



INTRODUCTION

How Urban Cohousing Communities Can Expand How We Think about Well-Being

Human well-being, including happiness, is so intrinsically social that it is wrong to try to conceive happiness or freedom or sense of self-worth or any other aspect of well-being in terms of pure, disconnected autonomy.

—Neil Thin, *Social Happiness: Theory into Policy and Practice*

ALL IS NOT WELL WITH well-being. Our lives, marked by decreasing social connectivity, are marred by patterns of isolation among the elderly, withdrawal and alienation among youth, increasing rates of interpersonal violence, and struggles with loneliness, anxiety, and depression. “Modern society,” Robert Wright noted in an article in *Time* back in 2001, “is dangerously asocial.”¹ This feature of contemporary life traverses a range of social systems, affecting societies as disparate as those of Canada and Japan.² According to Canada’s 2016 census, for example, the number of one-person households now surpasses all other types of living situations, adding up to almost 30 percent—more than couples with or without children, single-parent households, or intergenerational households.³ On the other side of the globe, in 2017, 18.4 million Japanese lived alone. This comprises only 14.5 percent of the population—much less than the 30 percent of Canadians who live alone—yet it is double the number of thirty years ago.⁴ And while living alone or in smaller households does not automatically translate into isolation,⁵ increases in solo living in particular and collapsing household size and reduced intergenerationalism in general have nevertheless been correlated with escalating rates of loneliness, leading to what some consider a public health crisis.⁶ In 2017, for instance, a record forty-five thousand Japanese died alone, sometimes unnoticed for days or even weeks⁷—and sometimes even while part of a shared household.⁸ There is even now a term for this: *kodokushi*, or “lonely death.” It comes as no surprise, then, that the Japanese government’s 2010 and 2012 National Survey of Lifestyle Preferences indicated that loneliness is *the* key determinant of well-being in Japan—not gender, age, income, educational

level, or occupation but loneliness.⁹ And in both countries, the percentage of people who report having relatives or friends to count on for support is on the decline.¹⁰ Clearly, we are experiencing a crisis of social sustainability.

This crisis has given rise to an obsession with happiness and well-being. Endless academic conferences and publications, policy discussions and initiatives, newspaper articles, TED talks, podcasts, and self-help books testify to the centrality of the topic in our collective imagination. Although the concern with happiness has deep historical roots in a number of philosophical and spiritual traditions, the emergence of this latest iteration can be dated to the mid-twentieth century, when we began to see declines in psychological indicators of well-being—a downward trajectory that continued through to the end of the century and into the twenty-first.¹¹ Around the same time, Bhutan introduced the Gross National Happiness Index to replace gross national product as a measure of prosperity and well-being, providing an institutional framework for a focus on happiness. Since then, and with the support of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and United Nations, well-being has become increasingly prominent in the policy orientations of governments across the globe. Fundamental to these orientations and interventions is the work of scholars in happiness economics and positive psychology, two recently emergent disciplines that have influenced not only governments but also popular culture. The result is a burgeoning, multibillion-dollar “happiness industry,”¹² composed of various approaches to therapy, self-help, medication, diet and exercise regimes, and so on.

Conventional approaches to loneliness and isolation, on the one hand, and happiness and well-being, on the other—two sides of the same coin—have tended to locate both problems and solutions in individual selves. Thus, the focus is on *individuals*, who are depressed, or lonely, or wanting to be happier; and the remedy is ingesting antidepressants, attending therapy, cultivating positive emotions, practicing gratitude, and so on. These methods, however, while useful in some contexts, also have the potential to exacerbate the problem of asociality that Robert Wright identified in his *Time* article, and that others, such as Robert Putnam in *Bowling Alone*,¹³ have also documented. The connecting thread here, weaving together interpersonal disconnection and desires for personal well-being with particular responses and practices, is hyperindividualism: an overvaluing of excessive, individualized forms of consumption, and an overemphasis on personal autonomy and self-sufficiency. Both articulate with capitalist economic formations, and both ignore the social contexts of loneliness and happiness alike. If, as I argue below, hyperindividualism is indeed a problem, then it becomes imperative that we not only identify the dangers of individualized (and individualizing) orientations to life but also move

beyond criticism of such frameworks to imagine—and practice—other ways of doing things.

Recognizing the problems associated with hyperindividualism, a number of people across the world have come up with one approach to doing things differently: living together in urban cohousing communities. A type of intentional community typically composed of architecturally designed buildings that provide both private apartments and common, communal spaces, urban cohousing communities allow for residents to simultaneously share space and time with each other, pool their resources, *and* maintain their autonomy and independence. A rather modest and unpretentious model for overcoming the debilitating isolation of contemporary society, cohousing has the potential to make significant contributions to social sustainability. This model, which positions happiness, well-being, and the good life as fundamentally about *connection* and *collaboration*, is the focus of this book. In what follows, I highlight the value of cohousing in general terms and illustrate its potential contributions to happiness and the good life in detail by means of in-depth explorations of two communities located in very different societies: Kankanmori, in Tokyo, and Quayside Village, in North Vancouver.

Why Urban Cohousing?

There are good reasons for paying close attention to urban cohousing communities in these times. First, and most obviously, we live in an increasingly urbanized world. As of 2018, 55 percent of the world's population lived in urban centers, and this percentage is projected to increase to 68 percent by 2050.¹⁴ Yet urban life is becoming increasingly difficult: “Working distance, flexible working conditions and above all rising individualism . . . have made it hard for communities to survive in an urban context since the 1980s.”¹⁵ In *Happy City*,¹⁶ Charles Montgomery uses the term *dispersed city* to describe the all-too-normalized, ever-expanding diffusion of business, industry, and housing in urban areas that reflects our long-standing “ideology of separation”¹⁷—in particular, for my purposes here, the valorization of privacy and private property ownership. The result is a dissolution of both spatial and personal connectivity, a problem highlighted in the 2019 *Global Happiness and Well-Being Policy Report*.¹⁸

Cohousing has the potential to remedy some of these patterns. Insofar as it is characterized by dense, interconnected living spaces located in close proximity to transit, businesses, schools, medical facilities, and entertainment, urban cohousing can help to ease some of the logistical difficulties generated by the ideology of separation and the dispersal it generates.

There are also economic benefits to living in cohousing: pooling resources to buy in bulk, growing food on site, and sharing everything from kitchen mixers and vacuum cleaners to large equipment such as washers and dryers reduces the economic burdens on individual households, thereby increasing the feasibility of living in city centers. Drawing on the expertise of residents—someone has experience in finance, someone else in carpentry—can produce further economic efficiencies.

