise/walking/jogging, eye [window] shopping, listening to Korean radio programs, traveling, and watching Korean videotapes. Group activities include singing and dancing, social parties, formal social gatherings (*Kye*), talking and singing on the phone, informal visiting (*Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi*), watching Korean videotapes, ballroom dancing, and attending Korean senior school. In many cases, the leisure activities include both solitary and collective activities. Each activity is analyzed and interpreted in relation to categories identified with respect to previous research questions. For instance, some activities contribute more to *Jeong* and others to *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*. But most seem to serve a variety of purposes.

Reading

Participants very commonly included reading in their daily routine. They often read the Bible and religious books. Older Korean Americans also enjoy copying the Bible

into a notebook, as Ms. Lee and Ms. Park did to increase knowledge and self development. Mr. Suh recollects that in Korea he used to spend a lot of time on reading. After immigration to the U.S., he was much busier, holding two jobs. Physically exhausted and pressed for time, he gradually spent less and less time reading books.

Participants who did not face language barriers--namely Mr. Han and Mr. Song--reported that they enjoyed reading books written in English or Japanese. Mr. Han mentioned, “A third of books I read are written in English and two thirds in Japanese…. I seldom read Korean books.” It seemed that familiarity with other languages helped Mr. Han and Mr. Song be open to other cultures through various reading materials. Participants with language barriers, on the other hand, read only Korean newspapers published in the area, partly because copies were free and could be picked up from any Korean restaurants or stores in the area. Ms. Lee receives several free Korean newspapers once a week. Her limited English makes it difficult for her to read American newspapers; besides, she added, “I have to pay for the American newspaper subscription, unlike Korean newspapers.” Mr. Song mentioned that there were no Korean newspapers available when he lived in Indiana, but now he can read them every day.

Immigration has little effect on reading habits, as the examples of Mr. Han, Mr. Song, Ms. Lee, and Ms. Park indicate. Mr. Suh was not able to read much after his immigration because he held two jobs for many years and could not find much free time. Most of the participants, however, were now retired and had more time for reading in the way they did before leaving Korea. Mr. Han considered reading as his “joy of life,” saying “I would die if I were not able to read.” He also added that when he was immersed in reading, he forgot about himself and felt that he was a very significant person, and that

reading stimulated his interests in life. Obviously, reading was one of the major activities Mr. Han enjoyed for *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* and self development. Others read only to accumulate knowledge. The lack of a second language contributed to the maintenance of ethnic identity for older Korean participants who had access only to Korean newspapers, magazines, and books. Ability to read in different languages provided more opportunities to learn and to be open to other cultures.

Exercise/walking/jogging

Interestingly, Mr. Han considered exercise to be work; leisure to him was something he enjoys doing and something that helps him kill time. Therefore, leisure for him is "sitting quietly, listening to the music, or watching video tapes." Regardless of how Mr. Han views work and leisure, he regarded the time he spent on physical strengthening through exercise as reflecting his "zest for living." Clearly, Mr. Han considered exercise to be a medium of self development.

Walking was used as a vehicle for social interaction as much as for exercise, particularly among those living in a senior housing complex. As Mr. Han had observed of older Korean Americans who walk early every morning, walking around their apartment complex provides an opportunity for the Korean residents to develop *Jeong* among themselves through exchanging information and caring for each other when necessary.

Mr. Song found that it was not fun to jog in his neighborhood because he was so worried about his neighbors, mistaking him as a stranger when he was not properly dressed in jogging clothes. This and the experience of being barked at by neighbors' dogs while jogging made him stay inside his property for exercise. He explained: "When I run in the back yard of my home, I don't need to worry about dogs' barking and smell of gas

from cars…. [and] I don't need to worry about my outfit." This example demonstrated that ordinary activities are not without their struggles. Mr. Song seemed to feel that he was a stranger and outsider, disconnected or disengaged from others. He seemed very aware that his physical appearance drew attention, and he suddenly became sensitive to his *Che-Myeon* (face) as a Korean.

Unlike Mr. Song, other participants often enjoy walking around their neighborhood or shopping mall for exercise and interaction with Americans. While walking around, Ms. Kim loves to greet or be greeted by her American neighbors who she thinks are very kind, with good smiles. Going to a mall for walking and window shopping is another activity viewed favorably, particularly by women participants. To some extent, these activities encourage participants to keep contact with the main culture, although they are not actively involved in the process of cultural integration.

This activity serves both the preserving of ethnic identity and integrating into the mainstream, depending on the environmental settings. Walking around with other Koreans in the apartment complex every morning is an opportunity to share *jeong* and strengthen ethnic solidarity. Walking around the mall alone or with a spouse helped participants observe American culture and interact with non-Korean people, albeit in a limited way.

Window [Eye] Shopping

Window shopping is another multi-purpose activity. Participants went shopping out of boredom or for exercise, stress relief, or relaxation. Male participants developed strategies for using their time while waiting for their wives to shop. Mr. Han stated: "I usually bring along a book and read there while my wife walks around for eye [window]

shopping…. When I read here at a mall, I don't get disturbed by my wife." Mr. Han, in this case, developed a strategy for *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* and self development through reading at a mall while waiting for his wife.

Mr. Han emphasized that his lifestyle has changed since living in the States because he always has to accompany his wife wherever she goes. He learned to adapt to this lifestyle, but he admitted: "Recently I got tired of doing it. So, when we go to a shopping mall, I sit on a bench and read books while my wife walks around shopping." Ms. Kim's husband always gave her a ride whenever she wanted to go for shopping. Unlike Mr. Han, Ms. Kim's husband would participate in shopping activities with Ms. Kim rather than sit by himself and wait for her to finish shopping. Unlike Mr. Han, Ms. Kim's husband enjoyed shopping itself as a *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* activity.

Transportation was a major barrier for Ms. Lee; she could enjoy window shopping only within walking distance. For some participants, window shopping was relaxing and fun, but others found it boring. Ms. Lee said that she went shopping out of boredom alone, since she could not visit her friends due to transportation barriers. She explained that "When I feel bored, I go shopping a lot. Alone… yes, I go shopping out of boredom."

Interestingly, the female participants, even those who did not speak English well, were relatively comfortable purchasing consumer goods without help from others who speak English. In general they indicated that it is not difficult to figure out what to do by using their "*Nun-Chi*" in such contexts. Knowing the price on the tag of an item, their minimal communication skills always seemed to work. My observation of Ms. Lee in a shopping mall verified their statements. Ms. Lee was walking leisurely around the mall

and decided to buy a bottle of vitamins in a store. With her minimal English language ability, she made sure that she received the discount for the item on sale and the discount for a senior citizen which applied on certain days. But when it comes to real shopping with a list of items to purchase, Ms. Park said that she would choose to go to Korean stores because she could communicate more freely with Korean merchants. Hence, there is no doubt that participants preferred Korean stores over American stores if the retail price was the same or similar.

Window shopping seems to be preferred by participants as a way to spend their free time. Although it was enjoyed more by females, males often accompanied their wives as a transportation provider. For the elderly who do not have many places to go for free time, window shopping is easily accessible with no pressure or worry about interactions with others. Koreans experience a sense of freedom from a routine daily life when shopping around with no particular purpose. This activity also provides an opportunity to adapt to the mainstream culture just by being exposed to other Americans.

Listening to Korean Radio Program and Korean Music

Like other large metropolitan cities in the States, the study city has Korean radio program broadcasts to meet the needs of the area's Korean population. Listening to Korean radio programs seemed to make the participants feel good and comfortable and alleviated some stress. The men and women in this study seemed to regard Korean radio as a companion and a way of managing loneliness. They often turn on the Korean radio channel early in the morning and leave it on the whole day. Ms. Lee stated that the first thing she does in the morning as soon as she gets up is to turn on the Korean radio

channel. She added that when she goes out, she turns the radio back on as soon as she gets home.

