

Passive Avoidance and Escape Behavior in the Spontaneously Hypertensive Rat: A Preliminary Examination

著者	HATAKEYAMA Toshiteru, SATO Toshihiko, KATAHIRA Kiyooki
journal or publication title	Tohoku psychologica folia
volume	56
page range	49-53
year	1998-07-01
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/10097/56200

INTERPRETATION OF AGING: WITH A USE OF DOCUMENTS OF LIFE

By

TANABA MIYUKI (田名場美雪)¹

(Hirosaki University)

The purpose of this paper is to advance a new view to explain the interpretation of aging with a use of documents of life, and pays attention to a women and a set of her writings appeared in Voluntary composition "Haha no mi"². The theme that is significance for interpretation of her aging contains agriculture of job, death of her friends/acquaintances, her disease, relation with her grandchildren, and retirement. This findings suggests that a writer who has written since mid-adulthood can be informant for this study and analyzed interpretation of aging.

Key words: aging, content analysis, documents of life.

PROBLEM

Feeling of aging, "I am not young any more" or "I have become old", is caused by various factors. The feeling does not remain as it is; once happens, fades away temporarily, happens by other factors, and then takes root. To understanding of complex phenomenon and process, this study focused on a subjective aspect of aging; interpretation of aging. Interpretation of aging goes slowly in a wide span of time. The purpose of this report is to account interpretation of aging, that is long, slow and complex phenomenon.

Aging proceed long and slowly: This report focused on after mid-adulthood; mid-adulthood, late-adulthood, and old age. In these periods people think about aging more and more. Among mid- and late-adulthood, a transition to old age, various changes happen to people (ex. physical, psychological, behavioral and social changes), and this psychological change begin forties, that is middle age (Okamoto, 1991, 1995; Yamamoto & Wapner, 1991). This period is one of crises, for people must look back on their past and decide orientation of the rest of their life. What features does feeling of aging have ("becoming old", "get to older" and "being old")? As regards past many experiences (ex. go on to a college, get a job, marry, become a parent, retirement and become a grandmother/grandfather), people can distinguish easily what he/she was from what he/she will be by some criteria. But in the case of aging, there is not strong criteria. Though aging always proceeds in everybody, aging is not usually recognized. However old objectively a person is, never change and reconstruct his/her identity without feeling of aging. Only when aging is critical for self, people feel discrepancy of identity what they had

1. Health Administration, Hirosaki University, Bunkyo-cho, Hirosaki, 036-8560, Japan.

2. "Haha no mi" means mother or the fruits of mother.

and what they will have, attachment to past identity, and anxiety for new identity. And then people find some solution to discrepancy, attachment and anxiety. After all aging is so long, slow and complex phenomenon that study of aging needs longitudinal and qualitative perspective.

Interpretation of aging in psychology: It comes to an aging society, many people, distinctively people in mid-adulthood and after, seek for a way of life eagerly. It has been believed that concern for meaning of life and identity is just the developmental task for young people. Now the same concern comes to developmental task for people in mid-adulthood and after. Answer or orientation to meaning of aging and becoming old and rule what is due to do in given time and energy are never showed for people who are getting to older (Rosow,1974). In this viewpoint we must select and decide coping to our aging by ourselves without any guideline. Ways of becoming old and living in old age, actually, are very abstract and depend on everyone. In short, there is not the clear guideline of aging. Considering meaning of aging and life, this report accounts interpretation of aging.

DOCUMENTS OF LIFE

This report focused on Voluntary composition "Haha no mi", has published since 1961 and published Volume 66 in 1997. This magazines contain composition, diary, poem, haiku and report, and we can read in these personal history, development and aging of writer, history of the town /community and historical/cultural background. Let's consider how voluntary composition "Haha no mi" stand in psychology. As mentioned above, we should take wide time-span and space into consideration in order to research interpretation of aging. How to recognize a behavior or life event, that is subjective aspect, influences next behavior. To take wide time-span and space and subjective aspect into consideration, I believe documents of life are very useful. Documents of life are the term that means all of personal documents, and contain life history, letter, writing, literature, photograph, movie and so on (Tani, 1996). Especially autobiographical material, like life history, is important, because it tells us how a writer reflect and construct on oneself.

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF "HAHANOMI"

This study intends a preliminary analysis on a set of writings by one of writer, before content analysis on every writer's writings.

