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Kokusai Kekkon - A Qualitative Research Study
on Intercultural Marriages between Chinese and Japanese

日中間国際結婚に関する質的研究

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Marriage is a major stage of life journey to many people. Finding a life partner in the form of marriage can also be seen as an important life goal. Getting married seems to be one of the most beautiful incidents that can happen; however, behind the happy scenes, there are also numerous challenges, some unpredictable, which will later on become the causes of breaking the partners apart. There are many forms of getting bond legally nowadays, some marry those whose cultural background and value system are the same or similar, others marry people who don't share the same/similar culture at all. Kelly (2012) called marital communication “a labor of love”, a life-long negotiation process that couples have to face trying to balance their expectations and enactment (Bochner et al., 1982).

Globalization and technology development have generated many more opportunities for people of different cultures to meet and brought people much closer than ever before. “As a result of increased interaction among people from different countries, romantic relationships and marriages between culturally diverse individuals are becoming more common (Frame, 2004; Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005).” Marrying someone, especially of a different culture, is no longer a rare phenomenon; rather, it has become more common. Finding a soulmate and walking into marriage “til death do us apart” can sound very romantic and exciting; however, it is not always “living happily ever after” for the married couples particularly those of intercultural marriages.

This study aims to explore intercultural marriages (*Kokusai Kekkon*) between Japanese and Chinese residing in Japan and China. Chapter 1 introduces the rationale of the study, why it focused on intercultural marriage, followed by a brief introduction of each chapter. The following chapters in turn provides some background information where intercultural marriage between Japanese and Chinese took place. The research method section explains what criteria were taken into consideration with regard to research participants and research procedure, it

also explains why a qualitative research method was employed and the Grounded Theory was utilized. Major findings are summarized and reported in the following chapter.

Based on the findings of the qualitative research study, existing literature on marriage and intercultural marriage are reviewed in chapters 5 and 6; some key concepts such as conflict, face that are common in intercultural marriage and the Western bias are discussed in chapter 7.

Combining the literature review, chapter 8 discusses the major results of the study in comparison to the literature review, similarities and differences with the literature reviewed are examined. In chapter 9 conclusions are made, limitations of the study are discussed, and future prospects are announced.

Quoted segments of interviews in both Mandarin Chinese and English translation are attached in Appendix.

Chapter 2. Background Information

Globalization and technology advancement have created numerous opportunities for people of various cultural backgrounds to come into close contact nowadays. As a result, romantic and marital relationships between culturally diverse individuals are becoming more common (Frame, 2004; Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005).

In Japan, for example, the number of foreign residents has been increasing. As the following statistics (Table 2-1, 2-2 & 2-3, Ministry of Justice, Japan, 2017) indicate, in comparison to 1990, the number of foreigners living in Japan in 2015 doubled, among which the majority are from Asian countries with China at the top, followed by Korea and the Philippines. A drastic change can be observed in Table 2-3 on the population of Chinese residents in Japan. 2007 was the turning point in that Chinese residents for the first time became the largest population among all foreign residents, surpassing Koreans who had been dominating over the past few decades. By the year 2015, 714,570 Chinese residents were living in Japan, constituting 32% of all foreign population in Japan.

Nationality	1990				2015			
	Number			Proportion	Number			Proportion
	Total	Permanent residents	Others	(%)	Total	Permanent residents	Others	(%)
Total	1,075,317	643,286	432,031	100.0	2,232,189	1,049,126	1,183,063	100.0
Asia	924,560	637,165	287,395	86.0	1,835,811	849,195	986,616	82.2
China	150,339	25,052	125,287	14.0	714,570	248,118	466,452	32.0
India	3,107	460	2,647	0.3	26,244	4,921	21,323	1.2
Indonesia	3,623	135	3,488	0.3	35,910	5,649	30,261	1.6
Korea	687,940	608,799	79,141	64.0	491,711	411,547	80,164	22.0
Malaysia	4,683	113	4,570	0.4	8,738	2,518	6,220	0.4
Philippines	49,092	1,083	48,009	4.6	229,595	120,438	109,157	10.3
Thailand	6,724	157	6,567	0.6	45,379	18,843	26,536	2.0
Viet Nam	6,233	501	5,732	0.6	146,956	13,541	133,415	6.6
Europe	25,563	2,353	23,210	2.4	68,179	19,752	48,427	3.1
France	3,166	314	2,852	0.3	10,672	2,212	8,460	0.5
Germany	3,606	472	3,134	0.3	6,336	1,506	4,830	0.3
United Kingdom	10,206	688	9,518	0.9	15,826	5,286	10,540	0.7
North America	44,643	2,579	42,064	4.2	66,064	21,497	44,567	3.0
Canada	4,909	204	4,705	0.5	9,538	3,243	6,295	0.4
U.S.A.	38,364	2,313	36,051	3.6	52,271	16,752	35,519	2.3
South America	71,495	305	71,190	6.6	234,633	150,217	84,416	10.5
Brazil	56,429	164	56,265	5.2	173,437	109,388	64,049	7.8
Peru	10,279	33	10,246	1.0	47,721	33,598	14,123	2.1
Others	9,056	884	8,172	0.8	27,502	8,465	19,037	1.2
Australia	3,975	77	3,898	0.4	9,843	2,589	7,254	0.4

Source: Ministry of Justice, *Statistics on the Foreigners Registered in Japan*, and etc.
As of the end of December.

Year	Total ¹⁾	China	Korea	Philippines	Brazil	Viet Nam	Nepal	U.S.A.	Peru	Thailand	(%)
1950	100.0	6.8	91.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	...	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
1955	100.0	6.8	90.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	...	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
1960	100.0	7.0	89.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	...	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
1965	100.0	7.4	87.6	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	0.1	0.1
1970	100.0	7.3	86.7	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.1	0.1
1975	100.0	6.5	86.1	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.1	0.1
1980	100.0	6.8	84.9	0.7	0.2	0.4	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.2	0.2
1985	100.0	8.8	80.3	1.4	0.2	0.5	0.0	3.4	0.1	0.3	0.3
1990	100.0	14.0	64.0	4.6	5.2	0.6	0.0	3.6	1.0	0.6	0.6
1991	100.0	14.0	56.9	5.1	9.8	0.5	0.0	3.5	2.2	0.7	0.7
1992	100.0	15.2	53.7	4.9	11.5	0.5	0.1	3.3	2.4	0.8	0.8
1993	100.0	15.9	51.7	5.5	11.7	0.6	0.1	3.2	2.5	0.9	0.9
1994	100.0	16.1	50.0	6.3	11.8	0.6	0.1	3.2	2.6	1.0	1.0
1995	100.0	16.4	48.9	5.5	13.0	0.7	0.1	3.2	2.7	1.2	1.2
1996	100.0	16.6	46.4	6.0	14.3	0.7	0.1	3.1	2.6	1.3	1.3
1997	100.0	17.0	43.5	6.3	15.7	0.8	0.1	2.9	2.7	1.4	1.4
1998	100.0	18.0	42.2	7.0	14.7	0.9	0.2	2.8	2.7	1.6	1.6
1999	100.0	18.9	40.9	7.4	14.4	1.0	0.2	2.8	2.7	1.6	1.6
2000	100.0	19.9	37.7	8.6	15.1	1.0	0.2	2.7	2.7	1.7	1.7
2001	100.0	21.4	35.6	8.8	15.0	1.1	0.2	2.6	2.8	1.8	1.8
2002	100.0	22.9	33.8	9.1	14.5	1.1	0.2	2.6	2.8	1.8	1.8
2003	100.0	24.1	32.1	9.7	14.3	1.2	0.3	2.5	2.8	1.8	1.8
2004	100.0	24.7	30.8	10.1	14.5	1.3	0.3	2.5	2.8	1.8	1.8
2005	100.0	25.8	29.8	9.3	15.0	1.4	0.3	2.5	2.9	1.9	1.9
2006	100.0	26.9	28.7	9.3	15.0	1.6	0.4	2.5	2.8	1.9	1.9
2007	100.0	28.2	27.6	9.4	14.7	1.7	0.4	2.4	2.8	1.9	1.9
2008	100.0	29.6	26.6	9.5	14.1	1.9	0.6	2.4	2.7	1.9	1.9
2009	100.0	31.1	26.5	9.7	12.2	1.9	0.7	2.4	2.6	2.0	2.0
2010	100.0	32.2	26.5	9.8	10.8	2.0	0.8	2.4	2.6	1.9	1.9
2011	100.0	32.5	26.2	10.1	10.1	2.2	1.0	2.4	2.5	2.1	2.1
2012	100.0	33.2	26.1	10.0	9.4	2.6	1.2	2.4	2.4	2.0	2.0
2013	100.0	33.0	25.2	10.1	8.8	3.5	1.5	2.4	2.4	2.0	2.0
2014	100.0	32.8	23.6	10.3	8.3	4.7	2.0	2.4	2.3	2.0	2.0
2015	100.0	32.0	22.0	10.3	7.8	6.6	2.5	2.3	2.1	2.0	2.0

Source: Ministry of Justice, *Statistics on the Foreigners Registered in Japan*, *Statistics on the Foreigners Registered in Japan*, and etc.
The order of nationality is the order of the registration foreigners in 2015.
1) Including other nationalities and stateless persons.

Year	Total ¹⁾	China	Korea	Philippines	Brazil	Viet Nam	Nepal	U.S.A.	Peru	Thailand
1950	598,696	40,481	544,903	367	169	25	...	4,962	178	73
1955	641,482	43,865	577,682	435	361	48	...	8,566	53	150
1960	650,566	45,535	581,257	390	240	57	...	11,594	40	266
1961	640,395	46,326	567,452	444	222	67	5	13,154	46	317
1962	645,043	47,096	569,360	495	231	89	2	13,943	61	433
1963	651,574	47,827	573,284	494	263	100	2	15,226	70	512
1964	659,789	49,174	578,545	497	306	129	12	15,626	71	600
1965	665,989	49,418	583,537	539	366	169	12	15,915	88	704
1966	668,318	49,387	585,278	520	388	192	16	16,217	93	707
1967	676,144	49,592	591,345	539	498	243	12	17,090	108	709
1968	685,075	50,445	598,076	632	646	330	20	17,286	124	674
1969	697,504	50,816	607,315	758	748	381	26	18,198	117	723
1970	708,458	51,481	614,202	932	891	557	42	19,045	134	721
1971	718,795	52,333	622,690	863	1,075	773	39	19,199	143	769
1972	735,371	48,089	629,809	2,250	1,255	1,015	34	21,285	219	798
1973	738,410	46,642	636,346	2,424	1,279	1,073	35	21,614	228	930
1974	745,565	47,677	643,096	2,758	1,395	1,073	42	21,441	292	967
1975	751,842	48,728	647,156	3,035	1,418	1,041	51	21,976	308	1,046
1976	753,924	47,174	651,348	3,083	1,319	1,039	64	21,222	308	1,022
1977	762,050	47,862	656,233	3,600	1,279	1,425	66	21,390	308	1,087
1978	766,894	48,528	659,025	4,281	1,279	1,516	81	21,396	306	1,136
1979	774,505	50,353	662,561	4,757	1,393	2,126	99	21,651	331	1,195
1980	782,910	52,896	664,536	5,547	1,492	2,742	108	22,401	348	1,276
1981	792,946	55,616	667,325	6,729	1,652	2,842	128	23,266	376	1,671
1982	802,477	59,122	669,854	6,563	1,643	3,132	138	24,825	399	1,974
1983	817,129	63,164	674,581	7,516	1,796	3,472	157	26,434	432	2,233
1984	841,831	69,608	680,706	11,183	1,986	3,993	202	29,037	466	2,758
1985	850,612	74,924	683,313	12,261	1,955	4,126	208	29,044	480	2,642
1986	867,237	84,397	677,959	18,897	2,135	4,388	248	30,695	553	2,981
1987	884,025	95,477	673,787	25,017	2,250	4,381	300	30,836	615	3,817
1988	941,005	129,269	677,140	32,185	4,159	4,763	380	32,766	864	5,277
1989	984,455	137,499	681,838	38,925	14,528	6,316	399	34,900	4,121	5,542
1990	1,075,317	150,339	687,940	49,092	56,429	6,233	447	38,364	10,279	6,724
1991	1,218,891	171,071	693,050	61,837	119,333	6,410	565	42,498	26,281	8,912
1992	1,281,644	195,334	688,144	62,218	147,803	6,883	676	42,482	31,051	10,460
1993	1,320,748	210,138	682,276	73,057	154,650	7,609	825	42,639	33,169	11,765
1994	1,354,011	218,585	676,793	85,968	159,619	8,229	1,056	43,320	35,382	13,997
1995	1,362,371	222,991	666,376	74,297	176,440	9,099	1,314	43,198	36,269	16,035
1996	1,415,136	234,264	657,159	84,509	201,795	10,228	1,671	44,168	37,099	18,187
1997	1,482,707	252,164	645,373	93,265	233,254	11,897	2,173	43,690	40,394	20,669
1998	1,512,116	272,230	638,828	105,308	222,217	13,505	2,836	42,774	41,317	23,562
1999	1,556,113	294,201	636,548	115,685	224,299	14,898	3,212	42,802	42,773	25,253
2000	1,686,444	335,575	635,269	144,871	254,394	16,908	3,649	44,856	46,171	29,289
2001	1,778,462	381,225	632,405	156,667	265,962	19,140	4,081	46,244	50,052	31,685
2002	1,851,758	424,282	625,422	169,359	268,332	21,050	4,593	47,970	51,772	33,736
2003	1,915,030	462,396	613,791	185,237	274,700	23,853	5,181	47,836	53,649	34,825
2004	1,973,747	487,570	607,419	199,394	286,557	26,018	5,929	48,844	55,750	36,347
2005	2,011,555	519,561	598,687	187,261	302,080	28,932	6,953	49,390	57,728	37,703
2006	2,084,919	560,741	598,219	193,488	312,979	32,485	7,844	51,321	58,721	39,618
2007	2,152,973	606,889	593,489	202,592	316,967	36,860	9,384	51,851	59,696	41,384
2008	2,217,426	655,377	589,239	210,617	312,582	41,136	12,286	52,683	59,723	42,609
2009	2,186,121	680,518	578,495	211,716	267,456	41,000	15,255	52,149	57,464	42,686
2010	2,134,151	687,156	565,989	210,181	230,552	41,781	17,525	50,667	54,636	41,279
2011	2,078,508	674,879	545,401	209,376	210,032	44,690	20,383	49,815	52,843	42,750
2012	2,033,656	675,370	530,048	202,985	190,609	52,367	24,071	48,361	49,255	40,133
2013	2,066,445	682,402	519,740	209,183	181,317	72,256	31,537	49,981	48,598	41,208
2014	2,121,831	694,974	501,230	217,585	175,410	99,865	42,346	51,256	47,978	43,081
2015	2,232,189	714,570	491,711	229,595	173,437	146,956	54,775	52,271	47,721	45,379

Source: Ministry of Justice, *Statistics on the Foreigners Registered in Japan*, *Statistics on the Foreigners Registered in Japan*, and etc.
The order of nationality is the order of the registration foreigners in 2015.

1) Including other nationalities and stateless persons.