These practical features of cohousing work to produce the kinds of connections that can mitigate the psychological difficulties—in particular, the loneliness—associated with the spread and fragmentation captured by the term *dispersed city*.¹⁹ According to the Harvard Study of Adult Development, which has followed over two thousand people over the course of some eighty-odd years, social connection is *the* key to well-being. In a TED Talk on “What Makes a Good Life,” Robert Waldinger, the current director of the study, stated that “loneliness kills. It’s as powerful as smoking or alcoholism.”²⁰ Similarly, in the 2018 *Global Happiness Policy Report*, Ed Diener and Robert Biswas-Diener note that “social connectedness is known to benefit health in a major way that surpasses the benefits of other known public health factors such as exercise, avoiding obesity, and not smoking.”²¹ This should come as no surprise: it has been over fifty years since social epidemiologists documented, unequivocally, that social and community ties have a greater impact on physical and psychological well-being than socioeconomic status, obesity, smoking, exercise, or alcohol consumption.²² Yet even earlier, sociologist Émile Durkheim demonstrated that patterns in suicide—something considered profoundly personal—were in fact *socially* produced.²³ The alternative to single dwellings provided by an arrangement of space that works to balance interdependence and independence, allowing residents to maintain privacy *within* a rich social environment—markedly different from the high-rise living that, in some cases, seems to increase rather than decrease isolation²⁴—is thus worth exploring.

The social and economic benefits of living in cohousing are intertwined with its positive environmental impacts.²⁵ The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the World Meteorological Organization remind us, on an almost daily basis, that we are in the throes of an environmental crisis, marked by rising temperatures and sea levels, increasingly erratic and severe storms, forest fires and droughts, rapid and widespread species extinction, and dramatic growth in the numbers of environmental refugees.²⁶ Admittedly small-scale, it is indisputable that having several people share a washing machine instead of having one in each household, eating food grown on site, and circulating used goods among community members and donating or recycling what is not taken up all serve to reduce the consumption of material goods and of the resources required to produce

and transport them. Fossil fuel consumption is also decreased by living in urban centers as opposed to suburbs, given the opportunities for walking, cycling, and using public transit that cities provide.

Despite these benefits, urban cohousing remains on the margins of mainstream studies of social and environmental sustainability, and it has yet to be taken up in any robust fashion in policy-related circles. It is, however, gaining recognition in the popular media, and it is also becoming increasingly attractive as a model among those who are plugged in to circuits for the travel of information on intentional community. The goal of this book, then, is not only to describe what urban cohousing looks like but also to feed the increasing awareness of cohousing as a viable option and to argue for placing it on the list of interventions that can improve both our daily lives and the condition of our planet.

How We Got Here: The Narrow Focus on the Self

That the individual has served as the site of both investigation and intervention in our theories and practices of well-being is understandable. As Sam Thompson notes in the *Oxford Handbook of Happiness*, those aspects of happiness that have to do with social systems have received less scholarly attention than those related to biology and personality, if for no other reason than that the latter are relatively easier to study.²⁷ This may, in turn, reflect the context within which mainstream orientations to both loneliness and happiness operate; namely, a cultural and political system in which “society” has been eclipsed by a focus on the individual. As Margaret Thatcher famously stated in response to critics of her programs of economic restructuring, “They are casting their problems at society. And, you know, there’s no such thing as society. There are individual men and women and there are families. And no government can do anything except through people, and people must look after themselves first.”²⁸

The concepts and methods of social science, however objective and universal its proponents may claim them to be, are not in fact immune to the influence of the cultures from which they emerge and within which they are situated. Thus, community psychologist Collin van Uchelen has argued that individualistic assumptions have been incorporated into psychological concepts and theories to such an extent that they are now taken for granted as universal.²⁹ Central to these individualistic assumptions is the idea that persons are self-contained autonomous units, a belief that produces both a self-other binary and a myopic emphasis on internal control and independence as signature markers of mental health. In a sense, then, the “ideology of separation” that Montgomery describes has informed not only how we

design our built environments but also how we conceptualize the nature of the self.³⁰ Individualistic orientations are so pervasive in our social science frameworks, van Uchelen argues, that reflecting on their influence may be “like asking those who know only one language to reveal the ways in which it constrains and shapes the nature of their experiences and their ability to communicate about them.”³¹

This narrow focus on individual selves was, at least initially, central to positive psychology, a key player in the mainstream approaches to happiness that emerged in the late 1990s. Its founders, Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, argued that psychology as a discipline had come to overemphasize what is wrong (mental illness, loneliness, distress) and underemphasize what is right (strengths, capacities, positive emotions).³² In order to remedy this, they claimed, we need to focus on enhancing the positive instead of fighting the negative; and the key method for this is work on the self, by means of therapy, meditation, medication, and various other techniques for developing positive thoughts—all with the goal of producing a positive attitude, itself considered a form of happiness.³³

As van Uchelen’s insights indicate, however, this emphasis on inter-iority, on what goes on inside our heads, and on positive affect/satisfaction—key indicators of happiness and well-being in positive psychology’s framework—are culturally unique rather than universal. Anthropologists agree: cross-cultural comparison reveals that the *individual* pursuit of happiness is not, in fact, universally valued.³⁴ On the contrary, in many societies an orientation toward others and toward the group overrides any emphasis on the individual per se. There are enough cross-cultural examples to indicate that it is precisely the contemporary Euro-American model of independent self-sufficiency that is unique—not the other way around.³⁵ Nor are emotional satisfaction and positive affect universally considered paramount: feelings of dependence, subservience, and dissatisfaction are in some places more highly valued than independence and “feeling good,” insofar as they foster relationships with others and boost motivation.³⁶ The pursuit of personal emotional satisfaction is even considered dangerous in some cultural contexts, since it can turn people away from the community; and in certain instances it is simply inconceivable as something that people would be primarily oriented to.³⁷ Three examples will serve to illustrate these points. Among the Yapese in Micronesia, happiness, or contentment—*falfalaen*’—is viewed negatively, since people who exhibit *falfalaen*’ tend to be focused only on their own success and comfort, to the neglect of attention to the well-being of others. Instead, *gaafgow*, or suffering for others, is what is most important.³⁸ In Sierra Leone, the Kuranko concept of *kendeye* refers to *social* well-being rather than to individual physical or psychological health.³⁹ And finally, perhaps most relevant to this book, in

East Asian societies, personal achievement, considered a key determinant of well-being in Euro-American contexts, is deemphasized relative to relationships with others and a self-other balance.⁴⁰ Thus while Western cultures place a premium on independence, there are many societies in which Western-style independence and individualism are frowned upon—or even feared—and in which interdependence and relationality are more highly valued.