Method: The purpose of this analysis is to get information and guideline for every writer's writings. Thus this analysis focused on an informative writer and her writings, in "Haha no mi" in recent 10 years, from Vol. 56 to Vol. 66; from 1988 to 1997. Criteria for selecting a writer analyzed were bellows : ①her writings have continued to appear for this 10 years, ②her writings are comprehensible and informative, ③I have certain information and knowledge of her through interview, ④it is able to give results of this analysis to her and take her judge about it.

Outline of field: She has been in Aikawa-Town, Kitaakita-County, Akita Prefecture (See Fig. 1). This town is located in a valley between two mountain chains and the point where

the Ani River, its source is Moriyoshi Mountain, and Koani River, comes from the Pacific Ocean, meet. This town has paddy fields spread around these two rivers, in the northeast the Ohno Plateau seventy five meters, and in the southwest the national wood, Akita cedar wood. The following is a transportation to Aikawa: go to Kakunodate on the New Akita Line, change at Kakunodate to the Akita-Nairiku Line, and after about two hours we arrive at Aikawa.

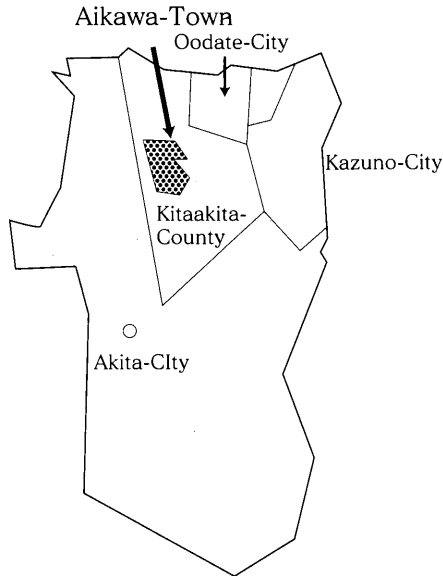


Fig. 1. Location of Aikawa-Town.

Aikawa Town has been formed in May 1955, combined four villages: Kamiohono, Shimoohono, Ochiai and Simokoani Village. This town has an area of 112.6 square kilometers, and the population has been decreased from 12,644 when combined to 8,699 in 1993 (See Table 1.).

Table 1. The population and the number of household.

	the number of household	the population
1985	2,305 (49)	9,333 (191)
1990	2,302 (49)	9,012 (179)
1993	2,922 (47)	8,699 (170)

() shows the number of her Y-community.

Outline of a writer analyzed: Present study analyzed a particular writer, Ai Sugibuchi. She was born in 1925 in this town. Now she lives with seven families; her mother, her husband, her first son, a daughter-in-law, three grandchildren. She is engaged in housework and farming everyday, what is called a hard worker. She has been eagerly concerned with "Haha no mi" since it's start, and her help has been indispensable. In 1984 she succeeded Mrs. Tonozuka as the head of "Haha no mi" Society and in 1996 retired, Mrs. Shoji succeeded. In recent 10 years, from 1988 to 1997, she ranged in age from 63 to 72. This period psychologically comes under the late adulthood, after the period of transition to old age, and it is assumed that she has experienced some psychological changes as below (Hiraki, 1994; Newman & Newman, 1984; Okamoto, 1994, 1995). First, people lost old roles and are needed to explore new roles. For example, confrontation to bodily changes by aging, retirement, death spouse and transition from care-giver to care-taker. Secondly people accept their life and form attitude for death, because they aware the rest of their life is limited. It is assumed that some changes above happen to herself, her family, relative, friends and acquaintances.

Outline of her writings: I will begin with a examination of general outline. Figure 2 shows the number of Mrs. Sugibuchi's writings appeared in "Haha no mi" from Vol. 56 to 66, from 1988 to 1997. She has written every year, and some writings in a year. *Haiku* has appeared since Vol. 61, at age 67. Her writings have general features as below.

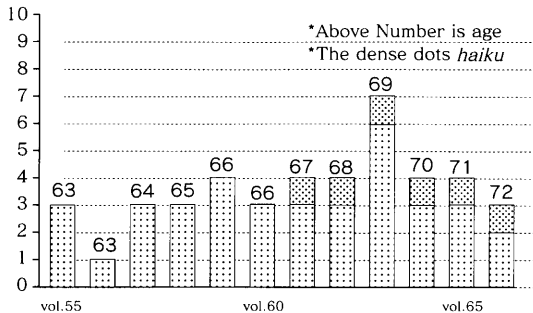


Fig. 2. The number of her writings.