Similarly, the number of intercultural marriages between Japanese and foreigners has also been increasing. As it can be observed from Figure 2-4, since 1990 the number of intercultural marriages between Japanese nationals and foreign wives had been steadily increasing until the beginning of the twenty-first century. As a clear contrast, the number of foreign brides and Japanese grooms is much more than the number of foreign grooms and Japanese brides. A sharp decline can be observed in 2005 between Japanese husbands and foreign wives. This result was possibly affected by the Japanese Government's Amendment to the Immigration Control Act in 2005 (Nippon.com, 2018), which aimed to reduce and prevent fake intercultural marriage for the purpose of entering Japan. The impact of this policy was reflected in the decrease of number of intercultural marriages between Japanese husbands and foreign wives in the following years, particularly Filipina and Chinese wives who were called *hanayome* (Figure 2-7).

Figure 2-5 by the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare, Japan (2018) indicates the changes of marriages between Japanese grooms and foreign brides by nationalities of brides in 1995 and 2015, with the number of Chinese wives increasing the most among all. The 2016 Vital Statistics on nationality of foreign wives and foreign husbands by the Ministry of health, Labor, and Welfare, Japan revealed a similar result that Chinese wives constituted the majority, followed by wives from the Philippines, and Korea (Figure 2-6, Figure 2-7). As it shows in Table 2-7, the number of Japanese husbands married foreign wives is much more than the number of Japanese wives and foreign husbands. For example, in the year 2005, there were 33,116 marriages between Japanese husbands and foreign wives, which was about four times of the number of Japanese wives and foreign husbands. Among the marriage of Japanese husbands and foreign wives, Chinese wives have obviously been the majority since 2000.

Figure 2-4 Annual trend of marriages between Japanese and foreign citizens between 1965 and 2015 (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, Japan, 2018)

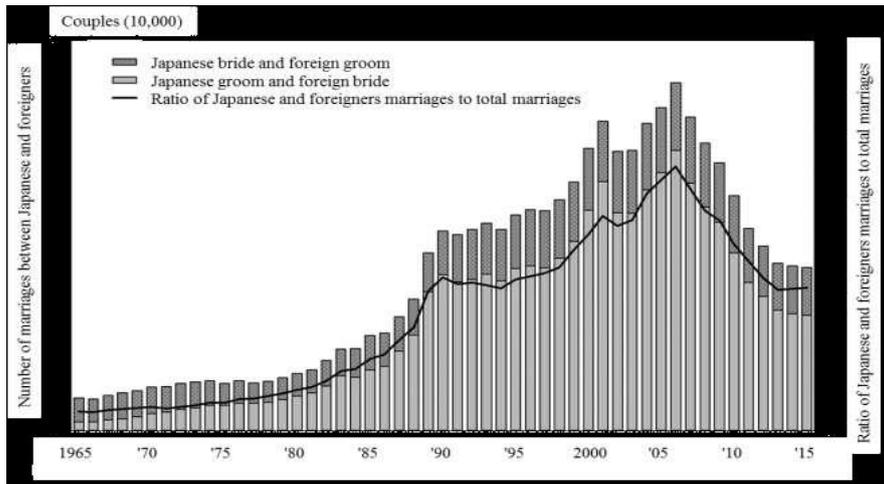


Figure 2-5 Percentages of marriages between Japanese grooms and foreign brides by nationalities of brides in 1995 and 2015

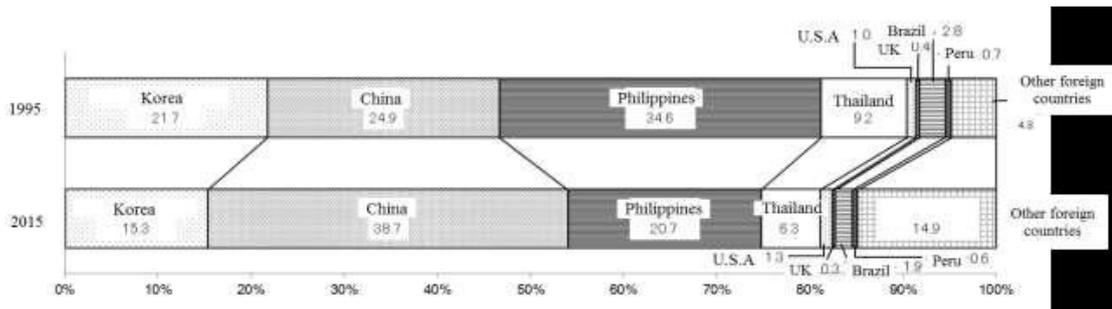
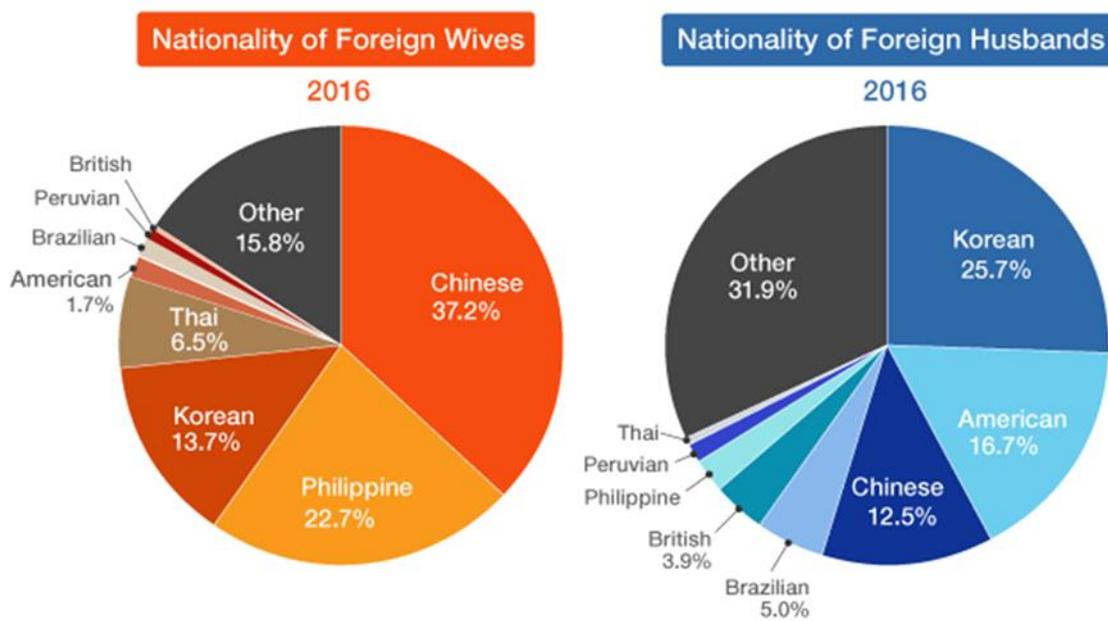


Figure 2-6 Nationality of Foreign Wives and Husbands



Source: "2016 Vital Statistics" report issued by the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare.

nippon.com

Table 2-7 Number of marriages by nationality of husband and wife , by year

Nationality		Showa 60 (1985)	Heisei 7 (1995)	Heisei 12 (2000)	Heisei 17 (2005)	Heisei 22 (2010)	Heisei 27 (2015)	Heisei 28 (2016)
Total		735 850	791 888	798 138	714 265	700 214	635 156	620 531
Husband and wife: Japan		723 669	764 161	761 875	672 784	670 007	614 180	599 351
Either of husband and wife: not Japan		12 181	27 727	36 263	41 481	30 207	20 976	21 180
Husband: Japan/ wife: not Japan		7 738	20 787	28 326	33 116	22 843	14 809	14 851
Wife: Japan/ husband: not Japan		4 443	6 940	7 937	8 365	7 364	6 167	6 329
Husband: Japan/ wife: not Japan		7 738	20 787	28 326	33 116	22 843	14 809	14 851
Nationality of wife								
Korea		3 622	4 521	6 214	6 066	3 664	2 268	2 031
China		1 766	5 174	9 884	11 644	10 162	5 730	5 526
Philippines		...	7 188	7 519	10 242	5 212	3 070	3 371
Thailand		...	1 915	2 137	1 637	1 096	938	970
USA		254	198	202	177	223	199	246
United Kingdom		...	82	76	59	51	44	55
Brazil		...	579	357	311	247	277	216
Peru		...	140	145	121	90	83	87
Other countries		2 096	990	1 792	2 859	2 098	2 200	2 349
Wife: Japan/ husband: not Japan		4 443	6 940	7 937	8 365	7 364	6 167	6 329
Nationality of husband								
Korea		2 525	2 842	2 509	2 087	1 982	1 566	1 627
China		380	769	878	1 015	910	748	790
Philippines		...	52	109	187	138	167	151
Thailand		...	19	67	60	38	36	32
USA		876	1 303	1 483	1 551	1 329	1 127	1 059
United Kingdom		...	213	249	343	316	235	248
Brazil		...	162	279	261	270	344	315
Peru		...	66	124	123	100	115	95
Other countries		662	1 514	2 239	2 738	2 281	1 829	2 012

Source: Director-General for Statistics and Information Policy, MHLW "Vital Statistics 2016"

Note: People with the nationality of the Philippines, Thailand, the United Kingdom, Brazil and Peru has been counted separately since 1992, therefore, they are included in the "other countries" until 1991.

**Table 2-8 Number of divorces by nationality of husband and wife,
by year**

Nationality	Heisei 7 (1995)	Heisei 12 (2000)	Heisei 17 (2005)	Heisei 22 (2010)	Heisei 25 (2013)	Heisei 26 (2014)	Heisei 27 (2015)	Heisei 28 (2016)
Total	199 016	264 246	261 917	251 378	231 383	222 107	226 215	216 798
Husband and wife: Japan	191 024	251 879	246 228	232 410	216 187	207 972	212 540	203 853
Either of husband and wife: not Japan	7 992	12 367	15 689	18 968	15 196	14 135	13 675	12 945
Husband: Japan/ wife: not Japan	6 153	9 607	12 430	15 258	11 887	10 930	10 440	9 782
Wife: Japan/ husband: not Japan	1 839	2 760	3 259	3 710	3 309	3 205	3 235	3 163
Husband: Japan/ wife: not Japan	6 153	9 607	12 430	15 258	11 887	10 930	10 440	9 782
Nationality of wife								
Korea	2 582	2 555	2 555	2 560	1 724	1 619	1 450	1 313
China	1 486	2 918	4 363	5 762	4 573	4 093	3 884	3 602
Philippines	1 456	2 816	3 485	4 630	3 547	3 245	3 200	2 989
Thailand	315	612	782	743	649	603	563	525
USA	53	68	76	74	63	73	67	58
United Kingdom	25	41	28	23	21	22	19	17
Brazil	47	92	116	103	93	101	79	89
Peru	15	40	59	59	38	29	37	39
Other countries	174	465	966	1 304	1 179	1 145	1 141	1 150
Wife: Japan/ husband: not Japan	1 839	2 760	3 259	3 710	3 309	3 205	3 235	3 163
Nationality of husband								
Korea	939	1 113	971	977	747	791	791	747
China	198	369	492	632	568	582	488	471
Philippines	43	66	86	119	109	106	127	143
Thailand	8	19	30	45	32	37	36	39
USA	299	385	398	397	384	356	390	382
United Kingdom	40	58	86	77	71	60	84	80
Brazil	20	59	81	140	133	130	142	107
Peru	7	41	68	70	73	62	55	47
Other countries	285	650	1 047	1 253	1 192	1 081	1 122	1 147

Source: Director-General for Statistics and Information Policy, MHLW "Vital Statistics 2016"

However, in clear contrast to the increase of intercultural marriages in Japan, the statistics showed that the divorce rate was surprisingly high. From Table 2-7 number of marriages by nationality of husband and wife and Table 2-8 number of divorces by nationality of husband and wife by the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare (2016), it is clear that the divorce rate has risen, particularly the number of divorces between foreign wives and Japanese husbands. For example, in 2000 in comparison to 28,326 couples of Japanese husbands and foreign wives who got married, there were 9,607 couples of Japanese husbands and foreign wives divorced. The number of divorce continued to increase in 2010 although the number of intercultural marriages between Japanese husbands and foreign wives dropped. In 2010, there were 22,843 intercultural marriages between Japanese husbands and foreign wives; however, there were 15,258 divorces reported. Although the number of marriages between Japanese husbands and foreign wives didn't reveal a significant change, the number of divorce was much higher than 2000. This situation lasted, take 2015 and 2016 for example, approximately 14,800 Japanese husbands and foreign wives married; however, the divorce rate was very high in comparison to the total number of intercultural marriages with either foreign husband or wife. All of the above indicated an extremely high divorce rate of intercultural couples. While the intercultural marriages between Japanese and foreigners had gone up and down, the divorce rate had remained high; this is especially true between Chinese wives and Japanese husbands.

What caused the high percentage of divorce? What happened between the couples that made them decide to terminate their marital relationship by divorce? And why did they marry? What does divorce mean to them? These questions remain unanswered. It is true that getting married to someone of a different culture poses numerous challenges which may be unpredictable; however, deciding to end a marital relationship requires the couple to have much more courage and face much more serious and real challenges. If they knew that they would end up with divorce, would they even have wanted to get married in the first place? Although

both Chinese and Japanese cultures are perceived by the West as collectivistic and high-context cultures, trivial but subtle similarities and differences which shape people's perspectives and behaviors have not been thoroughly and systematically examined.

This study sets its focus on intercultural marriages between Chinese wives and Japanese husbands. The first and foremost reason for this lies in the researcher's personal experience. As a Chinese who has lived in Japan for more than seventeen years and been married to a Japanese for more than fourteen years, my marital life has not always been a happy- ever-after one. There were countless times that new unpredictable challenges had to be faced and managed, sometimes with struggles between maintaining self-identity and coping with the Japanese culture. It has been a process accompanied with feelings of helplessness, frustration, confusion and desperation. In Japanese culture there is this saying of "*go ni itte ha go ni shitagae*" which was originally borrowed from the Chinese idiom "*rù xiāng suí sù*", literally meaning the same as in English "when in Rome, do as the Romans do." Comparing to the Chinese ideology, this way of thinking is more solidly rooted in Japanese culture, and foreigners are expected to assimilate to Japanese culture without many other options. A foreigner needs not only to learn the language but also adapt to the social norms. This assimilation to the host culture may reduce much more unpredictable problems than resisting; however, it takes a great deal of energy and effort, especially for those whose cultures and cultural norms are very different. As a person from a commonly viewed collectivistic culture by the West, moving from one collectivistic culture (China) to another (Japan), I was neither supposed to nor ready to go through too many differences but enjoy the similarities and find life a lot easier in Japan. However, it didn't happen like that. I found myself very often lost in trying to interpret new situations and constantly struggle to manage the unpredictable and hard-to-understand situations and human relationships, all of which required energy and great effort, but ended with very little reward. In the first few years in Japan, I had tried really hard to adapt myself to my perceived Japanese

culture, doing what I thought was expected, and forcing myself to behave in similar ways to Japanese people around me. After a few years I came to realize that however hard I tried, I could never reach the standard and get well recognized. The norms and expectations are simply too different from the ones I know in China. Although I had tried so hard and did my best, I was never appreciated and acknowledged by people around me, especially my husband's family members such as his parents. I remember once my father-in-law asked me to clean up the house and I said I couldn't because it was already too much: my study, my part-time job, not to mention I had a baby son to take care of. Guess what he said, "the monk's wife has three, and she never complains!" Since I live in the countryside and there is a temple nearby where the monk's wife lives with her three children. Most of the time her husband was away because he is a monk and spends most of his time taking training somewhere else. So this wife does everything including taking care of all the children. Wow! What a supermom! I thought, though I couldn't help saluting her, I also wondered what is the meaning of a family? What is the role of the father? So many questions just popped in my head and I told myself, "you are not a slave, this is not the kind of family you are looking for." Not to mention that before I came to Japan I was a career woman and I hardly did any housework. Even if I got married in China and had a child, my parents would try their best to help me instead of asking me to do housework for them. So after a few years' of trying, when I finally got confused, completely exhausted, and even started to question myself who and what I was, I quit making any effort of trying for the sake of rescuing myself and my preferred identity.