The work of cultural psychologists, like that of anthropologists, has also served to transcend the biases of individualistic frameworks. In contrast to the tendency of Western psychology to assume the universality of its constructs, cultural psychologists draw attention to “the critical role of culture in explaining psychological functions and behaviors.”⁴¹ Hidehumi Hitokoto and Yukiko Uchida thus introduced the concept of *interdependent happiness*, which works to broaden our understandings of where happiness is located (perhaps in between persons as much as inside of them) and how it might be produced (perhaps socially as much as individually).⁴²

The focus on individual selves is historically as well as culturally unique. Indeed, the taken-for-granted focus on inner life that marks positive psychology emerged in Euro-American cultural contexts in full form only around the time of the eighteenth-century European Enlightenment.⁴³ Given these shallow roots, any attempt to assert this orientation as a historical universal reflecting human nature is troubling. To collapse and simplify a long and complicated history: in general, in Western culture, beginning with the early Greeks, happiness has followed a trajectory from an experience gifted to humans by the gods, to something that humans have control over, to something all humans should have access to as a right, to, in the contemporary context, something that we are personally responsible for and even obliged to achieve.⁴⁴ Over the centuries, then, we have moved from constructs of happiness as happenstance—as something outside of human agency—to ideas of happiness and well-being as artifacts of human will, under our control. This is no small shift. It turns happiness into a consumer item, as commentators on the “happiness industry” make clear,⁴⁵ and also into a kind of burden, a social imperative. “Permanent monitoring is the new job of modern life and seems exhausting,” writes Suzanne Moore in *The Guardian*: “Now we’re in the era of clean feelings, with the rise of emotional hygiene. When you are not flossing your teeth, you should be flossing your mind, getting rid of pesky emotions such as anger or self-doubt. Write them down. Reorder them. Cleanse your brain.”⁴⁶

Finally, with this history in mind, scholars writing from the perspective of critical psychology have explored the linkages between mainstream approaches to happiness and neoliberal, or market-based, forms of governance that devolve responsibility for happiness and well-being—as well as

for loneliness and a range of social problems, like poverty for instance—to the individual.⁴⁷ Indeed, there is a correlation between the type of person most valued in positive psychology and the type of person most valued by neoliberalism: that is, someone who is self-examining, self-governing, “active,” autonomous, and self-sufficient.⁴⁸ Some happiness economists have even suggested that governments can use measures of subjective well-being to determine whom to target with programs designed to increase resilience, in order to allow for cuts to welfare programs; and in some contexts (most notably in the United States and United Kingdom), benefits for poor people have been reduced and the money rechanneled to programs like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy,⁴⁹ as if there are no structural problems, only problems of attitude. There is a relationship, then, between certain scholarly approaches to happiness and government programs of austerity and restructuring.

Despite their shallow history and cultural specificity, ideologies of individualism and of individual responsibility, asserted as universal, have been spreading globally.⁵⁰ If, however, policy-makers adopt these orientations uncritically, they will be focused on producing the conditions of possibility for the *individual* pursuit of particular *internal* states, thereby reproducing constructs of persons as autonomous, independent entities and strengthening frameworks that position both the genesis and manifestation of happiness as primarily—perhaps exclusively—subjective. In the process, the idea of “human welfare,” an expansive concept that “can only be imagined, and put into practice, in the context of a very clear social whole,” is in danger of being replaced by frameworks that focus more narrowly on individual selves,⁵¹ limiting both the experience of and responsibility for well-being to the individual person. Such individualized approaches may serve to exacerbate the disconnection and loneliness that give rise to the need for happiness in the first place.

Expanding Our Focus

Given the criticisms of anthropologists and cultural and critical psychologists, mainstream happiness scholars themselves have started to underscore the foundational importance to well-being of social relationships and engagements with society. Although recognition of the social was not completely absent in positive psychology’s early days, it was often eclipsed by an overarching emphasis on the individual self.⁵² This began to shift when scholars such as Ed Diener, a key figure in positive psychology, pointed out that

ever since Aristotle, those who study well-being have recognized the importance of family, friends, and other forms of social contact. Despite this long intellectual history, economists and psychologists have tended over the past century to concentrate on individual needs and aspirations. Well-being has often been treated as an individual outcome that is based on the pursuit and achievement of individual goals. Both survey and experimental data on well-being, however, show the importance of the social context. Some of the most important factors that influence well-being revolve around the social features of people's lives.⁵³

Following this, in 2012 Seligman added social relationships to his list of the basic building blocks of happiness.⁵⁴ More recently, Shelly Gable and Christopher Bromberg placed “healthy social bonds” at the center of their work on well-being,⁵⁵ mirroring Diener and Robert Biswas-Diener's claim that “the ‘secret’ to happiness—such as there is one—may be high quality social relationships. Humans are social animals.”⁵⁶

Some governments have taken notice. Japan, which established a Commission on Measuring Well-Being in 2010, provides a case in point. Under the advice of cultural psychologist Yukiko Uchida, the commission included among its five key orientations the need to “examine wellbeing not only at the individual level but also at a collective level. In addition, we should focus on inequity within societies.”⁵⁷ The commission was disbanded by the Abe administration in 2013, undermining the influence of its broader approach to well-being on policy initiatives—ironically, at the same time as Western-style individualism was gaining traction in Japanese society as a whole.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, in locating well-being in the interpersonal as well as the intrapersonal, and in highlighting issues of social structure and political economy, the commission's orientation serves as a corrective to hyper-individualized theories and interventions.

Acknowledgment of the central importance of social connection has also made its way into popular culture texts. Stefan Klein's *The Science of Happiness* provides an illustrative example. Writing for a general audience, Klein highlights the work of positive psychologists and neuroscientists, emphasizing the need to cultivate positive emotions and to control negative ones—the *modus operandi* of positive psychology. He places the individual self in social context, however, when he outlines what he calls the “magic triangle” of well-being: a civic sense, social equality, and control over one's life.⁵⁹ All three elements of this magic triangle underscore the embeddedness of individuals in social settings.