Some programs invite listeners to answer Bible quizzes or to sing on the phone. Ms. Lee shared her excitement about calling the radio station and providing the right answer. Ms. Kim told me about her friends who call the radio program to sing. Through these activities, participants seemed to keep in touch with Korean culture, current trends in music, and current news about politics and social issues. Korean radio also contributed to feelings of *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*.

Listening to the Korean news is very informative as well because through that channel older Korean Americans are able to keep up with news in the States. This helps them feel that they are part of the world and are not blind or confined because of the language barrier. This activity particularly helps participants stay attuned to gaining knowledge and increase self confidence through the familiar language. Listening to Korean music or singing is a way of self-expression and self preservation. Through these activities, participants had a source of joy in their life. Singing plays a very significant role among Koreans in their culture. Often times, Koreans are encouraged to sing in various social gatherings. Obviously, listening to Korean radio programs and Korean music helped the participants to maintain their Korean culture through the familiar Korean language.

Traveling

Participants enjoyed traveling because it provided them an opportunity to breathe fresh air and to interact with other Koreans while exposing them to the wider world. They spent travel time eating, talking, singing, walking, and having fun together. Several

participants said that while many older Korean Americans enjoy traveling with a cohort group, they consider traveling with their adult children boring because they feel that a generation gap separates them from effective communication. Therefore, trips are often sponsored by such organizations as the Korean senior school, the Korean community center, the Korean welfare center, or Korean churches.

Traveling was eye-opening for Ms. Lee and Ms. Park who were interested in self-improvement and learning. Through this fresh and exciting experience they discharged stress accumulated in their daily life. Through traveling, some participants confronted the issue of their ethnic identity when they met people from different cultures and countries. Meeting various people through their trips made participants aware of their ethnic identity, particularly their physical appearance, as well as increasing their English fluency.

Watching Korean Videotapes

Watching videotapes seemed to be the way most participants spent their free time when they were bored. Some participants, especially women, spent a lot of time watching Korean videotapes. In general, they prefer to rent five to seven videotapes at a time—enough to occupy their free time for a week. The rental fee is one dollar per tape, discounted to five dollars for seven videotapes. One videotape normally takes about two hours to finish. Soap opera miniseries dramas are popular videotapes for women, who especially enjoy watching with other Korean friends. Those who watch videotapes most seriously watch them by themselves so that they won't get disturbed by other people. Ms. Kim shares her experience of immersion in the stories as a great experience of enjoying her leisure time. Mr. Han explained why older Korean Americans enjoy watching Korean

videotapes: “These programs show how they lived out their life in the past…. The stories on tapes make them reflect on their life experiences…. They miss their Koreanness in their viewing of videotapes.”

Watching videotapes also provided an opportunity for older Korean Americans to interact with each other. Among those who live in a senior housing apartment complex, where they can easily visit each other’s apartment on foot, Korean videotapes allow them to spend their time laughing and having fun together. They would often watch the same videotape more than once, to include those group members who did not watch it the first time. This demonstrates that at least some of the viewers do not ascribe as much importance to watching the tapes as to having company with whom they enjoy talking and interacting. It is also true that watching videotapes is a way to pass the time. For those who stay home, the day would slip away while they watched two or three tapes in a row, taking as much as six hours in all. Those who worked were too busy and tired to go to a movie theater in the evenings after work. They often watched Korean videotapes before they went to bed as a way of relaxing. They felt that they didn’t have any alternatives.

The language barrier is another reason why older Korean Americans confine themselves to Korean videotapes for their leisure since Korean TV programs are not available except in a few large cities in the U. S. Although American TV programs are available all the time, many of the elderly would not be able to understand them much. Even those who are fairly good at understanding English would admit that they have a difficulty in following jokes and slang and thus they would not be able to laugh along with the rest of the American audience.

Watching Korean videotapes was one of the most distinctive activities I observed during my visits to senior housing apartments and houses of prospective research participants. While I was visiting an older Korean woman with whom I had made an appointment, several other Korean residents stopped by her apartment and joined our conversation. One woman showed some interest in volunteering for my research and allowed me to stop by her apartment for further conversation. During my visit, she wanted me to watch a mini-series drama that was a recent hit in Korea. She was excited to talk about the story to me, since I had not been exposed to Korean TV programs for years. I learned that in a senior housing apartment setting where many Korean neighbors live nearby, getting together to watch Korean videotapes was a routine way to spend their free time. They get together, almost daily, either in the same place (the one with the best VCR) or in the apartment of someone who has rented new videotapes. They often exchange videotapes with each other after watching them, or they watch the same videotapes again with different groups.

As mentioned earlier, participants watch the same videotapes again with different groups and swap videotapes with each other. Ms. Lee's time diary for a week demonstrated that she watched videotapes in the morning, afternoon, and sometimes evening, too. As Mr. Han emphasized, Korean immigrants in general seem almost addicted to watching videotapes. Considering the hours people spend watching TV program nowadays, this is not surprising. However, we may consider the problem serious when we look at what motivates the older Koreans to watch Korean videotapes. Older Korean Americans are very limited in access to leisure resources and typically suffer significant language barriers as will be addressed again in chapter five.

Social Parties

While *Kye* meetings and *Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi* have been discussed thoroughly to this point, two other forms of social gatherings were discussed by participants: Korean social parties and American social parties. Participants often commented that they could not enjoy American social parties as much as Korean social parties, partly because of language barriers, but mainly because of different cultural codes and understanding. While Korean social parties are characterized by solidarity, social interaction, familiarity, self-expression, shared cultural codes, and long-lasting friendship, American social parties present Koreans with language barriers, unfamiliarity, limited to no interaction, formal visiting, and confined experience.

Unlike American social parties, which often require formal invitations, Korean social parties are usually informal without any invitation required. One participant mentioned that older Korean Americans would get together at the house of their church members after church service on Sundays without asking any permission from the host. Or Korean employees working for a Korean cleaning company would often get together for a picnic or for socializing after work. These Korean social parties help Koreans feel solidarity through social interactions with each other. Through this activity they reaffirm shared cultural codes, get familiarized, and keep long-lasting friendships.

Nevertheless, some participants recollected certain involvement in Korean social parties as painful. Mr. Song described his unpleasant experience with drinking manners at social parties:

> In Korea, when your coworkers invite you to drink after work, you have to go with them. Here in the States, they don't have that custom. I like it here…. In Korea, drinking is a big burden for me. I assume it is the same case for others too. In a workplace in Korea, if somebody suggests coworkers go for a drink after

> work, you ought to join them. Or, you will get isolated from the rest of coworkers. It is called 'Wang-Tta' (reject). So, you cannot avoid going with them. But, here in the States you don't need to do that…

The *Nun-Chi* normally experienced is thus a burden in Korean social settings. Mr. Song remembers that in Korea he had a hard time learning and adjusting to interpersonal interactions and relationships, particularly with regard to drinking at social gatherings with coworkers. In Korean culture, the bonding of interpersonal relationships among Korean males is somewhat determined by interactions with each other while socializing and drinking. For him, being forced to drink at such gatherings was a matter of such a great pain that he would never be able to adjust. He concluded that his personality fits better into the American way of life, in which individual choice and privacy are appreciated.

Talking and Singing on the Phone

Having Korean friends with whom to talk, laugh, and travel was very important for the older Korean Americans studied here. Friendships developed in Korea in the past are carried on in the States and further strengthened by various activities together. Particularly for the elderly who are limited by transportation, talking with friends on the phone is a very common activity. They talk nearly everyday about trivial happenings. Through this conversation and interaction they feel that they are less isolated from the world. As seen in the case of Ms. Lee, they sing on the phone for each other when they are bored with talking. By engaging in this form of a leisure activity, they learn to strengthen their relationship and create the experience of *Jeong.*

Attending Korean Senior School

For older Korean Americans, the Korean Senior School in the region is a place where they can learn American culture and language and can meet and interact with other Koreans through various activities. They have such classes as English conversation on different levels, Korean music, aerobics, calligraphy, Korean history, and guest speakers on various topics. More details on daily schedules and programs of the school were also shared in the preface.