All these years the confusion has been there, and although I quit making effort to conform, the question mark still remains. Hence by focusing on intercultural marriages between Chinese wives and Japanese husbands I am personally hoping to clarify my doubt and find answers to my questions. Being one of the thousands of Chinese women who married Japanese, I am very curious and interested to find out the answers to the questions such as, how do other Chinese

wives manage their intercultural marriage? Am I one of them? What challenges have they faced? How did they manage them? I would like to go beyond my personal experience, and get into other Chinese wives' lives, explore their reality of intercultural marriage to their Japanese husbands. I am especially interested in finding out how the Chinese wives view their marriage and handle the challenges and conflicts that may be caused/influenced by their cultural differences in their marriage. So the above personal experiences and backgrounds serve as my motive and starting point of this study.

Another reason that Chinese wives are the focus of this study lies in the fact that Chinese wives have been the majority of intercultural marriages in Japan since 2000, as Figure 2-5, 2-6, 2-7 indicated. There were many more Chinese women married Japanese men than the opposite in the past twenty years. Meanwhile, it was also Chinese who are the majority of divorces, as it can be observed in Figure 2-8. This will no doubt trigger us to wonder why this happened, what caused this high ratio of divorce, are China and Japan very similar or different? What made the couples decide to marry? And again what caused them to divorce? Are there more similarities or differences? Do they hold the same or similar expectations toward marriage and gender roles? These questions have not yet been thoroughly and sufficiently discussed and examined in the field of communication. Exploring similarities and differences of both cultures in the context of intercultural marriage will also provide more insights in better understanding Japanese and Chinese cultures. Therefore, this study will mainly focus on Chinese wives who have gone through dramatic political, socioeconomic changes during the past few decades and who may hold varied expectations and perspectives regarding marriage and gender roles, which in turn may connect to some explanations of the high divorce rate in intercultural marriages between Japanese and Chinese.

To get a more complete and thorough understanding the method of interview will be used in this study. Interviews are the most effective way of obtaining data for certain researcher

questions, and the research questions drive the method(s) of collecting data (Charmaz, 2014, p. 79). Therefore, the following semi-structured open-questions serve as the guidelines of the interviews; however, they were discussed in varied sequence in corresponding the natural flow of the dialogues between the interviewer and the interviewees. Although conversational, the interviewer did keep these questions in mind, and sometimes asked the interviewees to clarify, to explain further, how they felt and thought, and how they coped with situations. Just as Charmaz concluded, in intensive interviews the interviewer has the privilege of learning about the research participant's life.

1. What is the current state of intercultural marriage between Chinese wives and their Japanese husbands, as perceived by the Chinese wives?
2. What are the challenges or conflicts perceived by the Chinese wives?
3. How do the couples manage the challenges, and what are the effects, as perceived by the Chinese wives?

Given the above situation of intercultural marriage in Japan, the political, social and economic backgrounds should be examined.

1. *Kokusai Kekkon* in Japan

Intercultural marriage, in Japanese, *kokusai kekkon* is used to describe marriages between Japanese nationals and foreigners of other nationalities. As Nitta (1988) explained, "*kokusai kekkon* (literally, international marriage) is the Japanese cultural category commonly used to designate any marriage pairing Japanese and non-Japanese nationals." He classified marriages into three categories: the first is between Japanese and Americans as international; second to be "interethnic" (or "interracial") marriages in which the technically non-Japanese partner is a Korean or Chinese born and raised in Japan but without Japanese nationality (or citizenship); the last refers to marriages with non-Japanese partner that are *gaikokujin* (foreign) wife or

husband even if he or she is a Korean or Chinese resident who has lived in Japan. Nitta argued that *kokusai kekkon* “overemphasizes the international nature” possibly linked to the “common perception that Japan is the most homogeneous society comprising one race which speaks one language”, whereas in heterogeneous cultures such as the United States or China the term “intercultural marriage” is generally used in the intermarriage literature when referring to marriage between spouses of different cultural backgrounds (Maretzki, 1977). In this study “intercultural marriage” will be used as it “emphasizes the cultural backgrounds instead of nationalities” (Nitta, 1988).

2. Political, and Socioeconomic Backgrounds of *Kokusai Kekkō* in Japan

2.1 Economic Backgrounds

The postwar Japanese economy had experienced rapid economic growth between the late 1950s and early 1970s. Since 1960, when trade was liberalized, Japan’s major exports have been manufactured goods such as automobiles, and electronic goods. By 1968, the Japanese gross national product was ranked number two after the U.S. According to Chiavacci and Lechevalier (2017), this period was characterized by common perceptions of stability and security as the top priorities: high educational attainments were directly related to stable employment and internal careers in the cooperative and protective community of the employer. Strongly differentiated gender roles were also observed with men being the breadwinner and lifetime employed salaryman (*salariman*), and women as education mothers (*kyoiku mama*). During the mid-1980s to 1990s, the Japanese economy experienced the bubble economy which was characterized by inflation. However, after 2000, deflation has been a problem that Japanese economy faced. The Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at that time proposed a set of policies, namely “*Abenomics*”, in the hope of stimulating economic growth and improving the long deflation. It is widely believed that with these policies the Japanese economy has been gradually

recovering, and as the Japanese yen depreciates, which was another goal, foreign people can purchase Japanese products at lower prices, so demand for Japanese products increases (Takayama, 2017).

2.2 Social Backgrounds

2.2.1 Gender Equality

In accordance with the economic development after World War II, the Japanese government has been integrating a few policies to improve the gender equality in Japan. In 1947 the Fundamental Law of Education enacted for Japanese women the equality of educational opportunities at all levels. In the same year, the Labor Standards Law came into effect, ensuring equal treatments for women in the workplace and equal pay for equal work. The new Japanese Constitution, based on democratic ideals of equality and respect for individual human rights, finally granted political rights to women, freeing women from the *ie* system which required women to be filial and obedient to her husband's family, a system that prevented them from enjoying their equality within marriage and in the home, and guaranteed equality of educational opportunity for women in Japan (Hara, 1995; Kaneko, 1995).

The Japanese government continued to promote gender equality in Japan. In 1986, the passage of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEO), called for equal pay and other improvements in hiring and working conditions. More gender equity plans were issued in the following years, for example, the Gender Equality Bureau, a Cabinet level council created in 1994, produced a Basic Plan for Gender Equality in 1999. All these promotions have served as a better platform for Japanese women's equality. As Fujimura-Fanselow (1995) observed, today it is both a common and socially accepted practice for women to work following college graduation. However, there are a few categories with regard to the purposes of receiving college education. Some view a job as a temporary activity in which they can gain some social

experience and meanwhile earn their own money before they marry; some see themselves as independent individuals financially who do not like being supported by their husbands or family; another type of women is called the “self-actualization” type, women who see work as a path to their self-fulfillment.

Although more and more women wish to work despite their various purposes, getting married and having children have still remained as the norm in Japanese society. Despite the enactment of the Child Care Leave Law in 1991 which aimed to encourage both parents to take child care leave, it is usually the mother who takes it. For many of the women who work, they have to constantly juggle between their work and family as well as child care. Lindsey (2011) pointed out that married women know that their roles as wife and mother will limit employment opportunities, but the issue is almost always resolved in favor of home over workplace. Motherhood remains the essence of a woman’s social and personal identity. A woman’s role is ranked as mother first and wife second. Though women represent half the workforce, employed women in Japan are constrained by restrictive, stereotyped gender roles. Even if they re-enter the labor force after bringing up the children, they are more like to be concentrated in part-time or temporary employment and take lower-level jobs not commensurate with their education (p. 155). Lindsey further argued that as part of a common global pattern in which a lower fertility rate, especially for highly educated women, is associated with higher labor force participation, Japan has also faced the challenges of low birth rate and declining number of children. Meanwhile, the traditional salarymen are fast disappearing, replaced by men eager to live a fuller life outside the confines of conventional jobs and conventional marriages (p. 156). This may explain the decrease in number of marriages in Japan, which can be observed in Table 2-7 that marriages of Japanese husband and wife has kept decreasing, whereas intercultural marriages between Japanese nationals and foreigners had been increasing until it reached the peak in year 2005.

2.2.2 Increase of Aging Population and Life Span, and Decline of Birth Rate and Marriage Rate

Japan has ranked as the top with the most aging population since 2005 (Figure 2-9, Cabinet Office, 2015). According to the U.N. statistics on world population (2017), as the following Figures 2-10 indicated, the aged population (65 years old and above) has been increasing, and by 2020 it was estimated to reach 28.9%, which means approximately out of three Japanese one is above 65, indicating a serious short of labor in the Japanese society. The average life span of Japanese will also continue to increase, in 2020 the average life span for Japanese women was predicted to be 87.64, and men 81.34 (Figure 2-11, Cabin Office, 2016). In contrast, the number of population under age 15 has been decreasing, in 2020 it was estimated to occupy only 12 percent of the total population in Japan.

Figure 2-9 Aging population in Japan (Cabinet Office of Japan, 2015)

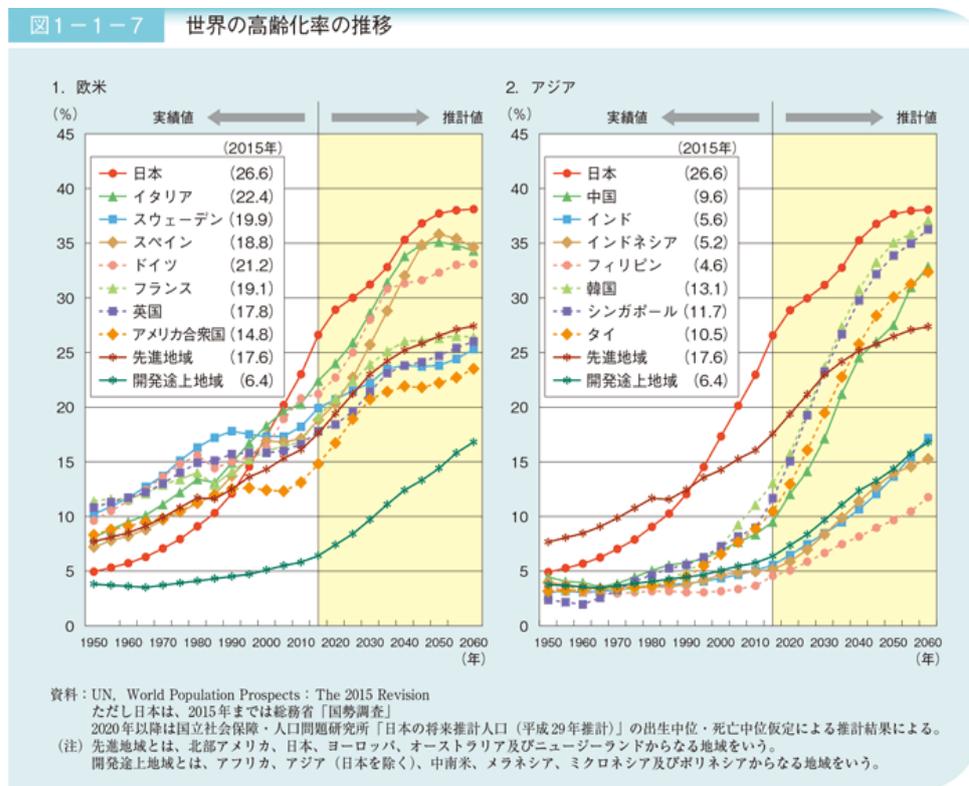


Figure 2-10 World population/Ageing group (U.N., 2017)

Figure 2-10 World Population・Ageing Group (1950~2050年)												
年次	総人口		年平均増減率 (%)	15歳未満人口 (%)	65歳以上人口 (%)	中位年齢 (歳)	総人口		年平均増減率 (%)	15歳未満人口 (%)	65歳以上人口 (%)	中位年齢 (歳)
	(1,000人)	女 (%)					(1,000人)	女 (%)				
	世界 (World)						先進国 (Developed Countries)					
1950	2,536,275	50.1	...	34.3	5.1	23.6	814,865	52.3	...	27.4	7.7	28.5
1960	3,033,213	50.0	1.8	37.1	5.0	22.7	917,068	52.0	1.2	28.2	8.5	29.5
1970	3,700,578	49.9	2.0	37.5	5.3	21.5	1,009,082	51.7	1.0	25.9	9.9	30.6
1980	4,458,412	49.8	1.9	35.3	5.9	22.6	1,084,244	51.6	0.7	22.5	11.7	31.9
1990	5,330,943	49.7	1.8	32.9	6.2	24.0	1,146,999	51.5	0.6	20.6	12.5	34.4
2000	6,145,007	49.7	1.4	30.1	6.9	26.3	1,190,505	51.4	0.4	18.4	14.3	37.3
2010	6,958,169	49.6	1.3	26.8	7.6	28.5	1,235,143	51.3	0.4	16.5	16.0	39.9
2020	7,795,482	49.6	1.1	25.5	9.4	30.9	1,269,277	51.2	0.3	16.4	19.4	42.1
2030	8,551,199	49.6	0.9	23.7	11.7	33.0	1,289,937	51.1	0.2	15.8	22.9	44.0
2040	9,210,337	49.7	0.7	22.2	14.1	34.5	1,297,496	51.0	0.1	15.3	25.2	45.5
2050	9,771,823	49.7	0.6	21.3	15.8	36.1	1,298,069	50.8	0.0	15.5	26.6	45.4
	開発途上国 (Developing countries)						日本 (Japan)					
1950	1,721,410	49.0	...	37.5	3.8	21.5	84,115	51.0	...	35.4	4.9	22.2
1960	2,116,145	49.1	2.1	40.9	3.5	20.0	94,302	50.9	1.1	30.2	5.7	25.6
1970	2,691,496	49.2	2.4	41.9	3.6	18.9	104,665	50.9	1.0	24.0	7.1	29.0
1980	3,374,167	49.2	2.3	39.4	4.0	19.9	117,060	50.8	1.1	23.5	9.1	32.5
1990	4,183,944	49.2	2.2	36.2	4.4	21.7	123,611	50.9	0.5	18.2	12.1	37.7
2000	4,954,502	49.3	1.7	32.9	5.1	24.1	126,926	51.1	0.3	14.6	17.4	41.5
2010	5,723,027	49.2	1.5	29.0	5.8	26.5	128,057	51.4	0.1	13.2	23.0	45.0
2020	6,526,205	49.2	1.3	27.3	7.4	29.1	125,325	51.4	-0.2	12.0	28.9	48.7
2030	7,261,262	49.3	1.1	25.1	9.7	31.2	119,125	51.6	-0.5	11.1	31.2	52.4
2040	7,912,841	49.5	0.9	23.3	12.2	33.1	110,919	51.7	-0.7	10.8	35.3	54.2
2050	8,473,754	49.6	0.7	22.2	14.2	34.8	101,923	51.7	-0.8	10.6	37.7	54.7