This has not been a wholesale change in tack, however: many mainstream approaches, and certainly popular culture models, continue to highlight the individual more than social relations. In these contexts, connection

and relationship are often positioned as a means to an end, as self-centered and instrumentalist “investments” in one’s own well-being (so, for example, you give money to a homeless person because it makes you feel good and not because they need it).⁶⁰ Nevertheless, these recent developments in positive psychology can be taken to herald the beginning of a potential confluence of mainstream approaches, on the one hand, and more culturally and historically attuned ideas about how to think about and enhance well-being, on the other.

This emerging convergence around the need to position well-being as simultaneously subjective *and* social has focused attention on the range of venues and practices that foster connection, such as churches, community centers, clubs, and volunteer and activist groups. At the same time, the need to rethink privatized versus shared space has garnered the interest of city planners, urban studies scholars, architects, policy analysts, and activists alike. In the 2018 *Global Happiness Policy Report’s* chapter on “Social Well-Being,” for instance, Diener and Biswas-Diener highlight interventions in zoning regulations, the design of parks, and community activities that work to encourage and enhance social connection.⁶¹ Similarly, in the 2019 report’s chapter on “Happy Cities Agenda,” Aisha Bin Bishr points to the role of urban design and placemaking in the building of a sense of connection and community, that is, of belonging.⁶²

What happens in these spaces that are now seen as foundational to the good life? How are connections established and maintained? While religious organizations, clubs, community centers, or activist groups could all serve as fruitful entry points for examining these mesolevel processes in more detail, this book zeroes in on urban cohousing communities—self-organized and -governing environments in which people live out their daily lives in close proximity to a group of known others. Given its unique features, the model provided by urban cohousing provides a particularly useful addition to our “tool kit”⁶³ for projects of well-being. Such a tool kit is ideally composed of “positive alternatives, contextualized in a way that avoids moral judgment—non-prescriptive, non-definitive options that might inspire other ways of looking at issues.”⁶⁴ Urban cohousing, as a possible approach to living that transcends hyperindividualism, is thus good to think with—not only in and of itself but also in terms of its capacity to generate new ways of conceptualizing space, the public and the private, human connectivity, and human impacts on and engagements with the environment.

Quayside Village and Kankanmori, and places like them, thus offer one positive alternative to how we have organized society and how we think about and practice the good life: namely, one that locates the solution to loneliness and the generation of happiness and well-being in sets of so-

cial relations as well as in individual minds, hearts, and bodies. Cohousing communities tell us that while the experience of happiness may be subjective,⁶⁵ this does not necessarily mean that the production of happiness is purely individual, or that happiness is an exclusive characteristic or property of the self.⁶⁶ Attending to how urban cohousing communities operate and to the lives of those who live in them can thus broaden our approach to well-being: to how we define it, how we think about how and where it is generated and by what means, and how we might engage with it in our daily practices, ranging from envisioning what a good life might look like to participating in social and political activities designed to produce it. This is not to deny that well-being does indeed reside in individuals. Nor is it to claim that macrolevel structures and policies are irrelevant. Far from it: both are clearly crucial. But the meso—that space of groups and communities that sits between the macro and the micro and plays a key role in articulating the two, with implications for both—is equally fundamental.

Gordon Mathews and Carolina Izquierdo provide perhaps the most comprehensive framework for exploring happiness and well-being that combines the macro, micro, and meso, recognizing the importance of each.⁶⁷ They outline four dimensions of well-being: (1) the physical dimension, or conceptualizations/experiences of the body; (2) the interpersonal dimension, or constructions/experiences of relations with others; (3) the existential dimension, or conceptualizations/experiences of meaning and value; and, finally, (4) the national institutional and global dimension, that is, the larger contexts of and influences on well-being. In underscoring that “these dimensions are perceived through a prism of culture,”⁶⁸ they point simultaneously to universals (these dimensions are present in all societies) and specifics (they do not look the same everywhere). In exploring Kankanmori and Quayside Village, I focus on all four dimensions, with particular attention to the individual and the interpersonal, as situated within the context of collective constructions of meaning and value.

Intentional Community: Urban Cohousing

The study of community acknowledges the inherent need for connection that exists among human beings . . . and affords opportunities to understand how this need is culturally configured and reconfigured with other human requirements in the face of change.⁶⁹

Urban cohousing communities are a type of “intentional community.” The term refers to “groups of people who share a common vision of the good life and who live and act together in order to try to realize this.”⁷⁰ As

early as the sixteenth century, Thomas More, in his book *Utopia*, idealized communal living, envisioning groups of thirty households (syphograncies) sharing property, space, and meals.⁷¹ Over the years, others (among the most well-known being Robert Owen, Charles Fourier, and Le Corbusier⁷²) produced a range of designs for collective living, and more than a few, including adherents of religious/spiritual sects, experimented with putting some of these designs into practice.⁷³ Aside from mid-twentieth-century state-organized and Marxist-inspired utopian socialisms, many such undertakings remained on the fringes of society. In the second half of the twentieth century, however, intentional communities experienced a resurgence, moving inward from the margins of society and taking a variety of contemporary forms ranging across the political spectrum: communes, ecovillages, kibbutzim, religious sects, disability communities, and—my focus here—cohousing communities.⁷⁴ This resurgence is part and parcel of increasing interest in the commons, forms of “self-organized cooperation (or solidarity)” that focus on the collective sharing and management of various resources and operate outside of the orbit of the state or market.⁷⁵ Examples here include the commoning of water, land, and other natural resources; participatory politics; alternative currencies; community gardens; and knowledge and health commons, to name a few.⁷⁶ Contemporary intentional communities, then, far from being outliers at the edge of society, are firmly situated within the context of these diverse efforts that together signal a movement away from capitalist forms of privatization and individualization.