The school is a place for friends, social interaction, and learning, and it provides an outlet for emotions. Most of the students in the school live in the U.S. by invitation of their adult children. Few students in the school are first-generation Korean immigrants who came to the U.S. by their intention. Mr. Han and Mr. Song worked as volunteer teachers at the senior school and Ms. Lee was the only student enrolled in the school among the participants. Ms. Lee was very faithful about going to the senior school on Tuesdays and Saturdays every week.

Although Ms. Lee is apparently the only research participant attending the school as a student, the idea of Korean senior school for older Koreans seemed to be very significant in their daily life. The Korean senior school is a place where older Koreans find comfort, attachment, and familiarity with language, culture, and people through various interactions. It is a place where they relieve the accumulated stress of the week by getting away from home. It is a place where they try to make sense of their life by identifying with other Koreans who also live between the two cultures. It is also a place where they learn to accommodate with the host culture by taking English language classes, singing an American anthem in a music class, listening to an American guest

speaker on the topic of "living wills," and taking a class to prepare for the American citizenship test.

Ballroom Dancing

Dancing, particularly American ballroom dancing, was enjoyed by a few research participants. Dancing is a new and assimilated activity that provides joy of life, flow-like experience, and social interaction. Some older Koreans participate in ballroom dance with other Korean friends on major American holidays. Mr. Han shared his experience of going to a ballroom dance with his Korean friends:

> We dance changing partners, exactly as other Americans (called foreigners) dance…. We have a group of friends who are good dancers. Dancing is a very good exercise to alleviate stresses. My wife likes it very much, too…. I never danced before in Korea. After coming to the States, slowly I started to go with other people who dance… I love music. If you have a sense of rhythm to the music, you simply move your body around. In general, American dance is not difficult to learn…. We go to a dance hall only for special occasions such as New Year, Christmas, or Thanksgiving holidays. At other times, we only enjoy singing with *Karaoke*.

The fact that ballroom dancing is a leisure activity among this generation of older Korean Americans can be considered a remarkable change. As Mr. Han acknowledged, "In Korea, an opportunity to dance for social interaction is not viewed as a positive activity mainly because of the way ballroom dance was introduced during the Korean War through American soldiers. Korean society is very reserved." For Mr. Han, ballroom dancing helped him "alleviate stresses, converse with friends, and get immersed into the music." He also loved it because he could taste the joy of life. He further shared that "it provides an opportunity to interact with other women through dance and that motivates the meaning of life. Within this American culture such an interaction is possible naturally. That's the real social interaction." Ballroom dancing was an activity

through which Mr. Han also experienced *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*. Although he participates in the activity only occasionally, and only with Korean friends, they are in the midst of American dancers on the floor, mingling with them during the activity. The activity thus provides a sense of freedom by virtue of its unconventionality in Korean culture.

Volunteerism

Volunteer activity was a daily routine activity for male participants in particular in the study. All three male Korean American participants were involved in various forms of volunteer work. Mr. Suh served as president of the Older Korean American Association. Mr. Han and Mr. Song taught English at the Korean Senior school for many years. Mr. Song worked for the Korean Service Center several years ago and Mr. Han is currently working at the Pan-Asian American Service Center. Mr. Suh and Mr. Song limited their service to the Korean community, whereas Mr. Han extended his service to both the Korean community and the American society.

Considering social and cultural expectation and recognition toward elderly men in Korean culture, it is not surprising to observe older Korean men seeking honor and title from the Korean community they belong to. It could be more so for Korean immigrants who often felt left out of the main society, unrecognized and ignored, particularly after their retirement. One way for them to identify their personal self with their social self is to be recognized by the Korean community, with a title that would provide them authority and power. Another approach used to gain recognition was to submit articles to local Korean newspapers, as in the case of Mr. Song and Mr. Han whose writings appeared on newspapers for the last few years. They all seemed to enjoy what they do for their community and gain a sense of achievement through involvement in those services.

They do not necessarily view their volunteer service as a leisure activity but obviously experienced enjoyment and satisfaction through the activity.

Eating

Eating has a very important role among leisure activities, particularly for these Korean immigrants. For example, Ms. Kim shares in detail her experience of ordering food during her cruise trip with other Korean friends in the past:

> There were various kinds of soup. It was not easy to pick one out of so many choices…. We had a friend who knows well enough to order. So we all ordered the same food that he chose…It worked out fine. The food was good for our taste. Soup was good too…There is a menu catalog for sampling, so I always order soup I have eaten before. I could not be picky about selecting particular soup since I don't know much about it… there are various kinds of dressings. I would use any kind of dressing available for my salad.

As shown by Ms. Kim, ordering food in another language may ruin an older Korean's leisure activity if the person is not accompanied by a friend to help order. Eating is one of the most difficult habits to adjust to in another country, for adults in particular (Bourdieu, 1984). Although participants preferred Korean food, several admitted that their meal habits have changed somewhat, especially for breakfast, since living in the United States. American breakfast foods are simple and convenient. One participant (Ms. Kim) acknowledges her changes by saying that, "Well, I like milk and cereal, so I feel I have changed." When Ms. Kim and her husband went window shopping, they would eat sandwiches from a snack bar in the mall. Another participant (Mr. Song) preferred to go to McDonald's and read American newspapers while having lunch there. Generally, though, the examples of using leisure for cultural accommodation and integration in the six individuals discussed in this investigation were far fewer than examples of using food and eating for purposes of ethnic preservation.

In Korean culture, food is an indispensable ingredient in human relationships, particularly in various social gatherings. For Koreans it is often unthinkable to have social gatherings without food to enjoy. If people invite friends or acquaintances to their house, that means that they prepare everything for the guests. There is no Korean word like “pot luck dinner” because it is not appropriate for guests to bring food. Food is also often used to develop interactions with neighbors. Ms. Kim provides a good example of her own. She says, “ I thought of inviting my neighbor or sharing food for special days, but I was not sure of what to do.” Ms. Kim is struggling between the familiarity with the old culture and uncertainty and discomfort with the new culture.

Summary of the Chapter

Older Korean Americans in the study shared their experiences of the various daily activities in which they spent their free time. In this chapter categories of data were discussed in relation to each research question. Research question 1 dealt with meanings of leisure and social activities. Both psychosocial and socio-cultural meanings were distinguished. Among the psychosocial meanings were *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* (shift in the state of mind) and self-development. Sociocultural meanings fell into three categories: expression of *Jeong* (special bond of attachment and closeness), experience of solidarity, and freedom from *Nun-Chi* (speculation) and *Che-Myeon* (face). With respect to research question 2, evidence was provided indicating that some daily activities and lifestyles before immigration had been continued, but that ethnic preservation was at least as commonly a matter of re-creating or reinventing Koreanness for purposes of ethnic preservation. With respect to research question 3, leisure activities and social interactions did indeed contribute to accommodation to the host culture but only in relatively

superficial ways. With respect to research question 4, living arrangement and gender were found to influence the relationship between leisure activities and ethnic preservation or cultural integration of older Korean Americans, but they were more subtle than dramatic. Finally, in examining leisure activities per se, it was clear that most activities had a variety of meanings and several contributed to both ethnic preservation and cultural integration. The next chapter will discuss and interpret findings of each research question further. First, particular leisure meanings which were identified in response to research question 1 will be explored further, especially with respect to ethnic preservation and cultural integration of older Korean American participants. And I will end with a consideration of implications for both research and practice.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

I want to begin this chapter rather unconventionally by sharing a subtle, but thought-provoking, cultural experience that helped me understand the mutually reinforcing relationships among activity, leisure, and culture in daily life of the American society. In the course of working on my research in a library, I gave up taking an elevator and used the stairwell for exercise. Climbing the stairwell up and down many times a day, I occasionally bumped into some Americans obviously disturbed by my blocking their way. After receiving the same reaction several times, I realized that walking on the left side was unconsciously perpetuated by my cultural convention which turned out to be the opposite to that of Americans. Obviously, I was the cultural violator in this context. This simple behavioral example illustrates the inseparable relationship between culture and activity, which is reinforced daily in a wide variety of interactions. And while leisure activities may be characterized by a greater degree of personal latitude, this study demonstrated that they, too, are culturally determined.