Figure 2-11 Average life span in Japan

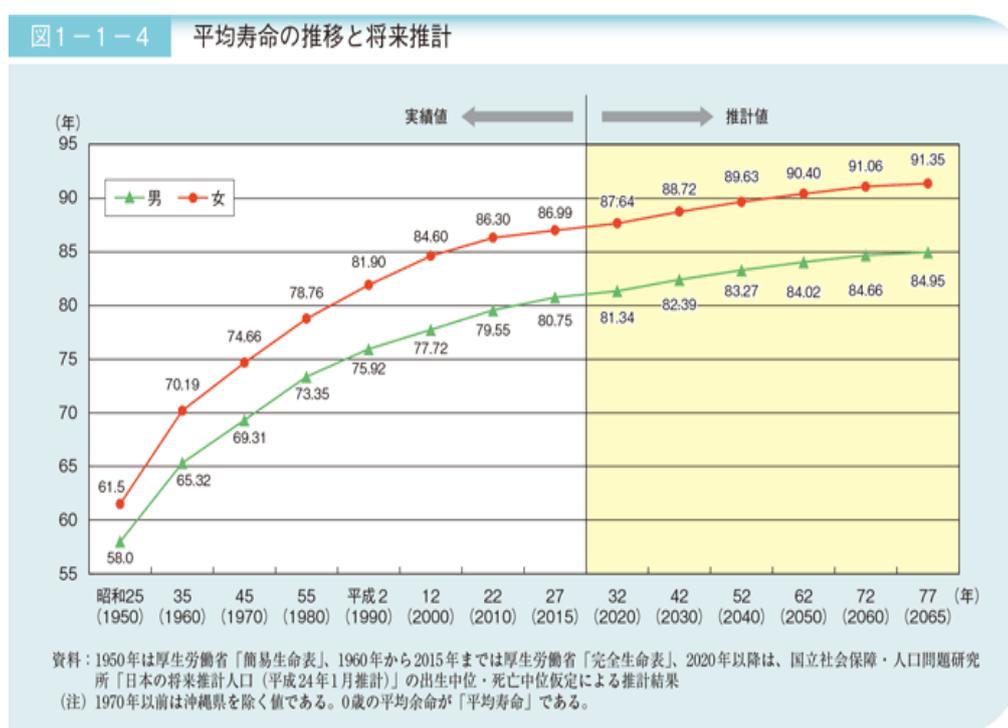


Figure 2-12 Live births and live birth rates (per 1,000 population)

Vital Statistics (Ministry of Labour and Welfare, 2019)

年次 Year	日本 Japan	
	数 Number	率 Rate
2004	1 110 721	8.8
2005	1 062 530	8.4
2006	1 092 674	8.7
2007	1 089 818	8.6
2008	1 091 156	8.7
2009	1 070 035	8.5
2010	1 071 304	8.5
2011	1 050 806	8.3
2012	1 037 231	8.2
2013	1 029 816	8.2
2014	1 003 539	8.0
2015	1 005 677	8.0
2016	976 978	7.8
2017	946 065	7.6
2018	918 400	7.4
2019	865 239	7.0

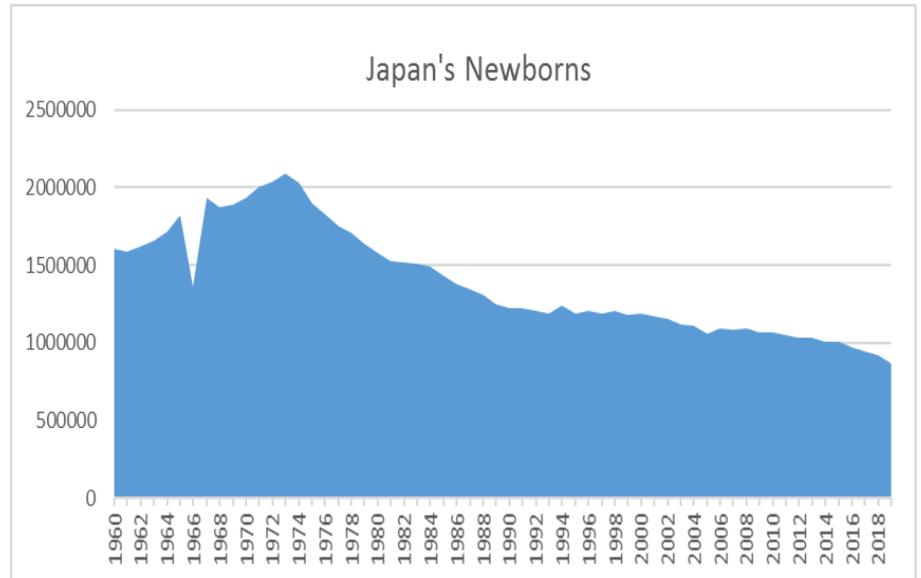


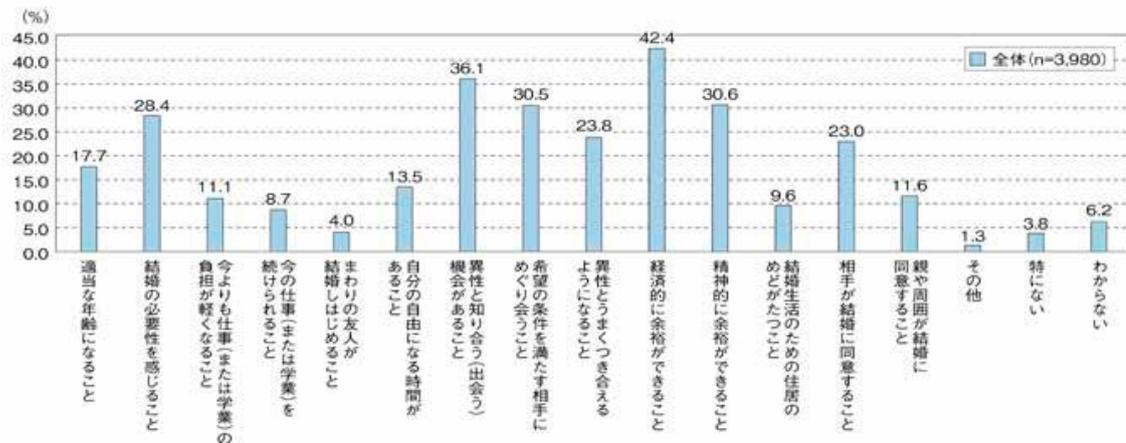
Figure 2-13 Japan's Newborns (Live births)

Modified based on Vital Statistics (Ministry of Labour and Welfare, 2019)

Japan's live births and live birth rates are reflected in the above Figure 2-12 and 2-13 (Ministry of Labour and Welfare, 2019). Since 1975, as reflected in Figure 2-13, the number of newborn babies had been decreasing, and in 2005 it hit the lowest point with an 8.4 live birth rate per 1,000 populations. Even though the situation slightly got better after that, the improvement was not significant. The live birth rate continued to fall, in 2019 the number of newborns was 865,239 with a birth rate of 7.0, which was the lowest by far.

According to the annual report on the declining birthrate by the Cabinet Office, Japan (2019), the declining birthrate has been influenced by the attitudes of Japanese towards marriage, childbirth and child rearing.

Figure 2-14 What sort of conditions are needed for you to consider marriage?



The survey on attitudes towards marriage investigated specifically the requisite conditions for marriage (Figure 2-14), reported that the highest response was “being financially comfortable”, 42.4% among the total number of 3,980 participants, followed by “having opportunities to get to know (meet) people of the other sex” which was 36.1%. The Japanese economy has been under deflation since 1980s, even though *Abenomics* seemed to have some effect, many Japanese don’t get married because they are not financially comfortable enough to get married. This may be especially true with Japanese men who are traditionally expected to take care of the whole family by providing financial support. Interestingly, in the ideal annual income of marriage partner, although the number of women who responded with “under 3 million yen” and “income is irrelevant” were higher than men, responses of “4 million yen or more” was higher than men. This indicated a gap between what women regard as the ideal income and the actual state of men’s income. A second result of the survey was having opportunities to get to know(meet) people of another sex. As the respondents said, “there are few (or no) unmarried people around me who are in the same generation, there are hardly any opportunities for me to meet someone.” In addition, about 60% responded that they haven’t taken any particular action yet, with men comparatively higher than women.

Figure 2-15 Ways of working after marriage



There is also a gap between men and women in their attitudes towards marriage and childrearing (Figure 2-15). Japanese men’s participation of housework and childrearing is at the lowest level among developed countries; however, the survey result showed that averagely half of the men and women think that they should both work for financial reasons. A significant characteristic of women working after marriage was reported by women to maintain connections with society even after marriage (42.3%); be financially independent through working (41.1%); be mentally independent through working (34.3%). Averagely close to half of the respondents reported that “wife and husband should do an equal amount of housework and childrearing”, indicating in general the attitudes towards marriage and housework share as well as childrearing have undergone some changes. In particular, women have a greater attitude change given the political, socioeconomic policies and changes. Nowadays women not only want to work to be financially independent, which challenges the traditional norm of men working outside and women as domestic caregivers, they also wish to be involved in social participation and become mentally independent through working. This suggests that Japanese women are no longer satisfied with being good wives and good mothers, but also seeking their

value through social participation. This attitude change has provided women with more options in life; instead of finding a man and getting married for security, women begin to stand on their own feet and become independent both financially and mentally by having their own career. In the same way, since they can achieve financial independence, they will not drop their standards and compromise in order to get married, but have their ideals in seeking the partner, which may delay the marriage. In this sense, to many women, marriage is no longer a necessity but more of a choice, which may have led to a low marriage rate.

The number of married couples in Japan has been declining since 1972. As Figure 2-12 shows, in 2016 the number of married couples in Japan were 620,531 couples, only half of the number in 1972. This decline in marriage will pose other challenges such as low birthrate and labor shortage.

The Japanese government has made various efforts to solve the shortage of brides and labor insufficiency, one of the strategies was by attracting Asian brides.

2.3 Political Backgrounds: Government Policies

2.3.1 Asian Brides (*Hanayome*)

Hanayome literally means flowery brides which implies a magnificent image of marrying Japanese. Because of the social and economic backgrounds, while more and more Japanese women choose not to get married but instead choose to pursue their career, many of the Japanese men, especially those in rural areas, have faced the *yome kikin* (bride famine) since the 1980s. Suzuki (2003) discussed the “bride famine” (*yome kikin*) the rural Japan faced in the last quarter of the twentieth century, which caused severe depopulation as one reason that a number of municipalities disappeared. One of the major reasons that counts for bride famine was the younger Japanese women’s attitude change. Younger women delay marriage or choose not to marry at all depicts their intention to seek egalitarian partnership instead of being a good wife

and mother. To solve this, “‘compliant’ (*sunao*) women from ‘poor, backward Asia’” were recruited as *hanayome*. *Hanayome* literally means flower bride, referring to the newly wedded brides. However, as indicated in the following, this word is used to describe Asian brides implying a nuance of those who come from less developed or poor countries; therefore, Asian *hanayome* are usually regarded as less privileged financially and socially.

Filipina *Hanayome*

In Suzuki’s (2003) “Transgressing ‘victims’- Reading narratives of ‘Filipina brides’ in Japan”, administratively mediated international marriages (*kokusai kekkon*) between Filipina *hanayome* (brides) and local Japanese since late 1980s were examined. As Suzuki claimed, Filipina *hanayome* “are considered subordinates and ‘victims’ in power relationships because of poverty in their homeland - a ‘Third-World’ country - and of their gender, ethnicity, nationality, class, and geopolitical location in Japan.” Until 1995, 34.6% of marriages between Japanese husbands and wives from the Philippines ranked the top, followed by China, 24.9%. This situation was taken over in 2015 when China took the lead with 38.7%, followed by the Philippines (20.7%).

Chinese *Hanayome*

In 1997, the number of Chinese *hanayome* first overpassed Filipina and became the top on the list. According to Ge (1998), as one influence that the economic reforms brought, many Chinese women viewed marriage with foreigners as a way of improving life quality and realizing personal value and freedom. As a result, many of them were actively pursuing marriages with foreigners. Davin (2007) holds the same opinion that women undertake marriage migration in the hope of achieving a better life for themselves or being able to help their families, and suggests that a similar phenomenon can be observed in international marriage

migration chains such as those from the Philippines, China and Korea to Japan. Meanwhile, Japanese government policies have also made visa application easier than before.

Asian women migrants, according to Piper and Roces (2003), have been largely perceived as either overseas workers or “mail-order brides”. Nakamatsu (2005) examined the issues of “Asian brides” who married Japanese through agent introduction in the late 1980s and mid-1990s by interviewing 32 marriage agents, several local government officials, and 45 Asian women from South Korea, China, and the Philippines, who married Japanese men through the introduction agency, and a similar conclusion of migrant women from other Asian countries predominantly were being portrayed as “entertainers”. Suzuki (2000b) argued that “Asian brides” were desirable to Japanese men, especially those in rural areas who cannot find a Japanese wife. Certain characteristics such as gentleness, humbleness or patience were exemplified by the governmental or introductory agents in their promotional advertisement, for example, the Asian brides are described as “warm-hearted” and made a man “feel comfortable as one does not need to act big” (Happi Sakuru brochure, n.d.). This articulation of poverty in a way implies a sense of superiority of Japanese women over foreign *hanayome*; it also portrayed the foreign *hanayome* as non-threatening to the prevailing gender hierarchy in marriage, and submissive because of their perceived poverty in their home country.

2.3.2 Policies of Attracting Skilled labors and Foreign Students

The Japanese government has also implemented a few major policies to attract more skilled labor force and foreign students by revising immigration control and plans for more exchange students.

According to *Jinminshinbun* (February, 1, 2019), the Japanese government started to take measures to reduce the growing lack of work labors. One policy was to incorporate the Foreign *kenshusei* system and *Teijyusha* system. Although on the surface *kenshusei* means trainees who

come to Japan and learn by taking trainings so as to increase the diversity in Japan and contribute globally, this system has served as one way to reduce the shortage of work force. Meanwhile, the second and third generations of Japanese who immigrated to South America one hundred years ago could get *Teijyusha* residence in Japan, which would ease the severity of labor shortage. It is said that these Japanese decedents were permitted to live and work in Japan because “they are Japanese decedents, therefore should be easy to assimilate to the Japanese society”. Japan’s “Revised Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition” was one of the major policies.

Revised Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition

In 1990 Japanese government issued the Revised Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Law in order to absorb more foreign workers from abroad because of the lack of labor the bubble boom from December, 1986 to February, 1991 caused. This revision clarified the resident status and simplified the procedures of entry. This made it easier for foreign workers to apply for visa and had attracted more foreigners to enter Japan.