- ① Every writing has her subjective mention.
- ② Mention about agriculture has appeared very often.
- ③ Communication with grandchildren has appeared continuously since Vol. 59, at age 66.
- ④ She has experienced serious disease repeatedly.
- ⑤ She has experienced some death of significance person.

She has engaged in agriculture and house work everyday; she is still care-giver in Sugibuchi family, though she has experienced serious disease. Thus to account interpretation of aging, these features must be taken consideration. Her subjective mention contained in every writing should allow to examine her feeling of aging.

INTERPRETATION OF AGING

This study focuses attention on her interpretation of her own aging. First of all, I have to inquire into descriptions about aging; "becoming old", "getting to older" and "being old". These descriptions appear with theme possibly significant meaning for her. Kaufman (1986) suggested a conception of theme that we base on to interpret and evaluate and integrate our experience of life and to form our self-concept. Telling our life, we create a symbolic set of meaning. The theme differs as well as life. But every theme is related closely to historical/geographical/social situation, everyday-life, social sense of worth and role-expectation. Writings appeared in "Haha no mi" possibly have personal and social theme.

From examination of all of writings, mentioned by all writers in 65 Vols, the theme of aging with theme of personal history, agriculture, family, health and friend (Tanaba,1996). Aging is mentioned with a theme, concerned with a significant aspect of life. Let's take for instance the case of Mrs. Sugibuchi.

(1) Experience serious illness

Mrs. Sugibuchi has experienced serious illness, as "Gratitude" in Vol. 55 (published in 1988, at age 63) shows. A life event of serious illness had much influence on interpretation of her aging. Her writing of "Planting Japanese radish" in Vol. 59 (published in 1991, at age 66) says that she plants Japanese radish on a rested paddy nevertheless suffering a illness. Let us consider the following quotation :

I have been like the word of 'strong as weeds' since I was young and confident that I'm strong as weeds. I have never imagined that I have been sick for a long time, till I go this condition in the latter half. Fields and paddies, never plant for the purpose of reduction an amount of production, get some rest one after another as I do .

("Planting Japanese radish", 1991)

Though she was proud of her health and physical strength in her young days, she has suffered from a disease in these days. One of factors of feeling one's aging is disease (Ishizuka, 1981). Suffering from disease repeatedly has make her feel aging strongly. "The latter half" in writing should mean the rest of her life. It is assumed that repeated disease make keenly realize her that she had passed the best of her life.

"An aging society" in Vol. 59 (published in 1991, at age 66) shows disease and death; how to confrontation with disease now and a way of living life. In the context of an aging society, we can read that she is strongly concerned with events of a Buddhist temple, thinks a aging society as a matter of herself, and calls her 'the older', never appeared before. The reason for appearance of 'the older' is assumed as followings: ① it is depend on the context, that is events of a Buddhist temple and a aging society lead the appearance. ② experience of disease for some years makes her recognize so, as can be seen in the following quotation:

One after another people were worried, suffered and passed away. I have had much illness

as if die, and greatly troubled to everybody. But recently I am resigned to get along with illness unwillingly.

(“An aging society”, 1991)

There is a suggestion here (if I interpret her saying correctly) that having much serious illness, she feels death close to her and is conscious that death is in her schedule for the rest of her life.

(2) Death of significance person

“I thank the head” in Vol. 58 (published in 1990, at age 65) shows her memories since those days they met in her twenties with mourning for the head, Mrs.Tonozuka, as can be seen in the following quotation:

I owe it to the head, Mrs.Tonozuka, that I’ve been able to take the responsibility to my way of life and that I will finish my life with my heartfelt gratitude to anything though I’m selfish. I am moved to tears to really feel thankful of Mrs. Tonozuka.

(“I thank the head”, 1990)

Death of significance person leads retrospect, reflection and feeling of aging (Ishizuka,1981). ‘The head, Mrs.Tonozuka’ is a person who is twelve years older than Mrs.Sugibuchi, her leader and friend, and has asked her to engage in the betterment of life movement and women’s movement and “Haha no mi” club. A mention of ‘I will finish my life’ can be interpreted that she feels going on the final stage of her life.

She has experienced death of older generation, and gradually her generation. “Peace to Aki’s ashes” in Vol. 62 (published in 1993, ate age 68) shows that Mrs.Sugibuchi determines succeed to Aki’s will and misses a close friend with mourning for Aki who was a mental support when Mrs.Sugibuchi was ill. In this writing ‘the older’ appears, as in “an aging society” in Vol.59, in the context of her wish to not have much trouble to family and her lonesome comes from increasing death of acquaintance in elderly club.