The primary purpose of this research was to explore the relationships among activity, leisure, and culture in the experience of older Korean immigrants. Dumazedier (1967) determined that leisure is an ensemble of ambiguous activities. Activities are situated in cultural values and patterns and used in a variety of ways, sometimes by the same individual. Hence, leisure activities are more than just consistent action patterns. Individuals learn and develop their social world by engaging in various activities, with

histories, value systems, and cultural traditions all coming into play in different ways at different times (cf. Kelly, 1992). In leisure, there is seldom one predictable experience associated with a given activity as was demonstrated in the multiple meanings of specific activities in the last section of Chapter 4.

The leisure experiences of the older Korean American participants in this study clearly demonstrated that leisure provides an arena for social interaction, for maintaining a sense of community, for reinforcing ethnic identity, and for experiencing a new culture. The findings reported earlier seemed to support Dumazedier's (1967) assessment of the ambiguous relationship between leisure and culture:

> Tradition may act to reject modern leisure; it may be the cause of inadaptation, or an imperfect adaptation, to it; it may offer a framework of ritual for the integration of the new pursuits, which in turn would give tradition itself a fresh significance; finally, tradition may serve as a force for balance in the development of the new trends. (pp. 53 -54)

The findings related to research question 2 implicitly support the first part of Dumazedier's thesis in that traditional Korean culture operates as an inhibiting mechanism for older Korean immigrants to acculturate in the American culture. Difficulties with cultural integration in daily activities and interactions of older Korean Americans either encourage them to continue previous activities or rediscover something of the activities of the old country. Older Korean research participants demonstrated this trend with respect to both external and internal continuity (cf. Atchley, 1999). In some cases external continuity was established in maintaining activity patterns from the old country, while in other cases internal continuity was reinforced by finding new ways to connect to Korean culture. The last part of Dumazedier's thesis, that tradition is a force for balance, is supported to some extent by my finding that *Nun-Chi* and *Che-Myeon* re-

emerge in a new form in restraining full participation in the new culture. But still more is revealed in the findings of this investigation with respect to ethnic preservation and cultural integration among older Korean immigrants.

Leisure activities of older Korean Americans in this study clearly reflected forms and meanings that are culture-specific. But some of those seem to address the difficulties of being a stranger in a strange land while others could be seen as characteristic of older adults in any cultural context. *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* is a primary leisure meaning common to all of the research participants: an idea often expressed in their everyday conversation. As noted earlier, *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* occurs when individuals deliberately engage in activities that shift them from a strained or harried condition to an uplifting or pleasant state of mind. As older Korean American participants demonstrated in the study, Koreans generate *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* as a means to counteract accumulated stress, restrained emotions, confining situations, or monotonous daily routines. A variety of activities create this experience, from solitary low intensity activities to collective high intensity activities. All were demonstrated in this study.

On the surface, *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* may appear to be no different from western leisure meanings such as relaxation or diversion. What makes *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* culturally distinctive and unique is not its motive or consequence, but the process by which culture-specific activities contribute to its creation, producing culturally unique experiences. It is particularly true in the experience of collective *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan*, which is distinguishable from other forms and meanings of activities. Collective *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* with high intensity often takes place in *Kye* meetings, informal social gatherings, or even at church, as was the case with Mr. Song. By becoming involved in

such activities, regardless of the motivation, Koreans experiencing *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* share collective experiences, through interactions, expressions, and manners that are distinctively Korean. Hence, in spite of being a more generally human inclination, the experience of *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* is inevitably attached to the cultural conditioning of being Korean in contemporary society. On the other hand, some activities are more intentionally and self-consciously Korean in nature. They are chosen expressly for their value in attaching oneself to Korean cultural traditions.

In the following sections, I discuss the daily leisure experiences of study participants in this study as they relate specifically to ethnic preservation and cultural integration. Regardless of the efforts and determination of immigrants, particularly the first generation, to acculturate into the host society, the older Korean Americans in this study preserved and recreated their Koreanness through daily activities by rebuilding *Jeong*, reinforcing collective identity, and seeking familiar forms from the old culture. Nevertheless, as will be discussed shortly, it is also clear that participants in this study made accommodations to their host culture and learned about it in the course of daily living; leisure activities provided a vehicle for doing so. Considering that the study participants have relatively high education in comparison to most other older Korean immigrants, it can be assumed that the participants have demonstrated higher cultural accommodation than older Korean immigrants with lower education. This influences learning English language and American culture. These general findings will be developed in the following sections. I will follow the interpretation with a consideration of implications for both practice and future research.

Leisure Activity and Ethnic Preservation

When people reach middle and old age they strive to preserve and maintain the existing patterns and structures, both internal and external, that were steadily constructed over a period of many years (Atchley, 1999). It is natural for people who emigrated from different cultures in their adulthood to continue previous activities, interests, and habits when faced with the physical and social discontinuity of immigration. Predictably, the older Korean immigrants in this study maintained familiar cultural activities from the past to assure a sense of community and identity in a strange country. However, preservation and re-creation of the past showed a wide variety of manifestations.

Typical of Korean cultural patterns, the older participants in this study tended to prefer group activities for purposes of enjoyment, even though they often found themselves alone or with just their spouse. Going shopping or to a movie theater or a restaurant alone was not preferred. Koreans have the view that individuals alone are isolated and unsociable. Whether watching Korean videotapes, traveling, attending Korean senior school, going to Korean church, joining *Kye* meetings or singing on the phone, it was obvious that these older Korean Americans were engaged in those activities to keep closer relationships with other Koreans and with the Korean culture and tradition. Consistent with continuity theory (Atchley, 1999), participants attempted to limit the impact of change by finding what would have the effect of preserving their sense of themselves as Korean. The leisure and social activities of participants revealed three distinct connections to the past: (1) familiar activities which were previously done in Korea and continued in the U. S., (2) existing activities which were not favored in Korea, but chosen after immigration, and (3) new activities which were created in a new culture.

The first type of activities was done by the participants who maintained their interests in certain activities they used to participate in and enjoy. Participants chose such activities as formal (*Kye*) and informal (*Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi*) social gatherings for their familiarity, maintaining a connection with their culture and language by interacting with other Koreans. The findings of the study demonstrated that leisure patterns and involvement of older Korean Americans are deeply embedded in the Korean culture, even after they have lived in the American culture for many years. As commonly happens in life, people often learn to realize and appreciate what they had before only after leaving their home. This must be true for older Korean participants in that they cherished various daily activities that they took for granted in the past. The changes in physical environment and interpersonal relationships due to immigration also contributed an appreciation for certain cultural activities and for finding a way to connect themselves with other Koreans to maintain their Koreanness.

Atchley (1987) acknowledged that maintaining relationships with close friends, parents, and adult offspring is considered most important among older people. It is nevertheless impossible for immigrants to maintain their previous lifestyle because they are physically and socially disconnected from their homeland and relationship with others. People in a new place are likely to speak a different language. To live life in the new surroundings, immigrants either have to learn the new language or find individuals who understand and share the same language and culture. Hence, the internal continuity of identity is challenged by the external discontinuity of the environment. Older Korean immigrants might feel a threat of losing their identity if they become isolated from other Koreans. Considering their rather confined environment in a new country, with

transportation and language barriers, participants were limited to certain activities because of their accessibility and availability.