New Amended Immigration Control Act

From April 1, 2019, the new Amended Immigration Control Act (Ministry of Justice, Japan) was enacted in order to solve the serious labor shortage. The new law has loosened the restrictions of visa from those with skills (namely “specified skilled workers”) to foreigner workers who are considered to have certain levels of skills. The “specified skilled workers” who meet the prerequisites can stay in Japan for up to five years but are not allowed to bring their family; those with higher levels of skills can bring their spouses and children, and may be permitted to live in Japan indefinitely if certain conditions are met (Japan Times, 2018, 12).

Attracting foreign students was also part of Japan’s globalization strategy to absorb more

working labors. To increase foreign students, the Japanese government had plans of 100,000 and 300,000 exchange students in 1983 and 2008.

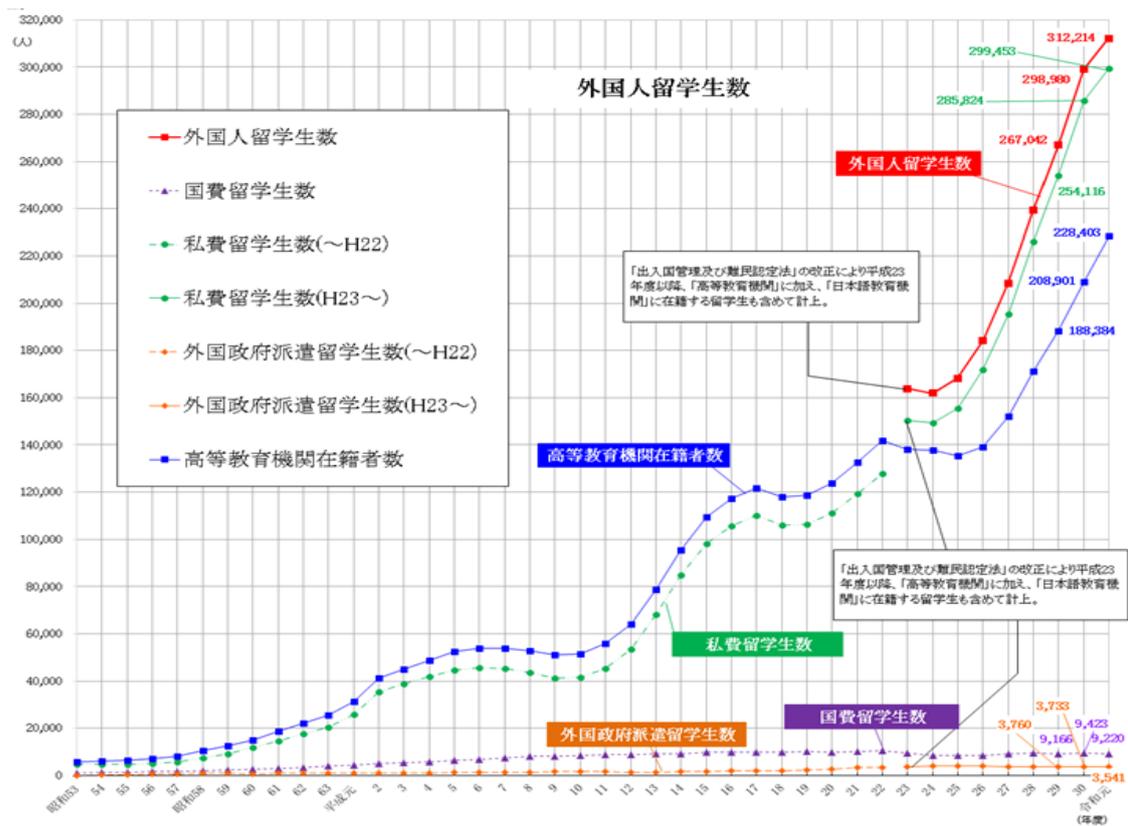
Plan for 100,000 Exchange Students

In 1983 former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone proposed to increase the number of foreign students in Japan to 100,000 by 2000 (NAFSA, 2008). Although it took almost twenty years, the targeted number was reached in 2003.

Plan for 300,000 Exchange Students

In 2008, in order to create “A Japan that is Open to the World”, the Prime Minister Fukuda announced a “Plan for 300,000 Exchange Students” hoping to “boost the number of foreign students to 300,000 by 2020” (NAFSA, 2008). This mission plan has provided a solid platform which attracted more foreign students to come to study in Japan.

Figure 2.13 The number of foreign students in Japan (JASSO, 2019)



According to the statistics of JASSO (Japan Student Services Organization, 2019, Figure 2.13), the number of foreign students registered at the completion of the survey (May 1, 2019) was 312,214, and 93.6% of them from Asia. The number of students from China is 124,436, 39.9% at the top, followed by 23.5%, 73,389 students from Vietnam. Along with the increase of foreign workers and students, people in Japan have more opportunities to interact with people of different cultural backgrounds.

3. Political, Socioeconomic Backgrounds, and Gender Roles in China

China has experienced dramatic changes in the past few decades. Not only has its economy developed drastically, Chinese have also had more opportunities to receive education abroad. Traditional gender roles have been challenged and undergone great changes. Women, as “half the sky”, have also gained their social equality to men.

3.1 Economic Backgrounds

Since the implementation of (domestic) reform and opening-up policy first proposed in 1978 by leader Xiaoping Deng, Chinese has experienced tremendous changes in various aspects. As a basic national policy, domestic reform and opening up has been carried out for more than 40 years, thus its effects are reflected in various aspects of the nation. One significant change is social and economic. According to an economic overview of China by *Focus Economics* (2019), “the Chinese economy experienced astonishing growth in the last few decades that catapulted the country to become the world’s second largest economy” since the introduction of the economic reform started in 1978. It further explained, “in 1978 - when China started the program of economic reforms - the country ranked ninth in nominal gross domestic product (GDP) with USD 214 billion; 35 years later it jumped up to second place with a nominal GDP of USD 9.2 trillion.”

3.2 Attitudes towards Studying Abroad

Accompanying with the rapid economy growth, studying abroad has emerged as a natural tendency and prospered, which resulted in the studying abroad boom in China since late 1980s. According to *China Daily’s* (2018) review of the 40 years since the economic reform was implemented, as part of the reform, the Chinese government had made effort in funding students to study abroad. In 1984 it started to encourage self-funded applicants to study abroad, then in 1992, aiming to attract more talents with international educational backgrounds, General Office of the State Council issued the guidelines of “giving support to people studying abroad, encouraging them to come back to China, and freedom to come and go”. This helped popularize studying abroad, and seeking education abroad became more common in China.

During the four decades, studying abroad has also revealed some different trends. As Cha (2012) summarizes, in the 1980s Chinese students funded and dispatched by the Chinese government mostly joined the master’s programs abroad; however, since late 1990s 4-year

university programs took advantage, and now joining high schools abroad at a younger age has become a new phenomenon. Target countries such the U.S., Japan, Canada have been on the list mostly frequently considered and chosen regardless of government funded or self-funded.

3.3 Gender Roles

Not only has China undergone tremendous economic change in the past few decades, the gender roles have experienced dramatic change as well. According to Su (2005) on gender in modern China, since the founding of People's Republic of China, women were ensured their equality to men not just in social status but also in marriage. Being "half of the sky", women's social functions and education were greatly emphasized. As a result, Chinese women were liberated in a real sense, and enjoyed the equality to men in various aspects of life, such as political, social, cultural, educational, and societal (p. 49). Although in old China traditional gender roles of men working outside and women as housewives taking care of the family were dominating, women's social status in new China has dramatically changed (p. 67). Many women were seeking financial independence (p. 110). For most Chinese women, becoming a housewife after marriage is not really considered as an option. Instead, career, family and friends are regarded as the most important three elements in life. Career, in particular, is important because it is the mental support for Chinese women to become strong and independent (p. 68). Since the 1980s when China incorporated free marketing in its economic development, Chinese women's self-awareness grew stronger, and they added more emphasis on their autonomy which includes self-respect, self-love, self-independence, and being strong, and were able to choose job freely (p.110). This has an impact on how Chinese women choose their marital partners in that when they make choices, they tend to focus on those who have higher degrees and social status, if not higher, at least the same as theirs (p. 113). The implementation of the One Child Policy since 1979, according to Su, also helped lift up the

Chinese women's social and familial status as they have more time socializing, working and focusing on activities they like (p.119).

To summarize, even though China and Japan have been commonly viewed as collectivistic and similarities have been overemphasized, political, social, economic backgrounds suggest some major differences. For instance, it appears that there is a huge gap in how Chinese and Japanese perceive their gender roles, especially women's gender role. China is a heterogeneous continental nation with 55 minorities and a rich diversity of ethnicities, whereas Japan is a homogeneous island country. China implemented the One Child Policy as one solution to its overpopulation, and now one-child families are considered as the norm. However, in Japan, due to various reasons such as social and economic backgrounds, the marriage rate has been gradually dropping accompanied with the decline of fertility rate and increase of ageing groups. There are also differences in the levels of gender equality. In China gender equality was strongly emphasized since the founding of the P. R. China, and various actions and policies were taken to strengthen women's social status. In contrast, Japan started only recently to implement policies and laws in promoting women's social participation. Although women's social status and participation have been slowly improving, traditional gender roles still dominate as a norm. While Chinese women enjoy their social participation through their career, Japanese women have just begun to explore their potentials and become independent both financially and mentally. It is still women who have to face the challenges of working, housework and child rearing. All of these differences pose challenges to intercultural married couples of Chinese and Japanese, who have to find ways to face and manage the challenges as much as they can, which may lead to divorce, if not handled well.

Chapter 3. Research Method

1. Research Participants

1.1 Prerequisites of Participants

There were no specific prerequisites regarding what kind of participants; however, acknowledging that variables such as residing countries/regions or educational levels might have impacts on marital relationship, it was ideal not to exclude couples residing outside of Japan. Educational level should also be taken into consideration to distinct from those less fortunate, who were mostly from rural areas, and married to Japanese to in the hope of achieving a better life for themselves and being able to help their families, and also to move up through the spatial hierarchy to more prosperous areas (Davin, 2007). Thus aiming find out how Chinese wives view their marriages, this study focused on Chinese wives with high educational backgrounds (college and above), who may be the only child in the family as the main participants.

There are mainly three reasons for focusing on Chinese wives with college degrees or above. First and foremost, as explained in chapter 2, it has been my personal interest because I am one of the many Chinese wives who married Japanese. Born a little before the One-Child Policy, and benefited from the socioeconomic changes in China, I had my pride in my education, my career and my social status. However, since I came to Japan as a foreign student, especially after I got married to my Japanese husband who lived with his parents in the countryside, everything reversed. My seemingly happy marriage had all of a sudden pulled me from heaven to hell, with unspoken obligations and responsibilities that were invisible but existed, invisible pressure from his parents, his relatives, neighbors, even those so called relatives that you don't get to see only on funerals. The stress, and depression that were caused by the unpredictability, and the ambiguity had drained me so much that for a few years I kept doubting myself that something was wrong with ME, I was the one who was the problematic person. Although

sometimes when I became so confused after trying to understand some behaviors or incidents, my husband couldn't explain why when I challenged him by asking questions directly because it was just one of the many "norms" to him. So my marriage had me involved into countless surprises and caused me unbearable frustrations and confusion. Exploring the marital lives of other Chinese wives who are "on the same boat" will definitely allow me to learn about their intercultural marriages, clarify my confusion, and deepen my understanding of myself, my culture and Japanese culture, meanwhile add new insights to my life. This background and curiosity serve as my starting point of this study.

The second reason has to do with the fact that Chinese wives were the majority of foreign wives marrying Japanese, and it was also Chinese wives who were the majority in divorces (Table 2-7, 2-8, MHLW, 2016). The high divorce rate between Chinese wives and their Japanese husbands has not been so far clarified, and the causes and variables such as age, educational levels have not been thoroughly examined thus remain unknown. Nevertheless, the divorce ratio suggests that there may be some major differences in various aspects of marital life such as perceptions and expectations on gender roles that triggered the divorce, reflecting some key differences in both Japanese and Chinese cultures that have been taken for granted under the same "collectivistic" terminology. The differences have not yet been thoroughly and sufficiently examined.

A third reason can be attributed to the lack of research on intercultural marriage between Chinese and Japanese, especially Chinese women with higher education levels. This type of participants may reveal different perceptions and expectations toward marriage and their Japanese husbands, and interpret and manage conflicts in different ways in comparison to the Chinese *hanayome*, used in most existing literature with a connotated meaning of those who married Japanese in the hope to seek for a better life. Constable (2005) reported that most foreign spouses that came to Japan as migrants through marriage to Japanese men, usually

undesirable ones in the rural areas, were mostly from developing countries in Southeast Asia and East Asia, and most of them were poor and less educated. Piper (2003) also claimed that marriage migration appears to be a secure way of achieving a less precarious life legally, socially, and economically, considered predominantly a rural phenomenon. Therefore, international marriage is seen as one chance for less-educated women to migrate legally and gain access to employment abroad with prospects for permanent residency. Chinese wives, also addressed as *hanayome* in most existing literature, have been the main participants, and little has been done with regard to intercultural marriages between Chinese wives with higher educational levels and Japanese husbands.

Given the above backgrounds and reasons, this study will focus on Chinese wives with higher educational levels.

1.2 Recruiting Procedure

The participants were recruited through friends' introductions. The researcher sent out a request using LINE and WeChat explaining the major purpose of the study. Within two weeks, four Chinese wives in Japan and six in China agreed to take the interview. During the two weeks the interviews were conducted and completed individually.

1.3 Interviewing

Qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted. Six interviews took place in Beijing where the participants were residing at that time; and four were in Fukuoka. Specific time periods and places were upon the participants' requests and convenience. As most participants have younger children to take care of, the interviews were mostly conducted in time periods when their children were at school. Except for a few interviews that were conducted in cafes or restaurants, most were carried out in the participants' residences.

2. Research Method

2.1 Qualitative Interview and Reasons

The emic approach interview was employed because interview talk “covers a wide range of topics, which are not selected by one of the talkers-the respondent... is organized so as to give one person (the interviewer) greater control over the other (the respondent) ... is (typically) furnished for someone else’s benefit” (Denzin, 1978, p.11). According to Pike’s (1954, 1955 and 1960) distinction on etic and emic, “emic descriptions provide an internal view, with criteria chosen from within the system”, are descriptions of “cultural phenomena in terms which make sense to those actually living in a specific culture”.

Hamaguchi (1977) argues that the concept of the individual is “culture-bound”, it is “not a scientific (etic) tool of analysis, but an ethnocentric, Western, emic concept misapplied to other cultures as if it were an etic concept”, hence suggests that using Western emic concepts as a framework for understanding non-Western cultures should not be encouraged and different concepts should be examined and discovered from within the cultures.