Typically organizing themselves both spatially and socially in ways that encourage interaction and interdependence, members of intentional communities define the good life in various ways, focusing, for example, on environmental sustainability, income sharing, community self-sufficiency, spiritual development, or some combination thereof. In all cases, intentional communities in one way or another challenge exclusive nuclear family formation and rigid practices of private property ownership. In its most recent update, the Foundation for Intentional Community, which hosts the largest international database of intentional communities,⁷⁷ lists 1,059 communities worldwide.⁷⁸ Significantly, 455 of these are categorized as “in formation,” indicating that intentional community, as both idea and practice, is gaining in popularity in certain sectors of society. Speaking at the 2013 International Communal Studies Association conference, Yacov Oved claimed that “the globalization of the communal movement” was becoming “an integral part of global civil society”;⁷⁹ and in his keynote address at the same conference, Robert Gilman went so far as to argue that the global spread of intentional community is part of a shift as significant as

that from gathering-and-hunting forms of social organization to the more sedentary social systems that accompanied the rise of agriculture.⁸⁰ The claim, in other words, is that intentional communities comprise a global social movement. Indeed, many such communities participate in web networks, conferences, and site exchanges designed to spread knowledge of “best practices”;⁸¹ and they are also becoming increasingly visible in mainstream media⁸²—something that many communities cultivate in order to increase awareness of their social and environmental advantages.⁸³ Robert Schehr notes in this regard that “actors in contemporary ICs [intentional communities] view their alternative lifestyle choices as laboratories for what is possible within civil society, conscious of their role as actors in (re)creating meaning.”⁸⁴ Clearly, increasing numbers of people are seeing intentional community as an idea whose time has come. Nevertheless, as already mentioned, intentional community remains relatively underrecognized, and therefore underutilized, as a potential model in policy circles. Thus, while there may be a global movement of intentional community, it is one that travels along different circuits than those for the travel of orthodox approaches to well-being and the sharing of official policy frameworks. One goal of this book, then, is to contribute to efforts to make one particular form of intentional community—urban cohousing—more visible and relevant to policy-makers and members of the public alike.

The approaches to cohousing I explore in the following chapters emerged in Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands in the 1960s and 1970s and soon spread to the rest of Europe, North America, and beyond, including to Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Korea, and Japan, among others.⁸⁵ In their influential book, *Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves*,⁸⁶ Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett outlined shifts in the social landscape to which cohousing provided a productive response:

Contemporary postindustrial societies . . . are undergoing a multitude of changes that affect our housing needs. The modern single-family detached home, which makes up 67 percent of the American housing stock, was designed for a nuclear family consisting of a breadwinning father, a home-making mother, and two to four children. Today, less than one-quarter of the United States population lives in such households. Rather, the family with two working parents predominates, while the single-parent household is the fastest-growing family type. Almost one-quarter of the population lives alone. . . . At the same time, the surge in housing costs and the increasing mobility of the population combine to break down traditional communities and place more demands on individual households. These factors call for a thorough re-examination of household and community needs, and the way we house ourselves.⁸⁷

Bertil Egerö echoed this view at Stockholm’s 2010 International Collaborative Housing Conference:

Today, the growing numbers of single parent households, and the even more common one-person households, underline a need for social support and access to social togetherness. The ‘ageing’ process (relatively fewer young and more old in the age pyramid) adds dimensions such as care and security, mutual support and easier access to services.⁸⁸

Cohousing, then, represents a response to dissatisfaction with contemporary social arrangements—in particular, with the mismatch between ideals, or norms (heterosexual nuclear families living in detached homes), and reality (demographic and economic shifts, and the range of actually existing household types). As Lucy Sargisson documents in her comparison of cohousing communities in Sweden, Aotearoa/New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, concerns about social systems that create “bad communities and unhappy people”—that is, systems characterized by alienation and the “inefficient use of social resources and human potential”—led many to turn to the alternative provided by cohousing.⁸⁹

Criticism of current social arrangements and utopian desires for something better—a hallmark of intentional community⁹⁰—is reflected in the design of community-specific approaches to space, community maintenance, and social life. Such designs reflect members’ ideas about the kind of community they would like to live in—in particular, about the spirit of interrelationships they hope to engender—as well as the practicalities of living collectively. These approaches to the built environment and to the organization of social interactions regarding, for instance, the sharing of food, decision-making, and the resolution of conflict involve “a circular process . . . in which the group intentionally designs” spaces and procedures “that will shape their own behavior”⁹¹—that lay the foundation, in other words, for the emergence of a particular vision of “community,” composed of particular kinds of individual selves.

While *urban* cohousing communities, like other types of intentional community, represent forms of utopic imagining and practice that articulate claims about what is wrong with society and desires for “something better,” they nevertheless remain fundamentally engaged with the societies within which they are embedded.⁹² This distinguishes them from those intentional communities that “attempt to create . . . [a] better life within the confines of the larger society but in various ways separate from it.”⁹³ It also distinguishes them from cohousing communities that are situated on the outskirts of urban areas, locations that may reflect financial as much

as philosophical orientations and constraints but serve, however inadvertently, to reduce the range of possible ties with society at large.

In being situated in urban centers and integrated with rather than segregated from their surroundings, urban cohousing communities transcend inside/outside, with/against binaries. They may emerge in response to a sense of alienation from current social arrangements, but they do not cut themselves off from them; on the contrary, “they strive to connect with neighbors and contribute to local economic, cultural and political life. This is perhaps cohousing’s most significant deviation from communitarian tradition and its basis is a matter of principle, being a different reading of the process of social change.”⁹⁴ The hybrid nature of their built environments and forms of social organization—emphasizing neither the individual nor the community to the exclusion of the other but both simultaneously—also transcends individualist/collectivist binaries. There is no effort to eliminate private property or personal space, but rather to place equal emphasis on shared spaces and resources: common rooms, gardens, laundry rooms, kitchen equipment, and so on. Similarly, residents remain responsible for their own units and personal finances while at the same time sharing expenses related to common spaces and resources. The response, then, to the failures of hyperindividualism is not hypercollectivism but something in between. This in-betweenness, or both/and, reflects a framework for living that challenges the radical individualism of mainstream approaches to well-being and consumption without being exclusively collectivist in orientation. In incorporating elements of both individualism and collectivism, and in maintaining ongoing connections with society at large, urban cohousing communities work within existing social and economic systems to model feasible alternatives that move society in the direction of greater social and environmental sustainability.