The second type of experience was exhibited by participants who ultimately adopted certain leisure activities in the U.S. that they had not been engaged or interested in. They chose the activity after emigrating to the U. S. Ms. Lee does not remember enjoying *Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi* in Korea; but after living in a high-rise senior apartment building, visiting other Korean residents informally in the *Ma-Sil* style became a primary source of social interaction. Such was also the case with Mr. Suh who relished attending *Kye* meetings that he never bothered with in Korea. Participating in such activities provided social interaction and reassurance of his identity as Korean. This strong attachment to the Korean community and the culture enriched the daily lives of older Korean Americans and, in retrospect, made their experiences in a new culture positive and satisfying, however restrained.

The previous two types of leisure activities were done by older Korean immigrants who were familiar with previous cultural activities, regardless of their actual participation in the activities in Korea. The third type of activities was somewhat different from the previous activities in that they were invented in this new environment to satisfy the need for cultural information. The data from time diaries, interviews, and participant observations all demonstrated that watching Korean videotapes in particular was an essential source of Koreanness for the research participants specifically. In contrast to the other two types of activities, however, it would not have been commonly done in Korea. The activity of watching Korean videotapes deserves some attention for its unique characteristics, as well as for large amount of time devoted to it.

As demonstrated by the older Korean participants in this study, watching Korean videotapes among Korean Americans is a popular activity that occurs in both social and solitary contexts. Watching Korean videotapes in many Korean American homes is the only way to keep up with ever-changing Korean society. In some sense, watching Korean videotapes among Korean Americans is a replacement for watching current Korean TV programs, the most popular free time leisure activity around the world. Watching Korean videotapes as a social activity was particularly common in the senior housing apartment complex where a group of Korean elderly reside in close proximity of each other. This activity of Korean videotape viewing seems to substitute for *Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi* activity in its function. This activity satisfies older Koreans by providing a place for social interaction on a daily basis, through which they build a sense of community and solidarity. Watching Korean videotapes is a unique activity for the elderly Korean residents living in the housing apartment setting because it offers an arena for a collective activity. Nevertheless, this activity also raises some concern when heavily participated in, as in the case of Ms. Lee who sometimes spent the whole day watching with other Korean residents in the apartment building.

Regardless of just how it was used to connect to one's Koreanness, the use of leisure for ethnic preservation was also influenced by living arrangement, gender, language barriers, and transportation in this study. Atchley (1999) considered living arrangement and transportation as long term patterns of external continuity. Continuity of living environment was considered very important because environments condition people, particularly immigrants. Watching Korean videotapes with other Korean residents living in a senior housing apartment, for instance, was developed as collective

activity because of the living arrangement. Their proximity within the apartment complex made it possible for them to visit each other's apartment without having to walk far. Hence, living arrangement was a critical determinant of leisure experience for this Korean elderly group.

Senior housing apartments with other older Korean residents are favored by most older Koreans, especially when they lack transportation, because daily social interactions with other Koreans are considered important and necessary (Min, 1998). As seen in the case of Ms. Lee, living with other elderly Koreans nearby provided opportunities to get involved in cultural activities (e. g., *Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi*, January Full-moon day) through which they develop *Jeong*, experience solidarity, and recreate Koreanness. Unlike most research participants living in an American residential area, Ms. Kim, a beautician, actively took advantage of her beauty shop, run in her living room, as social space for Korean customers. Living in such a private and lonely environment in an American neighborhood led her to find a way to continue and strengthen a sense of solidarity with other Koreans on a daily basis. This sense of bonding and contentment through daily interactions with Koreans must have strengthened her identity, which might have otherwise been weakened by living apart from other Koreans.

Language barriers were another influence on ethnic preservation in the daily lives of participants. Particularly for older Korean immigrants, cultural exploration is constrained by language ability (Furnham, 1984). Learning another language in a new culture is a challenging task for the elderly due to a more limited short-term memory capacity. I often heard complaints from students at the Korean senior school. The initial effort and struggle to learn English would usually end in self-disappointment. They

satisfied themselves by speaking the original language (cf. Gal, 1978). Hence, language familiarity was one of the reasons older Korean Americans preferred to continue familiar leisure activities in which they interact with other Koreans in Korean, thus maintaining their ethnic identity (De Vos, 1995). To compensate for language barriers, older Korean Americans often spent time watching Korean videotapes, listening to Korean radio programs, reading Korean books, and conversing with other Koreans as means of maintaining and recreating Koreanness. Withdrawing from speaking English, particularly after making mistakes, was a very common experience among Koreans. It is particularly hard for male Koreans who fear losing face by making mistakes. It seems to be a very difficult task for older Korean men, considering socially and culturally assumed roles and respect.

Gender plays an interesting role in preserving ethnic identity of older Korean Americans in daily routine. It is easily observable in a formal or informal social gathering that men and women feel more comfortable interacting and conversing with the same sex during social activity, as shown in the case of a Kye meeting. Older Korean men in general are very conscious of their social roles, respect, *Che-Myeon*, and authority, whereas older Korean women become more self-expressive, adventurous, active, and open in daily activity participation. During classes at the Korean senior school, it was often female students who actively participated in such classes as music and aerobics. Older Korean men become more passive, reserved, and self-conscious and often stay behind as spectators. Males prefer to participate in inactive, solitary, and knowledge-provoking activities such as reading while females enjoy active, collective, and expressive involvement in singing and socializing.

Although all research participants demonstrated their inclination to preserve their Korean culture and identity, closer observation of two male participants invites further interpretation. Mr. Han and Mr. Song were practically assimilated into the American culture while working for American companies for many years. After their retirement, however, they retreated into the Korean community through daily activity patterns and interactions. This shift apparently came as a consequence of their isolation from the majority society after they retired. Upon retirement Mr. Song looked for volunteer work in an American company to share his specialty, but ended up with rejection. Feelings of frustration and separation from the majority society no doubt contributed to his withdrawal to the Korean community. The act of reentering the Korean community allowed him to achieve the social respect and authority that is indispensable for older males in Korean culture.

Leisure Activity and Cultural Integration

In general, the examples of using leisure for cultural accommodation and integration among the six individuals discussed in this investigation were far fewer than examples of using leisure for ethnic preservation. Daily leisure activities which provide an opportunity for participants to become exposed to Americans and American culture include traveling, window shopping, going to an American church, going to McDonald's, attending an American senior center, going to exercise at the YMCA, going to Dunkin' Donuts after sauna, going to ballroom dancing, and watching American TV. The research participants particularly experienced a sense of freedom during traveling, window shopping, and ballroom dancing by mingling, though not particularly interacting, with Americans. Two elderly Korean American in the study also developed familiarity and

comfort by attending mass at American churches. But there were also more subtle ways that the leisure of participants showed some accommodation to life in America.

In American culture, participating alone in any activity is not uncommon. Individual self-expression generally covers considerable latitude. In Korean society, self expression is very restricted by the cultural norms and values. Several older Korean female participants cited as their adaptation to American culture, shopping by themselves without concern about what other people thought about them. They were, then, behaving in a liberated American style. Probably, the sense of freedom experienced while shopping by themselves helped them develop feelings of freedom from public scrutiny and from *Nun-Chi* and *Che-Myeon*. Being free from such cultural imperatives as *Nun-Chi* and *Che-Myeon* may have helped the older participants to explore culturally different activities rather easily, as happened to Mr. Han with ballroom dancing.

Nun-Chi and *Che-Myeon* are important elements in leisure activities. *Nun-Chi* is a key factor in developing interpersonal relationships, particularly in group activities. Sensitivity to others is both a socially valuable and a socially inhibiting force. *Che-Myeon* may prevent one from exposing oneself to new or unfamiliar activities for fear of embarrassment or losing face. These qualities are critical for maintaining Korean society. On the other hand, when participants were able to relax their concern with *Nun-Chi and Che-Myeon,* they were able to participate more freely in *new* activities. Living rather on the verge of two different cultures helped them to express their feelings naturally and freed them from any social and public pressure. Doing so also made them feel more a part of American society.