Charmaz (2014) demonstrated the uniqueness of interview, “seeing research participants’ lives from the inside often gives a researcher otherwise unobtainable views. You might learn that outsiders hold limited, imprecise, or erroneous views about the world you study” (p.24). To be more specific, “the in-depth nature of an intensive interview fosters eliciting each participant’s interpretation of his or her experience at the time the interview takes place. The interviewer seeks to understand the topic and the interview participant has the relevant experiences to shed light on it. Thus, the interviewer’s questions ask the participant to describe and reflect upon his or her experiences in ways that seldom occur in everyday life” (p. 58).

Corbin and Strauss (2015) view qualitative research as an opportunity for researchers to connect themselves with their research participants and to see the world from their viewpoints. In the *Discovery of Grounded Theory*, Glaser and Strauss (1967) worked out a methodology

called Grounded Theory emphasizing the need to build theory from concepts derived, developed, and integrated based on actual data. This methodology is unique in that “the concepts out of which the theory is constructed are derived from data collected during the research process and not chosen *prior* to beginning the research”. The logic of Grounded Theory involves openness to learning about the empirical world (Charmaz, 2014, p. 106)

Both Grounded Theory methods and intensive interviewing are open-ended yet directed, shaped yet emergent, and paced yet unrestricted. Intensive interviewing focuses the topic while providing the interactive space and time to enable the research participant’s views and insights to emerge. An intensive interview may elicit a range of responses and discourses, including a person’s concerns at the moment, justifications of past actions, and measured reflections (Charmaz, 2014, p. 85). Grounded Theory and intensive interviewing are also flexible in that they allow interviewers to discover discourses and to pursue ideas and issues immediately that emerge during the interview.

2.2 Interview Procedures and Special Consideration

Before each formal interview, the interviewer met all participants and explained about the purpose of the study and what questions might be asked during the interview. Confidentiality of data and anonymity were ensured, with the reason for recording explained and permission of the participants taken. The interviewees were also informed that they had the right not to answer any questions anytime if they didn’t feel like to and/or refuse to continue the interview if they changed their minds.

All interviews were in places the interviewees chose at their convenient time periods. With a few key concepts of the study such as conflict, face in mind, the interviewer started with explaining about confidentiality and anonymity, permission to record was once again confirmed and the interviewees were told that they didn’t have to answer the questions that they felt

uncomfortable with, or stop the interview any time they wanted.

All interviewees were very cooperative and didn't feel reluctant to disclose themselves, rather, they were very open. When the interviewer thanked them for agreeing to be interviewed, many of them said that they were happy to be able to help.

The interview started with asking about some basic information such as age, family, current job, years of marriage, years of living in Japan/China, followed by main questions such as how the couples met each other for the first time, what they thought attracted each other to marriage? What expectations did they hold before marriage? How do they view their marriages? What do they perceive to be the similarities and/ or differences? What are major factors that are perceived to influence the marriages, and how did the couples manage them? One of the key concepts in both Chinese and Japanese cultures is face, and it is considered to be universal and represents one individual's claimed sense of positive image in social interactions. Facework then refers to specific verbal and nonverbal messages that help to maintain and restore face loss, and to uphold and honor face gain (Ting-Toomey, 1988). Ting-Toomey argued that everyone has face concerns in situations of conflict, however, members of different cultures may have different levels of face concerns and negotiate face differently. The Chinese face of *mianzi* and Japanese *mentsu*, important in both cultures, should be examined in its impact on marital satisfaction of intercultural couples of Chinese and Japanese. Do people of these two "collectivistic" cultures in Asia view face in the same way? If not, what are the differences and the impact on their relationship and marital satisfaction? What face needs are concerned in conflicts between the intercultural couples? What facework do the couples employ in conflicting situations while negotiating their face needs? Through the interviews, the researcher expected to find the answers to these questions. All these questions were not asked in sequence, rather, they served as fundamental guidelines and were integrated in the natural flow of conversing with the interviewees. Keeping the main questions in mind, the interviewees were

encouraged to talk at their own pace and clarify their viewpoints when needed.

Planned questions help researchers improvise in a smoother, less confrontational way which is a typical goal of intensive interviewing. Developing a set of questions helps researchers to become aware of *their* interests, assumption, and use of language. By creating broad, open-ended, and non-judgmental questions, as Charmaz (2014, pp.64-65) suggested, the researcher encourages unanticipated statements and stories to emerge.

All interviews were carried out in a natural flow of conversation with the interviewer listened most of the time, from time to time paraphrasing to check the meaning with the interviewees. Mandarin Chinese was the major language used as the interviewees were all Chinese, sometimes with a little Japanese or English mixed as they felt more convenient and expressive. Four interviewees were residing in Fukuoka, Japan; whereas the other six residing in Beijing, China because their husbands were expatriates of Japanese companies at the time of interviews.

Right after each interview, the researcher wrote memos on each interview and interviewee. A few examples of the memos are: what impressions did the interviewees leave the researcher? What notable verbal and nonverbal characteristics occurred that require attention?

2.3 Coding

After each interview, the recorded content was transcribed. After going through the transcripts a few times, and coding was completed, the quoted parts of the interviewees' words were double checked by another Chinese and English bilingual researcher by back translating English to Mandarin to ensure the accuracy of the content. Glaser and Strauss's Grounded Theory (1967) has been utilized to analyze the data.

Grounded Theory is not a theory itself, but a way which consists of systematic, flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories from the data

themselves, thus researchers construct a theory “grounded” in the data (Charmaz, 2014, p.1). The method Grounded Theory helps the researchers induce theories that are grounded in their data. In other words, as Glaser defined, it is “a method of discovery, treated categories as emergent from the data, relied on a direct and, often, narrow empiricism, developed a concept-indicator approach, considered concepts to be variables, and emphasized analyzing a basic social process” (Charmaz, 2014, p.11). The procedures of Grounded Theory can be used for a number of reasons, in particular, to uncover the beliefs and meanings that underlie action, to demonstrate how logic and emotion combine to influence how persons respond to events or handle problems through action and interaction (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 11). The logical sequel of the Grounded Theory prescription against forcing interview data into preconceived categories (Glaser, 1978) is to study how researchers and their participants use language and form and enact meaning. A constructivist approach is integrated in the interviews eliciting the participant’s definitions, situations, and events and try to tap his or her assumptions, implicit meanings, and tacit rules (Charmaz, 2014, p. 95). It is constructivist in that “we construct our codes because we are actively naming data –even when we believe our codes form a perfect fit with actions and events in the studied world.” And coding is an interactive process where we define what we see as significant in the data and describe what we think is happening (p. 115).

Before coding, the entire interview transcripts were read through a number of times. As Corbin and Strauss (2015) stated, this is to enter into the life of participants, feel what they are experiencing, and listen to what they are saying through their words or action (p. 86). Seeing the world through their eyes and understanding the logic of their experience brings you fresh insights (Charmaz, 2014, p. 133). One procedure of Grounded Theory is memo-writing, which aims to elaborate categories, specify their properties, define relationships between categories, and identify gaps. To analyze the data, constant comparisons are integrated, data are broken down into manageable pieces with each piece compared for similarities and differences. Data

similar in nature are grouped together under the same concepts, followed by axial coding which is to find the interconnectedness of the concepts to form categories, eventually the different categories are integrated around a core category, which forms the theoretical explanation of why and how something happens.

During analysis, making sense of the raw data, denoting concepts to represent the participants' intended meaning require the researcher to use common sense and make the right choices about the data. In this sense, the researcher's similar marital status has offered some references to interpret the participants' intended meanings with more accuracy.

There are at least two phases of Grounded Theory coding: initial coding and focused coding. During initial coding fragments of data – words, lines, segments, and incidents are studied (Charmaz, 2014, p. 109). In focused coding, most useful initial data are defined and tested against extensive data (p. 137). More specifically, the interviews were examined in segments of data in order to label it which goes beyond concrete statements. This open coding is exploratory, and it leads to identifying concepts. After all the initial open coding is finished, focused coding around the initial concepts was conducted in search for explanations. During this stage, constant comparisons were used to compare similarities and differences among the concepts, data that appear to be conceptually similar were grouped under a conceptual label. Comparisons allow researchers to reduce data to concepts, to develop concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, and to differentiate one concept from another (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 95).

3. Why Interviews before Literature Review?

As Grounded Theory (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987) is used in inducing theory from data, there are a few defining components of Grounded Theory practice which include:

- Constructing analytic codes and categories from data, not from preconceived logically deduced hypotheses;
- Sampling aimed toward theory construction (theoretical sampling), not for population representativeness;
- Conducting the literature review after developing an independent analysis.

This study will follow the practice that literature review will be conducted after the analysis of the interview data. Glaser and Strauss urged novice grounded theorists to develop fresh theories and thus advocated delaying the literature review to avoid seeing the world through the lens of extant ideas (Charmaz, 2014, p.8). To get ready for the study, “should avoid reading the research and theoretical literatures about your topic”, as Charmaz (2014, p. 59) explained, “if you have the luxury of avoiding a literature review before entering the field, you may enter it with a fresh mind”. It is also critical the researcher be current about the experience or situation that he/she will be studying, that is, to be familiar with the situation. In this sense, being one Chinese woman who married to a Japanese husband, the author’s similar experience not only helps the interview participants to see her as an insider, and feel much easier to open up their minds to someone who is in a similar situation, and better understood, but also “echo” their voices to hers, which in turn increases the validity and accuracy of analysis of the data. When taking an interview, especially when it involves revealing very private parts of life, some interviewees may feel too much risk and vulnerable in disclosing them to strangers. Getting to know them through mutual trusted friends in a way reduces their anxiety and uncertainty, knowing that the researcher is also in intercultural marriage to Japanese increases their willingness of being empathic. Charmaz (2014, p.63) noted the strength of combining insider knowledge and detailed study in that it can yield profound analyses when researchers are able to subject their experiences, interview guides, and subsequent data to rigorous analytic scrutiny. Being close in age has also allowed me to understand the participants’ backgrounds

and their perceptions better. Being a woman also adds strength to intensive interviews in fostering being interested in the other person supportive, and accepting (Charmaz, 2014, p.75).

Chapter 4. Results

Following the procedures of Grounded Theory, initial coding and focused coding were conducted. In initial coding, concrete statements such as words, incidents were studied, and common topics and themes were grouped. After initial coding, focused coding was used to define and test the useful concepts in initial coding by constantly comparing similarities and differences among the concepts, and data that appear to be conceptually similar were grouped under a conceptual label. Comparisons allow researchers to reduce data to concepts, to develop concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, and to differentiate one concept from another (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 95). This focused coding examines data in order to label it which goes beyond concrete statements, to identify concepts and to search for explanations. By carefully examining the transcripts, initial coding and focused coding were carried out, the following emerged as the most frequently mentioned and significant categories after initial coding.

Initial Coding

- 1. Basic Demographic Information**
- 2. First Encounters and Impressions**
- 3. Reasons for Getting Married**
- 4. Attitudes towards Intercultural Marriage**
- 5. Gender Roles**

Housework

Child Rearing

Child Education

- 6. Work**
- 7. Relationships with In-laws**
- 8. Money**

9. Naturalization

10. Self-understanding and Identity

11. Other Perceived Differences

12. Perceptions of Marriage and Future Plans

1. Basic Demographic Information

No.	Age	Educational level	Marital status	Years of marriage	Number of children	Country of current residence	Language(s) spoken	Language(s) used between couples	Years of residing in Japan	Naturalization
1 A	37	Bachelor	Married	14	3	Japan	Chinese, English, Japanese	Japanese, English, Chinese	13	yes
2 B	42	Master	Married	12	1	Japan	Chinese, Japanese, English	Japanese	19	yes
3 C	57	Bachelor	Divorced	5	0	Japan	Chinese, English, Japanese	Japanese	23	yes
4 D	54	Bachelor	Married	13	0	Japan	Chinese, English, very little Japanese	English	0.5	No
5 E	36 Only child	Bachelor	Married	12	2	China	Chinese, Japanese	Chinese Japanese	5	No
6 F	48 Only child	Bachelor	Married	18	2	China	Chinese, Japanese, English	Japanese, Chinese	24	No
7 G	41	Master	Married	12	2	China	Chinese, English, Japanese	Chinese, Japanese	4	No
8 H	42 Only Child	Bachelor	Married	8	1	China	Chinese, Japanese	Japanese, Chinese	0	No
9 I	33 Only child	Bachelor	Married	9	1	China	Chinese, Japanese	Chinese, Japanese	0	No

10 J	36 Only child	Bachelor	Married	7	2	China	Chinese, English, Japanese	Chinese, Japanese	3	No
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From the basic information of the participants, excluding interviewee no.3 who is divorced, all the others remain married. The average age is 43 ranging from 33 to 57; two have master's degrees with one obtained her degree in Japan, and the other in China, and the rest hold university degrees. Regarding children, two of them don't have any, one has three, four of them have two, and three of them have only one child. Currently four are residing in Japan and six are in China. Except two that have never lived in Japan, the average length of residing in Japan is 11 years from the shortest of half a year to 24 years.

With regard to language proficiency, seven are trilingual, capable of speaking three languages: Mandarin Chinese as their mother tongue, Japanese and English although with varied levels; the rest three are bilingual in Mandarin Chinese and Japanese. Out of the four who are currently living in Japan, three have given up their Chinese nationalities and got naturalized to Japanese, the other one came to Japan only half a year ago, therefore didn't meet the requirements for naturalization. In contrast, all the other six who are now living in China with their Japanese expatriate husbands maintain their Chinese nationality instead of considering or getting naturalized.

The languages used between couples are a little diverse, one couple in Japan communicate only in English as they came to Japan only half a year ago, and the wife has just started learning Japanese. Another couple in Japan use three languages in the order of Japanese, English, and Mandarin Chinese, the other two couples in Japan only use Japanese. Couples in China shows the tendency of either Mandarin, Japanese or the opposite; specifically, four couples prioritize Mandarin over Japanese, and two use Japanese first followed by Mandarin. To summarize, all the Chinese wives are at least bilingual or trilingual, the same may be said about most of the husbands, especially those who are expatriates in China.

2. First Encounters and Impressions

Four out of the ten interviewees met and worked with their husbands as colleagues in the same companies in China; one at a party in China by helping ordering drinks in Mandarin Chinese, three studied in Japanese universities, and two met their husbands when they were students there, one was introduced to her husband by a friend after she started working in Japan. One more person met her husband in her part-time restaurant when she was studying at a university in New Zealand.

Speaking of first impressions, the participants expressed various feelings; however, some of the following qualities seem to be common that have impressed the interviewees. Though seeming shyness and quietness were mentioned frequently when they first met, being smart, having a good and serious attitude in doing things, kind, easy going, humble, open-minded, polite, honest, intelligent such as the capability of speaking a few languages including Mandarin Chinese, and being fashionable as well were mentioned to be attractive. Meanwhile, good manners, generosity, rich life experiences and life style also contributed to the good first impressions. These are either the qualities that the interviewees share or the ones that they had been pursuing.

3. Reasons for marriage

With regard to why the couples chose to marry, various reasons were explained. First impression may be good, yet it doesn't always lead to marriage. When it comes to marriage, the interviewees made their decision to marry based on their perceived qualities or conditions they prioritized. Let's take a close look at what the interviewees viewed to be the prioritized qualities their counterparts had that led to their marriages.