(Co)Housing and Well-Being

In their analysis of a survey questionnaire distributed to over 250 intentional communities in North America, with responses received from over 1,000 people living in almost 180 communities, Bjørn Grinde et al. found that cohousing residents ranked high on measures of life satisfaction, meaning and purpose, and connectedness and relatedness.⁹⁵ They conclude that “on average the ICs [intentional communities] appear to offer a life less in discord with the nature of being human [the need for social connection] compared to mainstream society.”⁹⁶ They also note that intentional communities’ environmentalist orientations and practices—one of the factors respondents highlighted as central to their decision to live in in-

tentional community—indicate that “ICs may serve as models for a way of life that combines happiness with sustainability.”⁹⁷ In another review, Amy Lubik and Tom Kosatsky point to a series of case studies demonstrating that “when communal spaces are shared by close neighbours, a common sense of belonging, ownership, and the facilitation of regular interaction reduces social isolation.”⁹⁸ The strong relationship between the built environment and physical and psychological health established in these studies leads Lubik and Kosatsky to position cohousing as a public health intervention.⁹⁹ Epidemiologist Lisa Berkman concurs: in a 2017 PBS NewsHour interview, she described how cohousing works as a prophylactic against loneliness and social isolation, which in turn has a positive impact on public health.¹⁰⁰

In an expansive study of both primary and secondary sources in the United States and Europe, Jo Williams documents a wide range of social, economic, and health benefits associated with living in cohousing, including increased opportunities for socializing and sharing interests, greater capacity to influence one’s surroundings, reduced costs resulting from the pooling of resources and sharing of expenses, and mutual care and support in the face of physical and mental health challenges—all of which lead to an increased sense of belonging, safety, and self-esteem.¹⁰¹ Lucy Sargisson, who coupled face-to-face interviews with an analysis of statements posted on cohousing communities’ websites, similarly found

an increased sense of well-being, happiness or satisfaction with their quality of life, pleasure about their reduced impact on the environment, and celebration of an increased sense of community. This latter involves greater involvement in the lives of neighbours (with well-protected privacy), shared responsibility for decisions that affect the group, and increased autonomy.¹⁰²

Elsewhere, Sargisson highlights cohousing’s positive impact on residents’ civic participation,¹⁰³ indicating that the advantages of living in cohousing may accrue to society as a whole, as cohousers’ engagements in community are not directed exclusively inward but also radiate outward.

Significantly, many of these benefits—connectedness, relatedness, belonging, mutual care and support, security, agency, and self-esteem—are precisely the ideals that we attach to the concept of *home*.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, housing is now recognized as a key determinant not only of physical health but also of happiness. Aisha Bin Bishr writes in this regard that “a lack of affordable housing is a major detractor from happiness.”¹⁰⁵ David Clapham expands on this theme to argue that housing policy needs to move beyond frameworks that position housing instrumentally as “units of accommodation”¹⁰⁶ toward approaches that take into consideration the intimate connections between housing, on the one hand, and meaning, identity,

self-esteem, agency, and human relationship, on the other. In other words, while housing policy obviously must address issues of accessibility, affordability, and adequacy, it should also be oriented to the idea of *home*, or *dwelling*, in an expansive sense.

This expansive sense of home includes recognition of “home-as-process,” as something that we *do*.¹⁰⁷ And it is here that, in these times, cohousing can provide a fruitful model for thinking differently. The ongoing work that goes into community building and maintenance in cohousing facilitates an appreciation of home as a verb, not just a noun. This means that the desires for intimacy, security, mutual care, belonging, and self-realization that we project onto the idea of home are not automatically given—indeed, home can be a site of oppression and domination as well as of refuge and security¹⁰⁸—but have to be actively produced. Cohousing also prompts us to recognize the larger, and largely taken for granted, conditions under which we realize (or don’t) our ideals, conditions currently marked by an ideology of separation and the practices that index this ideology: separate, often isolating as well as isolated living spaces, a pattern that reflects the historical emergence of distinct public/private spheres with supposedly distinct characteristics—dog-eat-dog competition in the public sphere versus the safe haven of the private.¹⁰⁹ This model, which includes not only the separation of the public from the private but also separation *among* private households, poses problems for both social and environmental sustainability. Cohousing, in contrast, crosses these public/private boundaries, offering a different entry point into constructions and practices of *homing*¹¹⁰ and functioning as a node of connection between “home” and “society.” As such, cohousing works to expand the parameters of our conversations about housing and well-being to include “different choices about what is equitable, politically possible, and socially responsible”¹¹¹ in the context of an overall desire to make our world better.

Quayside Village and Kankanmori

Most publications on cohousing focus on how to physically and socially build such communities, and/or provide overviews of a number of communities, often in different countries.¹¹² These are extremely useful: in presenting information on patterns of development and organization, including pitfalls as well as “best practices,” these studies and guidebooks offer insight both into what cohousing communities share as a model of the good life and into the contributions they make to social and environmental sustainability. My goal in this book is to build on these efforts by complementing breadth with depth—by providing a full-length movie, as it

were, to fill out the snapshots. I do this by focusing exclusively on Quayside Village and Kankanmori, exploring in detail the structure and feel of these two communities and the nuances of their residents' everyday lives and experiences.

Kankanmori and Quayside Village are the first cohousing communities in their respective cities, and both are well-established: in 2018 Kankanmori celebrated its fifteenth anniversary and Quayside Village its twentieth. As I describe in the chapters that follow, they are quintessential examples of urban cohousing: architecturally and socially designed to balance independence and interdependence, self-governing, cross-generational, and integrated with society at large. Both are also located in countries that are witnessing the negative impacts of extreme individualization at the same time as individualized approaches to well-being are gaining in popularity. This is occurring even in Japan, despite the fact that individual happiness has not been at the forefront of Japanese culture historically.¹¹³ Mirroring the pattern in Canada, the contemporary “quest for happiness” in Japan is manifested in mounting numbers of popular publications on the topic, the increasing circulation of discourses of well-being in the press and in politics, and an escalating pattern in advertising of coupling happiness with consumption—all in keeping with the global circulation and popularity of aspects of the “western tradition.”¹¹⁴ And yet, despite this, Kankanmori and Quayside Village, which emphasize *living together*, embody alternatives that both reject the current hyperindividualized order and offer a potential “yes”—that is, a direction in which we might want to go.¹¹⁵ It is worth noting in this regard that the alternative of urban cohousing is emerging *within* the mainstream,¹¹⁶ indicating that we do not have to look very far afield to find other ways of doing things that can provide models of how society in general might move in the direction of greater social and environmental sustainability.

Despite their similarities, Kankanmori and Quayside Village are situated in dramatically different cultures: the one traditionally individualistic in orientation, the other historically oriented to the collective, even as Western forms of individualism are gaining traction. I chose to focus on these two communities in particular in order to trace how cohousing models travel and are translated in diverse contexts. What is similar across contexts? What is altered to fit local cultural contingencies? Comparing communities situated in distinct settings also serves as a reminder that there is no one way of doing urban cohousing: neither Quayside Village nor Kankanmori can stand as *the* model of cohousing. If, as I argued earlier, there is a problem with universalizing what are in fact historically and culturally specific models of the nature of human being, there is also a danger in universalizing one model of urban cohousing. Even within Canada and Japan, neither

of which is homogenous, Kankanmori and Quayside Village, like all intentional communities, are unique. My goal, then, is not to provide a singular blueprint for cohousing but, rather, to explore some of the ways that it can unfold, and some of the experiences that residents have, as a way of opening up cohousing as a possibility that can then take any number of forms.