Paradoxically, though, Korean participants come to use *Nun-Chi* and *Che-Myeon* in interaction with other Americans; they unconsciously presume that the Americans share the same cultural conventions. Those research participants with English fluency (i.e., Mr. Han, Mr. Song) were particularly vulnerable to the cultural confusion; they had experienced living in the mainstream culture during work and in Korean culture after work. The experience of Mr. Song demonstrated his struggle with the use of *Nun-Chi* at a party hosted by an American friend. The conflict caused by ambivalence between the two cultures caused him to withdraw from interacting with Americans to the extent possible. This case suggests that cultural understanding of nonverbal behavior may be as important as language ability in the process of accommodating to the main culture.

Such complex (and uncomfortable) interactions as Mr. Song experienced were avoided by participants with greater language limitations due to minimal or no contact with Americans in their daily interactions. Ms. Kim's momentary exposure to American tourists during her trip demonstrated only collections of exciting and fun memories. Probably because her interaction with Americans was casual and shallow, intensive attention was not needed to maintain relationships. During such a short period of contact, Ms. Kim must have been relatively free from cultural codes and meanings to interpret, and ironically, had less of a sense of language inadequacy. That must have provided her with the freedom to enjoy relatively carefree interactions with Americans.

The use of leisure for cultural integration was also influenced by living arrangement, gender, language barriers, and transportation, although to a lesser degree than was the case with ethnic preservation as discussed in the previous section. Older Korean participants living in a senior apartment complex, for example, have a greater

opportunity to interact with residents from different ethnic groups than when living in individual housing. They are commonly encountered and easily approachable in a high-rise apartment setting on a daily basis. Ms. Lee had a Russian friend who sometimes accompanied her on buses to go grocery shopping. They seemed to manage necessary communications with each other by speaking English. Although limited in social interaction, Korean residents in the high-rise senior apartment building greet residents of other ethnic groups in the hallway or in an elevator every day. Hence, older Koreans living in a senior housing apartment setting have frequent interaction with other cultures, though not necessarily with the majority culture, in comparison to older Koreans residing in American neighborhoods. For some older Korean Americans who lived with their adult children in the past, living in a senior apartment complex brought a feeling of freedom of mobility, a higher comfort level, and freedom of self-expression.

Older Korean Americans sometimes use their weaknesses, such as lack of English ability, to protect themselves from unknown intruders in the neighborhood. But they become more aware of the meaning and value of privacy that Americans embrace to a greater extent. Although an independent living lifestyle can lead older Korean residents to an experience of loneliness and loss of joy, they also learn to appreciate the sense of freedom experienced in daily activities. In such living arrangements as senior housing, with a majority of elderly female residents, informal social interaction among the same sex takes place easily. But this was primarily true of the older Korean women I observed. In contrast to the men, the women seemed relatively adventurous and open to other people and cultures. Older Korean women demonstrate their behaviors and expressions rather easily, freer from social expectations and cultural roles, in comparison to men. The

history and lifestyle of this generation, particularly women, proves to be the source of their endurance and accommodation when situated in an unfamiliar social and cultural context.

Implications for Future Research

The findings of this study provide an interesting glimpse into the leisure meanings and behavior of first generation older Korean immigrants in the U. S. The approach taken in this study should be extended to other immigrant groups. Leisure researchers should recognize and pay closer attention to variations in leisure meanings and dynamics of all minority groups. Only by identifying the uniqueness of various cultures, traditions, value systems, and social structures will the full diversity of leisure meanings be revealed. And examining the experiences of immigrants is particularly useful for clarifying the significance of culture in leisure experiences.

Leisure is a term coined and developed in Western cultures and is not immediately recognizable, even in translation, to people from eastern cultures (Linhart & Fruhstruck, 1998). The Korean terms *Yeo-Ga* and *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* both approximate aspects of leisure for Koreans. Since they are unique, cultural terms used among all Koreans, research should start with those concepts rather than seeking English equivalents.

First generation older Korean immigrants, the focus of this investigation, demonstrated more evidence of ethnic identity preservation than cultural integration through leisure. One might have expected something different of 1.5 (Korean-born children of first generation Korean immigrants) and later generations. But my observations revealed similar patterns among the children of the participants, who are

often 1.5 or second generation. Ms. Park's son and Mr. Suh's son, regardless of their fluent English language ability, projected themselves as Korean in ways similar to their fathers. This argues perhaps for a greater impact of physical appearance than language ability in maintaining patterns of daily living. Nevertheless, future research on leisure activity involvement of the second and later generations may reveal interesting differences from first generation immigrants. Furthermore, studying both the first and the second generations together within the same family would likely reveal important intergenerational relationships expressed through daily leisure experiences.

Since this study was, by design, conducted with a small number of participants, interpretation of the findings should resist generalization. Increasing the number of participants and an extended period of data collection could add further insights. Closer observation of sports clubs, social groups, and traditional holiday celebrations could reveal additional aspects and functions of leisure in the lives of the Korean American population.

The focus of the study was limited to the investigation of daily leisure experiences of older Korean Americans in relation to ethnic preservation and cultural integration. Future research should be extended to the value of using leisure to preserve one's own culture and ethnic identity, rather than acculturating to the majority society. It would then be the task of future researchers to investigate the advantages of maintaining cultural uniqueness for the individual, the ethnic group, and the wider American society.

Implications for Practice

Previous research on minority populations has suggested implications for practice (Allison & Smith, 1990). Often these acknowledged the need for available programs and

facilities for the targeted population, for accessible transportation and volunteers, and for sensitivity to the people and the culture. As will be discussed in this section these are necessary but not sufficient conditions for providing leisure opportunities to older Koreans. The implications for practice in the study will deal with four elements: availability, accessibility, sensitivity, and application.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the older Korean Americans in this study were very limited in the programs and facilities that were available to them. Although the Korean community provided a Korean senior school for the elderly, the benefit was limited to a small section of the population due to limitations in the enrollment capacity, the shortage of volunteer teachers, and inadequate external financial support. While there were no senior centers available for the individuals participating in this study, programs and facilities offered in various senior centers in mainstream society may assist such populations by establishing connections between different ethnic organizations. For instance, neighboring American senior schools may invite elderly Koreans from a Korean senior school to share activities and programs with each other. They might go on picnics or trips together to historical sites, to learn from one another.

Older Korean Americans in this study were very limited in mobility due to the lack of transportation, a common complaint of older Koreans who would like to participate in various leisure programs, particularly cultural activities offered for them by the Korean community. Ms. Lee often shared her frustration about the lack of transportation at night when she wanted to participate in leisure related activities such as performances and concerts held by the Korean community, particularly during Korean holidays. The Korean senior school in this study usually picked up their students by van

or by carpools driven by elderly volunteer students; however, their transportation assistance was limited to certain locations, leaving out many Korean elderly, particularly those who live in distant areas. More transportation services and volunteers for the Korean elderly on a daily basis are critical to enhance the opportunities for various leisure activities and experiences. The popularity of watching Korean videotapes at home could be due to the lack of transportation services, preventing them from attending cultural activities such as traditional Korean dance performances, plays, and music festivals planned for the elderly population.

Limited English ability creates a major barrier in the daily life of older Korean Americans living in a senior housing apartment complex. Matching up with American neighbors may be a good way to learn each other's language, food, culture, and traditions. American partners or volunteers may also assist them with such simple tasks as sorting mail since the elderly residents often accumulate mail unopened until a visit from family members or friends. Recruiting more volunteers may help the elderly who want to participate in various leisure activities; this may be especially useful during evening hours when there is limited public transportation available. Korean American volunteers from the third generation would likely be particularly welcome in intergenerational settings. The elders can hand down the tradition, culture, and wisdom from their life experiences while the young have an opportunity to assist them with transportation and learn from them.