I wish to not have much trouble to family, every older and I wish and always say so every time we meet; even so your death was fast.... Recently in elderly club we has lost elderly women in ones and twos, so lonely. Please rest in peace till we meet in the other world. Good-bye, and see you.

(“Peace to Aki’s ashes”, 1993)

‘Till we meet in the other world’ shows that a way of her life and death matters really to her. Her friends fall ill and die with time.

Many of my friends and I are illness as aging. Care from my family and sad parting increase.

(“Watching a TV drama: Oshin”, 1994)

Death of older generation and her generation are not only parting, but the fact that death is on the my way. It is the stage that attitude to death develops.

(3) Retirement

“Gratitude” in Vol. 66 (in 1997, at age 72) shows retirement from the head, her gratitude for member’s cooperation, and reminiscence of “Haha no mi”. Let us consider the following quotation:

Recently I have been in out of condition one after another because of aging. Every time I fell ill, I wish that I hand my role over to my successor who is younger than I, and that younger people participate in our “Haha no mi” club.

(“Gratitude”, 1997)

Significant life event makes person reminiscent. We can read in this extract illness makes her feel aging. The fact that she hopes participation of younger in “Haha no mi” club is related with handing down and reproduction, which is a sign of higher internalization of aging.

Retirement from the head of “Haha no mi” club never means retirement from “Haha no mi” club. She continues to be a writer and cooperator for this “Haha no mi” club; she is still a significance person. Retirement from agriculture will matter to her. It is suggested that a person who has identified oneself with one’s career feels seriously the gap between what one was and what one is (Shimonaka, 1995). She is an altogether different from employees who are prescribed on one’s retirement; she has controlled quality and quantity of her working. Thus it is expected that agriculture influences, not suddenly but gradually, interpretation of her aging. She does not still retire agriculture. Much less housework; do the washing and cooking. Now she is still care-giver.

(4) Aware that the limit of lifetime

The more internalization of aging is gone on, the more the rest of one’s life and one’s condition is considered. For example, she traveled to Taiwan with her husband in her 64 years old.

My husband was in Taiwan on the end of World War II. I have hoped to visit Taiwan while fine, and my wish comes true.

(“A report about trip to Taiwan”, 1989)

A memorial place for her husband, World War II and the end of World War II are much meaningful for her. The fact that perspective of her lifetime is getting narrow, “it’s now or never” or “before it’s too late”, make her determine to do. Thus the limit of her lifetime induces non-everyday behavior as travel.

The limit of her lifetime also make her expect the limit of everyday behavior, as can be seen in the following quotation:

I am asked to cook zoni in the New Year, simmered *sasagi-mame*, *nitsuke*, pickled vegetables, *oden*, baked rice cakes, and still *dasosu-rice* cakes in *O-higan*. I have answered all right. But I doubt I cannot cook someday. Recently I say 'I cannot promise you', but she laughs and says 'I believe you are all right'.

(“My grandchildren”, 1997)

In “My grandchildren” in Vol. 66 (in 1997, at age 72), we can read cheerful and happy communication with her grandchildren and stills her feeling of the rest of life and her limited abilities. It is certain that she has done house work and has important role in her family. Repeated her sickness and death of friends have made her sense that the rest of her life is short.

(5) Hand down to the next generation

The more internalization of aging proceed, the more experience, custom and culture to the next generation people hand down. She began to writing from her sixties. In “Community and I (2) : a Buddhist temple” in Vol. 57 (in 1989, at age 65), she states a history of her community with recollection of her grandfather's telling and experience in her childhood. She started writing a history of her community from her wish that “I want to write and hand down”. Though description about it started in Vol. 52 (in 1984, at age 60), the description like a ‘I want to write and hand down’ does not appear. The expression of ‘I want to write and hand down’ shows her motivation.

“Community and I” in Vol. 57 (in 1989, at age 64) states a history of community, and we can read the matter of her motivation in detail.

I want to write and hand down, lots of if possible, a scenery of our community that has changed with my aging, folk stories that my grandfather told me by big *irori*, and events and scenery that I has seen since my childhood with my eyes. But I fell ill. I felt chagrin at my existence without a will and energy to write.