Interviewee no. 1 has been seeking an equal relationship; she wanted to find someone who she can respect, and learn from. She met her husband for the first time when she was doing her

part-time job in a restaurant in New Zealand where she was a self-funded student at a university. He was there taking training for Triathlon. Her first impression of him was that he was a very serious and hardworking person. She expressed her strong feeling toward her husband-then friend-after she watched him participate in the Ironman Triathlon, and she had felt very close and easy to talk to him as friends. Meanwhile, knowing that he was from a single parent family, and had been working hard to save money for his dream-to participate in this Triathlon, and watching him complete it, she felt truly touched with tears. She emphasized that her ex-boyfriend who was Chinese did everything for her, and she felt it was not an equal relationship where she could have the right of making her own decision because he planned and did everything for her, so their values didn't match. In comparison to many young men who were after her, rich and spoiled, she deeply respected her husband for his strong will and perseverance, and she felt that "this man is great, he deserves my respect, and I want to spend the rest of my life with him." However, getting married was simply for the convenience of visa because she wouldn't mind having partnership, just like the life style her host mother in New Zealand chose to have.

Interviewee no. 2's marriage came as a natural result of four years together since they first met at university. She respects her husband who was her *sempai* because he was intelligent and smart, also helped her a lot, especially when her father was sick and she was in the middle of completing her Master's thesis. Because of many commonalities between them, she felt that it was easier for her to feel close to him while she was on a foreign land where she knew nobody else, and it was a warm feeling. Apart from all the care and help from him, she also sees him as one that is stable, a person that has the courage to do things he likes, whom she can learn from, a "solid force" that is reliable and always there to support her. To her being kind and good is the most important as a human being, and then her husband's solidity gave her a sense of stability and security.

Interviewee no. 3 chose to marry because she perceived herself to be too old if she didn't marry quickly. She was over 30 when she first came to Japan, then after a few years of language school, university, work, by the time she got married she was over 40. She said that she had been too picky and "missed many good chances", and joked she would marry even to a dog if it says "I will". Her husband was alone because his wife died, so for both of them they had their varied purposes. He looked very honest and was actually very generous to her, and he also attracted her with his not bad financial condition because he has a few properties due to his good family background, and he also had a good salary.

Interviewee no. 4 was working at a Chinese restaurant in Qatar when she first met her husband, who was a top management executive of an oil company of Japan. She was divorced, with a daughter who stayed with her ex-husband. He had separated with his wife for seven years. So when he proposed to her asking her to be his girlfriend, she didn't hesitate because she felt she had nothing to lose. Not only did the man have the power and connection in various aspects, his qualities such as generosity, responsibility, caring also played a major part in the decision of marriage.

Interviewee no. 5 explained a few reasons that led to her marriage. First, although her husband was 16 years older than her, he looked very young, very fashionable, in her words, "he was like someone in TV dramas, wearing a suit, knowing how to enjoy life." His life style was attractive to her as he would go out for a drink, eating out, which made her feel that he had good taste. So given his age and life experience, "it was a piece of cake for him to please me". Besides, he is very gentleman like, very polite and rather humorous. He is also from a good family; his parents are nice, and she felt that this kind of family should be very harmonious and happy. On top of all, language has never been an issue because her husband can speak very good Mandarin, and she, as a Japanese major, stayed in Japan as an exchange student for a year. It was just because of her experience of studying in Japan that made her husband feel that she was the one

to marry. Physical appearance of course is very important, but to her husband, she was young and innocent. What was more, the fact that she stayed in Japan for a year made him feel that although she is Chinese, in many ways she is not like Chinese who has never been to Japan, as her experience in Japan has brought the two closer in that they could share many similar manners or etiquettes.

Interviewee no. 6 were seminar classmates at a Japanese university with her husband. She came to Japan after she graduated from high school in China, and had been very independent. Her husband was from a single parent family, quiet but made her feel quite man by trying to take responsibilities. The shared time and space brought them closer, and the unique family backgrounds also made them feel that they could rely on each other. She was very decisive due to the many years of being alone on a foreign land, whereas he felt a sense of responsibility to take care of her when she felt lonely or was in a difficult situation. She saw him as a very kind and unselfish person, and would feel happy for her improvement.

Interviewee no. 7 met her husband when they were working in the same company. She was attracted by her husband's life style first because he would go on a trip every holiday time. He had been to more than 90 countries by the time they met, and his topics were always very rich and fresh. He is a very interesting person, has received good education, and his family is a quite strict family which she felt a match because she also views herself a traditional person. She said that her husband has some talents in language as he would take every opportunity to learn new languages, and he can even speak Arabic and some local dialects such as Cantonese, Shanghai Hua and Minan Hua. She has been reading so many books that she can see a person rather accurately by using the framework that she has formed from her reading world. Regarding marriage, she was a bit scared because her elder sister ended up with divorce, so her expectation was either not to get married, or to make it a good one with a good result. She explained that she somehow felt that it was time for her to consider marriage because her age

was embarrassing because the women at her age were mostly married.

Interviewee no. 8 was a colleague to her husband who worked in the same news agent in Shanghai. She stayed as a colleague to her husband before they decided to get married. As she explained about the nature of being journalists, marriage was either very early or very late because they don't really have time or chance to get in touch with others in other fields. A lot of private time is taken up by work. So based on the mutual understanding of each other it was natural for them to get married. She sees him as one who is very honest and straightforward, never badmouthing others. Unlike many elites in this field, he will never discuss others behind their backs. He is not dark or damp. Although he knows many languages, and he is not arrogant, but very humble and open-minded. He will truly respect someone if this person is more excellent than him. In her words, they have many similarities, such as hobbies, and personalities. Because her major in college was Japanese, and her husband is also very talented in language and can actually speak a few languages, it has never been a problem for them to communicate.

Interviewee no. 9 also met her husband while she was working as an intern. She compared her ex-boyfriend who was very cunning and talkative, a type that she didn't like and feel that can't be trusted. But with her husband, she felt that he was the type that can be seen through. She described her first impression of him as "this little boy is so cute, slim and white, very fashionable" because he was wearing a suit and a tie which was "so cool". Unlike her he is very introvert, doesn't talk much, practical, not a romantic person, not complicated. Because of the predictability, she felt more relaxed and relieved with him because he is not that unpredictable [which reduced her anxiety]. She felt that he would be faithful in marriage. The reason why she felt this way also had something to do with her family background as her parents got divorced and started their new families again when she was only 10 years old. She felt no space in her home and wanted to get away as soon as possible. So marrying her husband was one secure way to get rid of the hard situation at home. Her husband also had a very good family

background with sufficient financial condition, and his parents treated her like their own daughter.

Interviewee no. 10 is very straightforward and frank. She met her husband when she was being hosted by her business partner in a pub and helped him order his drinks. He looked honest and modest, and she liked him. During the following three years they were communicating by emails. Her husband had tried a few times to visit her and wanted to develop a romantic relationship, however given that she had a boyfriend in Shanghai and was not really interested in him, nothing happened. It was only after she broke up with her Shanghai boyfriend that she started to consider him as she was persuaded by her best friend. It was interesting about the way she described her Shanghai boyfriend as follows:

My parents knew I was dating a Japanese, but at the beginning they said they didn't know much about Japanese, and there was also the historical background, so they didn't have any good impression on Japanese and questioned me why I had to date a Japanese? You know that Shanghai men are very thoughtful and considerate, they can take care of you so well in all aspects of daily life. My parents thought highly of my ex Shanghai boyfriend, thinking that he is good at taking care of me, also honest. Why did I discard him? You know, there are so many details in here, really. For example, he would get the hot water for feet wash ready for you. Could you stand it?! Also like when I had my period, and was about to wash my hands, he would say, "wait! Wait! You can't use cold water; use hot water." Would you think this is a man?! I really couldn't stand it! Is this still a man? Have I found a husband or a mother?! (Appendix 1, Quotation 1)

From this we can tell that in considering a man as a future husband candidate, this participant is not looking for someone who can take care of her, as her parents expected, but rather someone who has similarities or differences. In general, when Chinese wives chose their

partners, they reported that they focused on individual qualities first, taking into consideration whether their values matched, what they could learn from each other, and what differences there were in comparison to Chinese men. The second has to do with the family background, what the atmosphere of the family was like helped them visualize what kind of life they might have if they got married.

The above data on basic information, first encounters and impression as well as reasons for marriage have provided some basic background information of the participants', the following are categories that emerged in the interviews after initial coding of grounded theory, and concepts that were induced by focused coding. As Charmaz (2014, p. 111) explained, coding means naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorizes, summarizes, and accounts for each piece of data, which requires moving beyond concrete statements in the data to making analytic sense of stories, statements, and observations. During initial coding, "we define what is happening in the data and begin to grapple with what it means" (p. 113). In Glaser's (1978) words, the fundamental question of grounded theory is to ask: "What is happening here?", with happening referring to the experience or central problem addressed in the interview data. In this study, coding is conducted by topics and themes. This type of coding helps to define implicit meanings and actions, gives researchers directions to explore, spurs making comparisons between data, and suggests emergent links between processes in the data to pursue and check (Charmaz, 2014, p. 121).

Focused coding is a selective phase that uses the most significant or frequent initial codes to "sort, synthesize, integrate, and organize large amounts of data" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 113). The coding process is interactive because we interact with our participants and again many times over through studying their statements and observed actions.

The following Box 4.1 is an example of how the initial coding is conducted using interview excerpt from interview no. 1. By withdrawing topics and themes from concrete examples,

comparing them with each other, categories emerged and are listed in the following.

Box 4.1 Initial Grounded Theory Coding

Initial Narrative Data to be Coded	Examples of Codes
<p>I: Interviewer A: Interviewee no. 1</p> <p>I: What was his first impression of you?</p> <p>A: My Smile. Because all the people said I like smiling a lot. When I was in the English language school, there were many kinds of people including Japanese who said they liked me, but I didn't think about why he came to talk to me. I just felt that he was very serious, while talking to him knowing that he had no friend, I felt he was so pathetic, so when I went out to eat, I would take him. At that time, I was still with my boyfriend, but we were together for long and we had our own problems. Then I gave him my cell phone number, and he didn't even have a cell phone. I really did not think he would call me; I didn't think much, just felt if there was yuan (destiny) let's be friends, very simple. I really didn't think he would call. One month later, it was Christmas holiday morning when I suddenly got his call, and then I said something like going out for coffee or what, I forget, he event brought me a cheesecake! I always thought cheesecake was made only in shops. He told me that he made it himself. I was so amazed!</p> <p>I: You are saying that when you first met, you two just chatted a little, then you left your phone number to him, and then one month later he called you and made a cheesecake for you?</p> <p>A: In Japan they also bake Christmas cakes, but I had never done that, nor was I interested. That day because I promised him to take him and eat out, so I took him to a farther place where the Chinese food is more delicious, and there were many people, so we had to wait for more than one hour. So I drove around and took him to a nearby beach, where there was really nothing, so we were just walking and talking. Even though his English was not good, we could still talk</p>	<p>Perceived first impression of self by her husband</p> <p>First impression of husband</p> <p>Reasons of treating him as a friend</p> <p>On becoming friends</p> <p>Surprise</p> <p>Interest</p> <p>Different feelings</p>

<p>for more than an hour. I felt very surprised, because my former boyfriend and I never had the kind of experience, no coffee, nothing, but we could still talk for over one hour. I felt like talking to a stranger because we just met, but we could talk for so long. I was quite impressed. I was surprised because he was a completely different type from my boyfriend, but because at that time I still focused on my boyfriend, I didn't think about anything else. For me it's like I said there were other guys who would tell me that they liked me, but I would think you were playing and I had no interest at all. For developing a relationship as boyfriend and girlfriend, I have to be able to respect him first then I will like him, there is no need for me to break up with my boyfriend just to play with that kind of people. So I had my focus on my boyfriend, and taking him out was because I simply saw him as a friend. I never mind my friends being male or female since I was little. Guess I have more male friends because girls are more troublesome.</p> <p>I: Do you feel that in your personality there was this quality that you like to help others in your personality?</p> <p>A: There was, but at that time, I didn't know, I didn't think about it. But the truth is, I have always been doing that. Later I realized that it was part of my personality, I would be happy to help if there is anything I can do for others. Why not? Regardless of Chinese or foreigners, for me if there is anything I can do I would love to help.</p>	<p>Comparison to Chinese boyfriend</p> <p>Remaining loyal to boyfriend</p> <p>Personality analysis</p> <p>Willing to help others</p>
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During initial coding after carefully examining the interview data which included words that were emphasized by the participants, and incidents that were given as examples, the common topics and themes were synthesized and grouped as emerged categories. They are: attitudes toward intercultural marriage, gender roles which include housework, child rearing and child education, work, money, naturalization, self-understanding and identity, other perceived differences, and perceptions of marriage and future plans.

4. Attitudes toward Intercultural Marriage

Attitudes of family, friends or others toward intercultural marriage may to some degree influence the participants' decisions and they view their marital relationships.

One participant who is a local Shanghainese explained her attitude toward marrying a foreigner:

I had never thought of marrying a person outside of Shanghai city, even a Chinese from other cities. So it meant the same to me whether I marry a person from Tokyo or Beijing. To me a Japanese man just means he is not a Shanghainese, and this didn't bother me at all since I had never considered that I would marry even a non-Shanghai Chinese guy. My parents were against our marriage because they thought he lived too far from Shanghai, but my husband said that his parents weren't against it. (Appendix 1, Quotation 2)

A similar attitude was reported by another only child in the family who was from a big city. Her explanation not only demonstrated how her parents viewed intercultural marriage but also what they expected to be connected to their daughter even after she was married.

My parents are from the city, so they can accept an international marriage. However, considering that in the future it would be hard to see me, they were a bit against it at first. Because many people around them had their daughters marry Westerners or study in the West, and they told my parents that in the future it would be more convenient, like flying only two hours to Beijing, so they were kind of having it thought through. My parents were a little worried, and they thought that I should get married in China and then they could take care of my children. (Appendix 1, Quotation 3)

In contrast to her parents' concern, her husband's parents seemed to respect their son's decision by simply asking "are you sure?", "Is it really OK?"

One participant said her parents were against the idea of their daughter marrying a

Japanese because they didn't know Japanese well. On top of that, because of the historical backgrounds, they didn't have a good image toward Japanese. They would question her "why have you found a Japanese?" This was overcome after her mother came to Beijing to live and take care of her, and she gradually changed her viewpoint after she got to know him better.

A different reason for opposing the intercultural marriage can be seen in the following participant's narration.

My mom was worried about the international marriage because we are very ordinary family in a small town, and in generations we have never had any international marriages. Although he doesn't have blue eyes, but he is a foreigner. So my mom, in order to get a security for me, asked my husband to buy a house for me under my name, in case in the future if he divorces me, at least I have a place to live in. Because my mom is divorced, she had to leave us without anything, so she knew the feeling. My parents like him because he is honest, innocent, not complicated or sly. And he has a good family. The only pity they felt is they think it is too far because at that time I was the only child in the family before my mother had my sister. Given my family background, I wanted to get married early because I wanted security. I felt since I had already cohabited with him, if I broke up with him, it would be very hard for me to find another boyfriend. That was the perception I had. My parents like my husband because they think he is honest and good. They are very satisfied with him. (Appendix 1, Quotation 4)

She also described her parents-in-law's attitudes toward their getting married.