Recreation and leisure practitioners should be sensitive to people from various cultural backgrounds, acknowledging their needs and recognizing their diversity. But

availability, accessibility, and sensitivity are not enough. Effective interaction must be facilitated. The following example may best sum up the relationships among the four elements in reality. During my data collection period, I visited a senior housing apartment complex where one fourth of the residents were Korean elderly. In the office, I met a Korean American employee who administers the senior center program for the apartment complex and explained that older Korean residents stop coming to the program after a couple of trials because lunch was always American food. Although the employee knew this to be the major reason Korean residents did not come, she said that they could not do anything about it because most residents were Americans who would not attempt new learning experiences with food. No effort to accommodate the tastes of the sizable minority of Korean elderly had been made.

This example clearly demonstrated that the Korean residents had access to the program which was available for them, and that the Korean American employee was knowledgeable enough to know the Korean culture and the people. However, there was no effort to apply the concepts learned from the cultural differences into practice, probably because the majority residents coming to the program were Americans, who might not desire to be challenged by a new learning experience. An informed employee who encouraged each group to learn about the other group's culture would have found involvement and experience both useful and successful. Leisure practitioners in the future should spend more time applying what they have learned, into daily leisure programs to diminish the gap between what they are aware of and what changes they are able to bring about, using the knowledge gained from their experiences and research.

Conclusion

Leisure does not take place in an isolated life context. Leisure experience derives from complex social, cultural, and interpersonal relationships and interactions. The activity patterns and experience of immigrants, especially in a social setting, reinforce their identity and sense of place in a given environment. This study was intended to investigate how leisure experiences of first generation older Korean immigrants contribute to ethnic identity preservation and cultural integration. Involvement in various daily leisure activities provided older Korean Americans an opportunity to experience *Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan* and enjoy collective fun and pleasure as part of a group. Shared feelings of closeness and attachment (*Jeong*) were strengthened through such communal experiences as *Kye* meeting and *Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi*. Various daily leisure activities also assisted the older Koreans to become familiar with the people and culture in the mainstream society. Interestingly, the relaxing of some Korean cultural codes, *Nun-Chi* and *Che-Myeon*, become a liberating force in experiencing the new culture.

I want to end with a metaphor that summarizes and puts this study into perspective. The application of cultural codes, values, and manners among Korean Americans in a leisure context can be compared to actors who depend on their script in a play. Actors in the play know exactly what, when, and how to perform with their lines in response to other actors on the stage. Likewise, Koreans (actors) in the given cultural context (stage) understand how to behave according to their cultural codes (script). When actors (Koreans) are, all of a sudden, thrown into a new unfamiliar stage (American society) with other foreign actors (Americans), they may choose to stick to their script (Korean cultural codes) for fear of making mistakes. Some actors may like challenge

more than others. Some may try not to be on an unfamiliar stage with other unknown actors again and will limit their roles to familiar ones, if possible. Others may learn to play their roles with impromptu responses to other actors, risking incoherence or even embarrassment. Some actors perform their part better than others, depending on their ability, effort, and motivation. Successful, competent actors not only understand their parts in the script and become familiarized with settings on the stage, but also develop skills and techniques to adapt and assimilate to unpredicted scenes. If we agree that life is like a play and individuals are actors on the stage, there is no doubt that the best actors give some deeper aspect of themselves to new roles, tasks, and challenges. A promising strategy for this comparison is that while the capacity of actors on the stage is heavily dictated by the script and the director, the facility of actors (persons of action) in real life is cultivated by choice and determination. On that account most immigrants celebrate the invaluable experience of living between the two cultures.

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Appendix A

Daily Time Diary

Day: Date: / /

Time	Where	With Whom	What	Category (leisure, work, neither, Both)

*Please, feel free to write on the reverse side of the paper any events, incidents, feelings, and thoughts that you have experienced today.

APPENDIX B

The Interview Guide
(Questions presented in Korean)

Let's talk about your time diary.

[Focusing on those activities the participant designated as leisure ("*Yeo-Ga*"), ask the following:]

1. Why do you do [activity name]? (RQ 1)

   [If ethnic identity preservation or cultural integration are not discussed ask the following:]

   a. Does the activity make you feel any more or less Korean? How so? (RQ 2)

   b. Does the activity make you feel any more or less American? How so? (RQ 3)

2. How has your life changed/remained the same by living in the United States? (RQ 2, RQ 3, RQ 4)

3. a. What types of groups do you participate in socially and/or professionally? (RQ 2, RQ 3, RQ 4)

   b. Which group is most important to you and why? (RQ 2, RQ 3, RQ 4)

   c. What do you enjoy most about being a member of the group? (RQ 2, RQ 3, RQ 4)

   d. Do you see any other members outside of these meetings? (RQ 2, RQ 3, RQ 4)

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions on Living Environment

(Adapted from Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981)

1. Can you tell me about your home (house, apartment)?
2. What things did you bring with you from Korea?
3. What has been important to you to creating your home here?
4. Why are these important to you?
5. What do you like about your home in America that you did not have in Korea?

APPENDIX D

The Informed Consent Form

1. I agree to participate in the research entitled "Leisure activity of older Korean American in the U.S. and its relationship to cultural integration and ethnic preservation" which is being conducted by Eunja Kim (706-543-8977). The purpose of this study is to explore daily activities and interactions of older Korean Americans and the relationship of these activities and interactions to ethnic identity preservation and /or cultural integration.

2. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary, that I may choose not to answer any
question, that I can withdraw my consent at any time, and that I can have the results, in so far as they can be identified as mine, returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.
I understand that this study will involve the following components:

(a) I will be asked to record a time diary for four days that consist of "when, where, with whom, and what" to describe my daily life experiences.
(b) I will be asked to provide a biographical information as a form of preliminary survey.
(c) The first in-depth interview is expected to last two to four hours depending upon the amount of information I volunteer. During the interview, I will discuss daily activities and interactions I have involved in the past and present days. I may be asked questions on cultural integration, ethnic identity, family structure and living arrangement, and previous lifestyles in Korea. The interview data will be kept confidential.
(d) A series of follow-up interviews will be conducted, as the researcher needs more information as well as for clarifications.
(e) The interview will be audiotaped. I am aware that my responses will be recorded in such a fashion as to protect my anonymity. Any names that I mention during the interviews will be eliminated from the tape and will not appear in the dissertation. I am also aware that any identifying information will be kept under lock and key in Ms. Kim's home and will not be revealed.
(f) Ms. Kim will transcribe the interview.
(g) Any personal information such as names and identifiable characteristics will be disguised or written in general terms in the final report in order to protect my privacy.
(h) The interview will be conducted at a place of my preference and convenience, either my house or somewhere else.

3. I have been informed of the possible mental or physical harm that might occur to me as a participant.
4. I understand that the procedures described above may have the following benefits to others and myself:
   Increased knowledge and better understanding regarding “cultural integration and ethnic identity through daily activities and interactions of older Korean Americans.”

5. I have been offered an opportunity to receive a summary of the result upon completion of the study.

6. I have been invited to contact the researcher should I have further questions regarding my participation in this research. Her name, address, and phone number are listed below.

   I have read the consent form (or the researcher has read it for me), discussed the content and any concerns with the researcher, and given a choice of either written or verbal consent.

_____ _____

Signature of Investigator Signature of Participant

Date: _____

PLEASE SIGN BOTH COPIES. KEEP ONE AND RETURN THE OTHER TO THE INVESTIGATOR.