The Project

My goal in this project was not to establish the happiness of Kankanmori and Quayside Village residents by means of psychological measures and comparisons with those who live in single-dwelling households. Instead, I took as my starting point the contrast between cohousing's relative lack of visibility in mainstream orientations to happiness, on the one hand, and evidence, outlined in the studies cited above, that living in cohousing has a positive impact on social and environmental well-being, on the other. Clearly, cohousing has something to contribute—again, not in the sense of proclaiming that everyone needs to live in cohousing but rather in its capacity to help us reflect on how we think about the good life. With existing data on the connections between cohousing and the good life in mind, I set out to explore a particular set of questions: How do residents experience the benefits and challenges of living collectively? How do they put their philosophies into practice? What tensions might be involved in negotiations between connection and personal freedom and autonomy? What practices of environmental sustainability do they engage in? And, finally, how do their visions and practices of community articulate with the different cultural contexts within which they are situated?

The only way to answer these questions—and to complement the primarily quantitative, large-scale approaches of orthodox happiness studies,¹¹⁷ on the one hand, and the generalized overviews of multiple communities in cohousing studies, on the other—is to spend time in these communities in order to participate in their activities and engage in extended conversation with their residents. This is what I did, between 2014 and 2017, making five visits to Kankanmori, two of which were for two months each and three for ten days each; and six visits to Quayside Village, one of which was for two months, and the others for ten days to two weeks each. With the exception of two of the shorter trips to Kankanmori, during these visits I lived on site; participated in community activities, including not only social activities but also meetings and, at Kankanmori, committee work; collected life histories of residents; and facilitated a series of discussion groups.

The way in which topics for discussion groups were chosen illustrates a keystone of my approach to this project, namely, the idea that if cohousing

involves collaboration, research on cohousing also calls for collaboration. A central attraction of collaborative work is that it positions participants as co-researchers, thereby steering research in the direction of what they, as knowledgeable insiders, consider to be most important, relevant, or problematic. Collaborative work also encourages participants to reflect on their values and practices and explore what has become common sense, and thus taken for granted, in their communities.

Collaboration for this project took two forms. First, it took the more traditional form of working with residents to determine the focus of the research, including both the general direction the research should take and the specific topics it should examine.¹¹⁸ In other words, although I wanted to explore urban cohousing as a model for the good life, I did not determine what this exploration should look like in advance. Rather, orientations and topics emerged over the course of the research, in both formal and informal ways. Formally, I facilitated “brainstorming” sessions during which residents came up with topics for focused investigation; for example, the benefits of cohousing, how to balance personal and community commitments, aging in place, what growing up in cohousing is like, and how to deal with conflict around decision-making. Topics also emerged informally in the course of everyday conversation: for example, residents’ rates of participation in running the community, and the future of cohousing. My goal, then, was to collaborate with residents to *coproduce* both the framing for the project and the data and insights generated as a result of that framing.

The collaborative nature of the project also extended beyond my engagements with residents of each community to include collaboration between residents of Kankanmori and Quayside Village themselves. Cohousing, as already described, is part of a global social movement that includes multiple circuits for the mutual exchange of ideas and practices. When, in the early days of the project, I told residents of each community about the other community I was working with, they expressed an interest in learning more; so I sought funding for members of each community to visit the other. The exchange visits provided Quayside Village and Kankanmori residents with an opportunity to reflect on their own orientations and practices in light of what they learned about life in the other community. This learning and reflection, moreover, occurred by means of physical *copresence*—a very different experience from reading about other communities at a distance or discussing them at a conference, however useful those endeavors may be. The exchanges contributed significantly to the collaborative spirit of the project—that is, to a shift in the balance of the ownership of the project from myself, an outside academic, to the residents of Kankanmori and Quayside Village—underscoring my methodological orientation to what it is that *they* orient to in pursuing the good life. It also advanced the overall

goals of supporting the circulation of new and deeper understandings of alternative models of the good life, and of enhancing partnerships among intentional communities.

As part of the effort to place the research process as much as possible in the hands of residents, I provided each community with a GoPro so that they could record footage of life in their communities, choosing for themselves what to film and how to frame it. The result is four film shorts: *Life at Quayside Village*, *Life at Kankanmori*, *Exchange at Kankanmori*, and *Exchange at Quayside Village*. Most of the segments were filmed by residents, although in some cases we collaborated on deciding what should be filmed by either myself or the artistic consultant for the project, Don Gill—for example, a tour of someone’s apartment or, at Quayside Village, clips of the resident midwife, Vera, meeting with her clients. Given the range of residents involved in filming, the sound and light quality varies considerably. Jamie Lewis, one of the research assistants for the project, worked assiduously to improve the film quality as much as possible and inserted subtitles in Japanese and English for all scenes. Some scenes are accompanied by brief narratives, recorded by residents, while in others the talk of those on film is highlighted. The film shorts (see appendix for URL) can be viewed on their own, to get a sense of the overall feel of Kankanmori and Quayside Village. Alternatively, readers can focus on the specific aspects of life in the two communities that they’re most interested in, using the outline provided in the appendix as their guide. The shorts also complement aspects of the text, and so, where relevant, I provide references to particular clips, indicated by a ¶ icon.

Finally, collaboration included discussions about what forms the book and film shorts would take. Over the course of several return trips to each community in 2018 and 2019, I shared drafts of the book and rough cuts of the film shorts with residents so that we could jointly decide what to represent and how to represent it. I also consulted each person involved to make sure they were comfortable with quotes or references to them in the book and/or scenes in which they are included in the films. During these reviews, each participant chose whether they wanted to be referred to by their actual name or a pseudonym.

These processes of collaboration took unique shapes in each community. At Kankanmori, residents decided to form a study group of five to deal with the formal aspects of the project. Brainstorming sessions were conducted with this group, and then all residents were invited to participate in discussions organized around the topics chosen. The study group also made decisions regarding filming and the exchange visits between Kankanmori and Quayside Village. In contrast, the Quayside community wanted all residents to have the opportunity to participate in all phases of the project,

from brainstorming, to filming, to choosing exchange participants. As will become clear in the following chapters, these different approaches reflect key patterns in the organizational structures of the two communities.