(“Community and I”, 1989)

The reason for ‘I want to write and hand down’ is not stated in her writing. It is assumed that she recognizes handing down knowledge to the next generation is a role of her generation. The same is true of her behavior, handing down importance of peace.

People are hunger and hanging about on the street burned down by air raids. The present condition of the Gulf War is just like Japan in those days.... Now old people know the terror of war, but many young people do not. I hope and pray we parents, bring up our children, do our duty to teach our children the importance of peace.

(“Postscript”, 1990)

Both history of community and the importance of peace can not be talked and handed down, if who now knows the matters die. Thus she talks and writes very often. Awareness of the importance of handing down shows internalization of her aging proceeds.

CONCLUSION

The theme that is significant for interpretation of Mrs. Sugibuchi's aging are agriculture of job, death of her friends/acquaintances, her disease, relation with her grandchildren, and retirement. Repeated diseases make her sure that she is aging and comes to older and that the best of her life has gone. Death of her elders and her generations means not only departures but also the fact that 'I am to die'. The more strong her feeling that her life comes to the latter half is, the more her attitude to the death is fixed. And having little length in her life-time makes her hand down something to the next generation.

The feature in late-adulthood, people lost old role and are needed to explore new role, is not dramatically appeared as regards Mrs. Sugibuchi. In the case of her job, agriculture, it is never realistic to lose suddenly her role of job entirely. Actually she has controlled quality and quantity of her job. In the case of her housework, like agriculture, her role is not suddenly lost but controlled little by little. Accordingly lost role of agriculture and housework influences her interpretation of aging, of course, but in the case of Mrs. Sugibuchi that will proceed gradually. It needs wide time span.

This study analyzes her writings for ten years only. I expect that a writer who has written since mid-adulthood can be informant for my study, that is, I can analyze interpretation of aging. It is importance to set theme, that is significant for the life of a writer. I expect that theme contains job, health/illness, death, retirement, family and so on, but for everyone what, when and with how significance the theme appears are entirely different. In short individual difference is wide. Thus this study needs wide time-span and perspective according to a informant. I have concerned on a subjective aspect and paid scant attention to historic background on internalization of aging. It is expected that study about internalization of aging takes wider time-span and historic background consider into.

REFERENCES

- Hiraki, N. **1994** Consider implication of life. In Y. Okamoto & M. Matsushita (Eds.), *Life cycle psychology for female*. Tokyo : Hukamura Press, pp.201-216. (In Japanese)
- Ishizuka, Y. **1981** A study on old age (1) : the conscious that I'm old in old age. *Humanscience*, **16**. Hyogo: The Graduate school of Kansai University pp.31-56. (In Japanese)
- Kaufman, S. R. **1986** *The ageless self; Sources of meaning in the late life*. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Newman, B. M., & Newman, P. R. **1984** *Development through life : A Psychological approach*. (3rd Ed.) Illinois : Dorsey Press.
- Okamoto, Y. **1994** *A study of the development of identity and the factors in the adulthood*. Tokyo : Kazama Press. (In Japanese)
- Okamoto, Y. **1995** Psychological aspects on mid and latter life. In H. Minami & Y. Yamada (Eds.), *Meaning of aging : middle and old age*. Tokyo : Kaneko Press, pp.41-80. (In Japanese)
- Plummer, K. **1983** *Documents of life*. London : Geogr Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Rosow, I. **1974** *Socialization to old age*. California : University of California Press.
- Shimonaka, Y. **1995** A new image of old people in a aging society. In H. Minami & Y. Yamada (Eds.), *Meaning of aging : middle and old age*. Tokyo : Kaneko Press, pp.81-116. (In Japanese)

- Tanaba, M. **1996** Internalization of aging with life-historical and community-historical approach: A case of "Haha no mi-kai" at Aikawa Town, Akita Prefecture. *The bulletin of The Tohoku Culture Research Room*, **38**, 63-80. (In Japanese)
- Tani, T. **1996** Life history. In T. Tani (Ed.), *An introduction to life history*. Kyoto : Sekaishisou-sha, pp.3-28. (In Japanese)
- Yamamoto, T., & Wapner, S. **1991** *Developmental psychology of life transition*. Kyoto : Kitaohji Press.
- Yamada, Y. **1995** A method of personal document for life-span developmental psychology. In T. Mutoh & Y. Yamada (Eds.), *Life-span developmental psychology*. Tokyo : Kaneko Press, pp.233-245. (In Japanese)

(Received March 2, 1998)

(Accepted April 23, 1998)