Research at the University of Georgia which involves human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board. Questions or problems regarding these activities should be addressed to Ms. Julia Alexander, Institutional review Board, Office of V. P. for Research, The University of Georgia, 604A Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602, (706) 542-6514

APPENDIX E

Preliminary Questions on Biography

Date: Place: Time:

Participant's Name: Gender: Age:

Birth Date: Birth Place: Birth

Order:

Year of immigration:

How and why?:

Current Living Arrangement:

Brothers: First Name_____ Present Age_____ Now lives in_____

First Name_____ Present Age_____ Now lives in_____

First Name_____ Present Age_____ Now lives in_____

Sisters: First Name_____ Present Age_____ Now lives in_____

First Name_____ Present Age_____ Now lives in_____

First Name_____ Present Age_____ Now lives in_____

Occupation: Before Immigration_____ After Immigration_____

Education: Highest Level_____

Marital Status:

Married what Year_____ Divorced what Year_____

Remarried what Year _____ Widowed what Year _____

Children (Age and Gender):

Name _____ Age_____ Gender _____ Now living _____

Name _____ Age_____ Gender _____ Now living _____

Name _____ Age_____ Gender _____ Now living _____

Name _____ Age_____ Gender _____ Now living _____

Religion: In Korea _____ In the United States _____

Faith: Strong _____ Moderate _____ Inactive_____ Indifferent_____

Involved Activities: _____

Relatives living in the United States:

Friends from Korea living in the United States:

APPENDIX F

Coding Table

Activity	Coding (b/w & within meanings, interpretation)	Cultural significance	Defining conditions (language, transportation, age, gender, living arrangement, and religion…)
Kye meeting	Cultural tradition; Instrumental and functional values; Motive for socialization, place for social interaction & communication; Information exchange; Joy Luck Club = Kye meeting => shared experience; social interaction; play cards; gendered activity for women (opportunity to be free from social obligation & constraints) Trust & distrust *"It (Kye meeting) provides a motive to socialize. Kye is necessary in our society. It is a part of our culture and our lifestyle…Without Kye meeting, people will seldom find an opportunity to meet and communicate with each*	Multiple values: *"Like Joy Luck Club, Kye meeting is a cultural tradition for us to socialize…It provides a motivation. It's necessary in our society. It's part of our culture and life style in our daily lives. That's the Kye meeting…without this gathering, we seldom have an opportunity to communicate with other Koreans…In the gathering they exchange information useful in daily life."* (1B651) Gendered activity; separate gathering by gender; transportation provider: "When you go to any types of social gathering, you see husbands provide transportation for their wives for Christmas parties or New Year's parties when we were younger living in	

	other…They talk about every day life. They share tips on where and how to buy inexpensive items without a rip- off. They can exchange information about happenings in daily life such as a particular doctor who is very kind or rude is in 'such and such' hospital. Or, herb medicine is good for health. All the invaluable information related to daily life comes from the Kye meeting." (1B651)	Chicago. Almost all husbands drive their car…Hence, when there is a Kye meeting for their wives; a social gathering for husbands is created spontaneously. While husbands by themselves eat, drink, and joke with each other in a room, wives gather in another room to have fun." *(3A514)*	
Watch Korean video tape (usually the wife likes to watch Korean video) = leisure = recreation (3A379)	Attachment to Korean experience; reflection of the past memory: *"The reason the elderly enjoy watching video tapes is that these programs show how they lived out their life in the past…The stories on tapes make them reflect on their life experiences…. They miss their Koreanness in their viewing of videotapes."* (2A50) Selections of video tape; only educational program; light program is a waste of time: *"When we stay home, we watch video, Korean video, only old and historical stories such as 'Huh-Jun'(a story about an oriental*		

	medicine doctor who wrote a famous medicine book called 'Dong-Eui-Bo-Gam' and 'king and queen'(story about Korean history.) (2B447)		
Daily routine	Relaxation; enjoyment: time flies *"We have breakfast at home, and usually lunch and dinner out…walking around, shopping, often window shopping…eat something and drink coffee at the mall…we often walk around window shopping, drink coffee, have lunch, then relax, drop by a bookstore to look over new books. We eat at a restaurant, but often use fast food stores for convenience…I don't know, but time flies very fast. While my wife walks around window shopping, I take my book along and read at the mall."* (2B344)	Spousal relationship (thread and needle) => in Korea, a couple has a separate social life. [discontinuity in some freedom) *"The only time we are not together is on Saturday mornings when I go to the Korean senior school for teaching."*(2B455) (his wife goes to church on Sunday mornings and that is the only time he has his own free time alone.)	Leisure activity in Korea: "When I had time, I used to go to the mountain, but in America, I have not had a chance to do that at all. Here you should join a club to be a member, have some knowledge about geography, and have a guide. In Korea, I do this by myself whenever I feel like doing it. My hobby in Korea was backpacking and drawing. But now living in the United States I cannot concentrate on drawing anymore…." ***(3B338)***
American social gathering vs. Korean social gathering	Not totally free & comfortable; Altered state of consciousness; uninhibited; shared leisure being with other foreigners; constraints;	Cultural difference & barriers (structural⇔interpersonal constraints); function of structure management; impression management 'Ki-Bun-Chun-Hwan' =	

	Playful exuberance; diversion; comfort of being w/ other Koreans: *"At an American social gathering, we cannot enjoy as much as we wish to with open minds…Koreans have, so called "Ki-bun-Chun-Whan," (diversion) becoming tipsy and losing one's inhibition… I'm not talking about verbalizing, but dancing, playing around, having fun, making jokes, and then sharing funny stories. We often do this, don't we? But, we cannot do as much in American society….That's why we have a cultural barrier. In Korean society, we open everything in our hearts to others. Only with Koreans, it is possible to be completely open, to talk about everything with other Koreans in Korean society. Among Koreans we share both good and bad stories, however, we talk and share selectively with Americans, not to give them a bad impression about Koreans*(2B760)	talking, dancing, playing, joking, having fun Separate social life of a couple: "In Korea, a couple rarely has an opportunity to attend any social gatherings together. *Men do not accompany their wives to a party. I would not join a party for women. My wife would take care of school visits related to kids' education. I seldom go to my kids' school. After immigration to the States, it has changed to the opposite….I cannot but follow what my wife suggests I do. That's the lifestyle of our family in the States.*" (3A500)	
Reading = leisure (3A372);	Joy of life: "…I would die if I am not able to enjoy		Language familiarity: *"I read a third of*

reading cartoon = recreation (3A386)	reading. Reading is the joy of life in my future…" *(3A300)* Immersion; enjoyment; *"when I am immersed in reading, I feel that I completely forget myself and feel the joy of life. I feel extremely joyful. Hence, I may have been a useless human being, but when I read, I feel that I am a very significant person in life. It stimulates my interests on life."* (3A350) "Reading is very useful in our life if we choose books selectively. Recreation is different from reading. Reading cartoons is recreation. It does not cultivate my knowledge." *(3A386)*		*books written in English and two third in Japanese….I seldom read Korean books…"* (2B285)

APPENDIX G

Dictionary of Korean Words

Che-Myeon: Face, honor, dignity, decency

Chin-Han-Sa-Yi: Close relationships often experienced in informal friendships

Chun-Whan: Transformation, change, or shift

Ga-Kka-Un-Sa-Yi: Close relationships often experienced in formal kinship

Han-Bok: Korean costume often worn in special holidays

Han-Kuk-Jeok-In-Keot: Koreanness

Hyo: Filial piety, obedience to parents

In-Yeon: Relations; affinity; connection

Jeong: A special interpersonal bond of trust and closeness, attachment, affection

Kye: A rotating credit association, a mutual aid association

Ki-Bun: A state of mind or atmosphere

Ki-Bun-Chun-Whan: Shift in the state of mind

Ma-Sil-Ka-Gi: Informal visiting act

Mak-Keol-Li: Liquor fermented from grains or potatoes

Nun-Chi: Ability to perceive unexpressed emotions, attitudes, and thoughts of another person or sensitivity to implicit norms and conventions; the ability to read a situation or environment and know what to do before being asked.

O-Gok-Bab: Rice with five different grains

Ba-Ram-Ssoi-Da: Go out to get exposed to fresh air or atmosphere

Si-Gan: Time

Yeo-Ga: Leisure

Yeo-Ga Si-Gan: Leisure time; spare time

Yeo-Ga-Whalh-Dong: Leisure activity

Yut: A game of casting four sticks

Whalh-Dong: Activity

Whan-Gap: A birthday celebration for a 60 year-old person