Outline of the Book

This book positions urban cohousing as an example of the kind of intervention that Charles Montgomery could have had in mind when he wrote that “sustainability and the good life can be by-products of the very same interventions.”¹¹⁹ In light of my strengths and limitations as an anthropologist, and in keeping with Graham Meltzer’s observation that “the quality of our social relationships and our ‘sense of community’ are major determinants of our capacity for pro-environmental behavioural change,”¹²⁰ I give primacy of place to social sustainability, weaving in threads of environmental sustainability as they emerge in the visions and practices of the residents of Quayside Village and Kankanmori.

In exploring Kankanmori’s and Quayside Village’s quest for the good life, I focus in particular on their philosophies and organizational structures, the unfolding of daily life, and the stories and experiences of residents. In chapter 1, I provide general overviews of the two communities, outlining their similarities as well as their unique histories, their spatial arrangements, the goals and desires of their founding members, and the collective processes involved in building community. This is followed by a detailed description of the kinds of people who live in Quayside Village and Kankanmori, including basic demographic data, residents’ reasons for moving in, and extended personal narratives of residents’ experiences, four for each community.

Chapters 2 and 3 are set up as “conversations” between philosophy and the practices of everyday life; in other words, what are the foundational aspects of each community’s governing framework and how do residents put them into practice? In chapter 2, I describe Quayside Village’s values, both stated and unstated; the organizational structures built on the basis of these values; and how values and structures play out (or not) in everyday life. I emphasize three orientations in particular: first, *each-according-to-their-strengths*, *each-according-to-their-desires*, Quayside Village’s underlying philosophy of participation in community building and maintenance; second, attention to emotional care; and, third, an emphasis on environmental stewardship. In chapter 3, I apply the same approach to Kankanmori, similarly exploring values, organizational structures, and everyday practices. Kankanmori’s key orientations, different from those of Quayside Village, include, first, *everyone is equal*, which translates into sameness in the distribution of contributions to community maintenance and gover-

nance; and second, clear divisions between the public and the private, and between official community affairs and spontaneous socializing.

Chapter 4 focuses on the exchange visits between the two communities. In the fall of 2017, three residents of Quayside Village visited Kankanmori for ten days; this was followed by a ten-day visit to Quayside Village by a Kankanmori family of four. In both cases, exchange participants stayed on site. The chapter explores what exchange visitors learned about the other community as well as about their own, and what they brought back—and did not—to their home communities. Follow-up discussions with participants one year after the visits provide insights into the long-term impacts of the exchanges.

Since residents played key roles in determining the direction that the project would take in each community, highlighting sometimes similar and sometimes different concerns and agendas, the comparative aspects of what follows is not tit for tat. Certainly, some aspects of the discussions to follow are directly comparative; for instance, I outline the history and development of each community, compare the built environments of the communities and their philosophical orientations, and, in chapter 4, focus on the similarities and differences noticed by the exchange visitors. But chapters 2 and 3, focused on Quayside Village and Kankanmori respectively, each have a unique flavor, reflecting the specificities of what residents oriented to rather than a list of questions predetermined by an external researcher. Deliberately organizing these chapters to capture the frameworks and concerns of the two communities themselves reflects the deeply collaborative nature of the project, although it does mean that the chapters do not follow parallel trajectories. Another result of this collaborative approach is provided in chapter 1, where the personal narratives of Kankanmori residents are presented in the third person, while those of Quayside Village are presented in the first person.

Finally, in the conclusion, I explore what we can learn about happiness, well-being, and the good life from communities like Kankanmori and Quayside Village. How do such communities transcend individualistic approaches to happiness—the idea that happiness is a primarily internal phenomenon composed of personal satisfaction and positive affect—to approach Community with a capital “C,” that is, the community that, as Katsuji, at Kankanmori, put it, “is a basic characteristic of humanity”? How might urban collective housing communities serve as models for both policy-makers and the public at large—as an addition to our “tool kit”¹²¹ for producing the good life that does not eclipse the individual but, rather, serves to enhance individual well-being by means of social connection? Here I argue that cohousing provides insights into how we can increase both social and environmental sustainability, potentially decreasing the patterns of, and various costs associated with, loneliness, isolation, and en-

vironmental degradation generated by approaches to life focused on hyper-individualism and overconsumption.

Three Notes on Terminology and Naming

Happiness, Well-Being, and the Good Life

The relationships among these terms are complicated. *Happiness* is often used to refer to a subjective state, in contrast to *well-being*, which is typically used more broadly to encompass physical, economic, and cultural, as well as psychological, factors.¹²² Such practices are not consistent, however, and these terms are often used interchangeably, not only with each other but also with other terms, such as *flourishing*, *thriving*, or *fulfillment*. *Happiness*, furthermore, is often subdivided into different types (for example, the distinction between hedonic and eudaimonic happiness, which may be glossed as pleasure versus virtue). The *good life* is also deployed in various ways, sometimes referring to individuals crafting a desired life for themselves, and sometimes in association with utopic aspirations—that is, with models of how to collectively approach social organization in ways that enhance the well-being of society at large and not just of individuals in isolation. This lack of precise definition and consistency in the use of terminology marks the ambiguous, perhaps elusive, nature of happiness, well-being, and the good life—as well as the reality that the meanings of these concepts, where they exist, can vary enormously. Perhaps it is less useful to pin the terms down than to recognize that they are overlapping pointers, suggesting, without narrowly delimiting, directions in which we might look. In what follows, then, I use the terms *happiness*, *well-being*, and *the good life* sometimes together and sometimes interchangeably, with the hope that the ways in which they are used will provide some indication of what it is that is being pointed to.

Cohousing and Collective Housing

What is referred to as *cohousing* in Canada is called *collective housing* in Japan.¹²³ In what follows I use the shorter *cohousing* most frequently, generally restricting my use of the term *collective housing* to discussions of Kankanmori and the Japanese context.

Japanese Names

Typically, Japanese refer to each other by their last names, followed by the honorific *-san*, which translates as Ms./Miss/Mrs./Mr. This is the practice

followed at Kankanmori, except in the case of couples who share a last name, when first names are used, with the tag *-san*. After some deliberation, the Kankanmori study group decided that they wanted me to follow the Canadian convention of first names in the English version of this book (in the Japanese version, Japanese convention will be followed), and so this is the practice I have adopted here.

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