Within a month his parents came to see me right after he informed them. They were quite worried, because they heard a lot about getting to know each other in a pub, the girl is after money, etc. His parents worried that I was not a good girl. That was why they flew to China to meet me. (Appendix 1, Quotation 5)

The happy result turned out that her parents-in-law were very happy with her and saw her as a good girl, not a bad one. They were also very touched by the fact that their son could have found a girlfriend, a son who, as the elder but was born very weak and doesn't seem to have inherited all the good parts from them. The father even cried because he was so happy with the good news. They worried about him because he was in a foreign country, and since his personality was very introvert, he might be easily cheated. The parents-in-law showed great love and kindness to her and her family, and she felt that she likes them much more than her own parents. As she said, "I like my parents-in-law very much, even exceeding my parents. I like them 90%, with my parents it would be 40%. My parents-in-law treat me very kindly and nicely, just like their own daughter."

Parents' and parents-in-law's attitudes seemed to be very important to the couples who were planning to marry, how others such as friends or colleagues think seemed to have some influence as well. For example, one participant talked about her colleagues' opinions of her marrying a Japanese although her mom was not particularly against it as long as she felt ok. She said she couldn't tell her colleagues that she was getting married because he didn't have money.

In the past when I took him to my company, they would laugh at me asking what he could give me. They would ask me questions like did he give you diamond rings, houses? Nothing?! Why are you still staying with him? If you like to marry a foreigner there are many, should I introduce one to you? Anyway all that they were trying to introduce to me were foreign elites, made me feel so awkward to tell them more about my boyfriend. Because at the same time another girl who was similar to me in many ways was also getting married, and she would brag about her ring, and her houses, things like that. In the end I didn't want to say anything until I got pregnant. (Appendix 1, Quotation 6)

Another participant started her story by mentioning how much trouble her friends' and colleagues' prejudice and misunderstanding caused her. Because she started dating her husband after she quit working in the same company, a lot of rumors were going around gossiping badly about her. Some people saw her as someone very sophisticated who had carefully planned for everything, some others believed she tried to marry a Japanese who was young and had a bright future for a nationality in developed Japan. There was even a young colleague saying "I really admire her, she succeeded!" All of these made her very confused and angry. "Why must I marry a Japanese?" "I marry him for love, not because of the benefits I can get out of marriage." She was particularly sad because her best friend thought the same way and didn't come to her wedding because her best friend, who failed to marry a foreigner, was jealousy of her success in her marriage. She addressed this as her first problem that her marriage caused her.

They [my colleagues] used the word succeed to describe my marriage. But I said I married for love, not selling myself to foreign countries. It was very easy for me to find a foreigner especially Westerners. Why would I have to choose a Japanese! (Appendix 1, Quotation 7)

To summarize, the only child families showed concerns in that once their daughter marries a foreigner, it will be difficult for them to see her often, not to mention in the future to help her take care of her children which they were eager to do. Although the historical influence is still there, compared to Chinese men who are very sophisticated and hard to be trusted, the Japanese spouses seemed more honest, innocent, and reliable. These qualities that many Chinese men seemingly lacked made the parents feel relieved to have their only child marry the Japanese husband.

5. Gender Roles

Gender role differences can be reflected in daily routines such as doing housework, taking

care of children, and attitudes toward working.

Housework

Many of the participants, especially the only child in the family, reported that they had never done any housework before they got married because their parents would do everything for them.

Interviewee no. 1 expressed how hard it was for her when she first came to Japan. In the first few days she stayed home with her child and didn't go out because she knew nothing, had never cooked before that. But since she was already in Japan, but couldn't speak Japanese, she decided to do housework as if it was her work. Since then she was taking care of the child, meanwhile cleaning the house and learning Japanese. She said that as her husband and she had never talked about these things, she didn't even know that the wife was supposed to cook Bento (lunch box) for the husband. Besides, he had never asked her to do so. She said that she didn't even know that rice should be washed before being cooked, and she never did any when she was with her parents, and her ex-boyfriend took charge of everything when they were in New Zealand. There were times they got into quarrels regarding their perceived gender roles.

My husband complained that I was too strong, and not as gentle as Japanese women. I would reply by saying that Chinese men are more gentle than Japanese men, and I have already done a very good job. If I don't judge you in my standard, then you shouldn't judge me in your standard, either. Then he would not say it anymore. (Appendix 1, Quotation 8)

Interviewee no. 2 had similar situations in that she and her husband didn't talk about the responsibilities of house chores; however, there were problems caused by this. Neither party was happy with each other as they expected their spouse to do more. Although they came up with some rules to solve the problem, the result was not satisfying. In the end she had to quit

her job and focus her attention on her family which was a great sacrifice she made.

A few participants considered housework as a responsibility of a wife. One commented that she has full control with domestic matters and would ask her husband to do something if she needs to, so she didn't see that there was a need to get into any conflict with her husband because of these daily chores. Another interviewee reported a similar perspective, and didn't mind doing these house chores at all partly because she felt that "men should work outside and women should take care of the family". She felt that he has been working very hard to earn money for the family; partly because she learned to take care of herself at the age of ten because her parents were divorced. But she did mention that on the 7th year of her marriage she wanted to divorce because she felt he was so lazy, and she didn't even have the right to get sick because she still had to do everything for him. One more participant explained that she was doing everything simply because her husband was too busy with work, and since they were colleagues, she knew perfectly well how busy it could be, so she didn't expect him to help at all. She concluded that there is no need to be bothered by it at all because many families in the company were like this.

A mismatched perception regarding what is the right thing to do or what wives should do can lead the marital relationship to a fatal end. The interviewee who got divorced reported her unpleasant feelings of being coerced to do housework by her husband and how they went into serious conflicts. Sometimes the couples don't realize that they are expecting their spouses with their cultural norms. One participant looked back with very strong negative feelings about her husband's insensitivity and ignorance to her situation in Japan.

As a wife, I thought I should support him, but this support had really hurt me so deeply. During the first two years he hardly did anything for the child, and even he had never changed his diapers or bathed him. One Korean mom once even asked me if I was a single mother! I realized that all my problems lay in the fact that I had done everything

by myself! Every time we got into a fight, even now, I would say to him that “you owe me, and you really hurt me so much before our elder son was two. If I were in China, my situation would be much better because I am Chinese.” (Appendix 1, Quotation 9)

From her point of view, he had not been able to take the responsibilities of being a husband and a father as she expected, although she felt that she had tried all her best to support him as a wife. She associated his problem with his family background where his father was busy at work and away most of the time, whereas his mother was busy taking care of three children. Lacking a good model, he didn't know what a father should be like. However, her family was very different, her parents, especially her father, has devoted more time than her mother to the family. She emphasized that “Chinese fathers really do housework” and expressed her feeling of helplessness and desperation when she was busy making the milk for her crying baby son while her husband was sleeping soundly. She said that he wouldn't realize that he should or could get up and care for the baby while she desperately needed help from him. To her this was just unbelievable. She also tried to help her mother-in-law during the New Year get-together.

I tried to help even when my child was very small. Once he fell asleep, I would make efforts to help my husband's mom no matter how exhausted I was. There were only two women in this house. His mom is already old, and the men in the family are not thoughtful and considerate enough, so I would try my best to help. Maybe because of this, his father one day said I was suitable to be his daughter-in-law which I took as a sign of acceptance. (Appendix 1, Quotation 10)

When the same or similar perceptions are not shared, both parties need to make effort in adjusting to the other's norms and meet the expectations. In intercultural marriages, problems can be caused easily when one party takes things for granted and the other perceives to have to make more effort. This may be more obvious when the couple lives in one side's native culture. Understanding and acceptance of the spouse's culture can help eliminate the possibilities of

conflicts. One interviewee said that since they met in China, her husband has been in China long and had no problem with the language, and also known Chinese culture very well, besides he also knew that she was the only child in my family, so her husband had never expected her to do the chores as many Japanese wives would do.

In China having parents' help is also quite common especially when the baby is born. Although one participant said that her husband was busy and didn't have time to help, he had a good attitude in that every time she asked he would try, she didn't have much to complain about. She tried to manage with everything until her mom came to help, and so far her mom has lived with them for about three years, and both of the couples were happy with the situation because the possibilities of getting into fights have been greatly reduced with her mom's help. For the husband who knows the language and understands the culture very well, there were times that he should be appreciated for what he has been contributing to the family. In her words:

I never cook breakfast for my husband. If he is late he would say please make me something, then I would. I never had this idea that he works hard and I should thank him. Every time my husband would say don't you thank me? [for working hard, and being so considerate and showing great understanding by not asking me to make breakfast for him every day which a norm in Japan?] (Appendix 1, Quotation 11)

Child rearing

Once a child is born, the couple faces new challenges and much more has to be done. Although it is usually very common in Japan that the mother mainly takes care of the children and manages house chores while her husband is working, in China child raising involves not just the parents, but also helpers and/or parents of both sides. Chinese wives may find the situations in Japan hard to cope with without anyone's help, not to mention the fact that they don't speak the language and lack of help from the husbands and others. One participant

expressed how desperate she was when her husband went back to his hometown for a break leaving her and her baby alone at home in the condition that she didn't know the language, the culture, not to mention that she didn't know how to cook. Another interviewee expressed her tough times and suggested that having a very little child might be the sharpest problem because she as a mother was supposed to be at home taking care of her daughter, while she had to work and go on business trips very often. Although it is very common for parents or parents-in-law to help in China, it is simply impossible for her Japanese parents-in-law to come, so she didn't even bother to ask because it is not logical to them. To her husband, she should first be a mother since a little kid needs mom's being around, it was too self-centered of her to focus on her career.

I didn't bother to tell him my opinion because it doesn't make much sense. After all he is not like Chinese men, as he doesn't have the spirit of devotion [to the family]. He first sees you as a mother, having the obligation [to raise a child]. If you do your job well, and have done what you should do as a mother, then we can talk about what you want to do. Probably this is the difference from Chinese. I had no other options but quitting my job because I could not find a maid which is not a norm in Japan. (Appendix 1, Quotation 12)

Given this very hard situation and her husband's perception that it was her job to take care of their daughter, she became the one that had to find out the solutions. As she understood, her husband didn't even think about the situation because after all it was she who wanted to work which caused the problem, therefore it was her job to find the solution. As a result, when she had to go on business trips, she either asked her mom to come to Japan for a while in order to take care of her child, or sent her daughter to her parents back in China. Although the problem seemed to be solved, new problems occurred due to her mother's visiting and staying with them.

Another interviewee still has very strong images of the day when she had to see her mom off in Japan. She remembered vividly that it was on a very snowy day, when she went to see

her mother off who would go back to China after helping her for a while in Japan. The reason she had to leave was that her husband couldn't get used to someone else living together, he felt he couldn't relax, and he has more needs in his own space. She said she was crying with tears in the heavy snow while pushing her son's trolley heading home. She was very emotional when she talked about this scene even so many years have passed.

It was the first time for me to have a baby, and I was alone in a foreign country, where I didn't know the language. My husband was such a devoting person to his work, and he could work seven days a week. Do you know what kind of state I was in and what was on my mind? When my son was sick, and I called him to come back, he wouldn't do so even if it was only one hour away by train. I couldn't speak the language, so I even carried one quilt in case my son had to stay in hospital [in China many things are to be prepared by the patient's family]. (Appendix 1, Quotation 13)

Child education

For the two interviewees who have children in Japan, they didn't seem to have anything special regarding their children's education. Basically they receive Japanese education, and parents try not to add burden by asking them to learn various things like many kids do in China. For wives of Japanese expatriates in Beijing, they usually use their native language when they communicate with their child. Although all of their children go to Japanese school so that in the future when they go back to Japan there won't be a gap, these moms make effort to talk to their children in mandarin Chinese. The reasons of letting their children go to Japanese school instead local Chinese schools vary, for example, one thinks that her husband's education proved to be successful, she personally thinks Japanese education is more advanced, so she would follow her husband's decision. Another who studied and lived in Japan long said her husband and daughters prefer Japanese style, so her husband takes more responsibility because he knows

better. Going back to Japan in the future was also one reason the children commute to Japanese school. One participant pointed out sharply that her father-in-law and husband decided to let their children go to Japanese school because they worry about their Japanese, and worry they would become too Chinese since they grow up in China. They are a little selfish in this matter. But anyway she accepted this decision and requested her husband to take full responsibility since it was his decision. In general bilingual awareness is stronger for those who live in China than the ones in Japan.

6. Work

Balancing work and family has become common for women nowadays in Japan. Women start to get more involved in social participation, and the traditional gender role has faced new challenges. However, women working are still rather new in comparison to Chinese women. The majority of Chinese women view working as a must, a norm. All the participants expressed their willingness to work, to be independent.

One interviewee, before she got married and became a housewife, changed her job a few times, and she concluded it as seeking higher goals and more self-improvement. She explained that she couldn't stand the feeling that he (her husband) gives her money every month, as she felt like a beggar even though she had her own pride and self-esteem. She was proud of herself that when she was in China she was always independent, and to her working not only allows a woman to be financially dependent but also mentally which is very important to her. Another mom shared her plan of going back to work after her child was born, but it was hard for her to find a job that allows her to come home at 4 p.m. because her daughter finishes school at 3p.m. So as a result it's wise for her to stay home as a housewife because she feels there is no need to work if it influences her family negatively and the income doesn't increase. Another interviewee expressed her opinion of work by comparing to Japanese housewives.

I love working. I felt that I didn't want to be like those Japanese moms who just enjoy life every day by eating, and having fun. The topics they were talking about were too boring. I want to work, and make some new friends, Chinese friends. (Appendix 1, Quotation 14)

According to her, there was a clear distinction between Japanese culture and Chinese cultures.

In Japan, I have to stay very sensitive and conscious to others' feelings and how they may think, I felt very tired and hard since I have to conform to others, and I find it very exhausting. But now I am back to China, on my own motherland, I can do whatever I want. I don't care how others think of me. I am free. (Appendix 1, Quotation 15)

This not only explains her attitudes and understanding toward working, but also tells her feelings regarding the differences. A mom in Japan has also expressed her hard times as a career woman. She said she felt stuck between family and work, and felt very exhausted both in time and energy. Specifically, she felt guilty that she couldn't spend more time with her daughter as her Japanese husband expected, but she felt reluctant to get help from him because maybe it would add to him extra burden, and he may think that you gave birth to the child but left her alone most of the time. She had to quit her job in the end although her job looked quite promising and she had learned a lot, however, given the strong awareness of the importance of family, she said she didn't quit for him, but for the family because they were originally one unit where everyone has a place, and her family's support is very important. In talking about her husband's work, she tries to be very supportive, yet she provided her opinion of Japanese husband and Chinese women.

I try to support his work consciously. I think Japanese husbands, in comparison to Chinese men, may particularly need wife's acknowledgement. Only in this way can they feel their value of existence. Chinese women are really too strong. (Appendix 1,

Quotation 16)

7. Relationships with In-laws

Relationships with in-laws may be the most challenging reality the participants had to face and deal with. Although none of the participants lives with the Japanese in-laws, all the specific occasions that they came across with their in-laws shaped their perceptions, some positive while some very negative.

Two expressed positive feelings toward their parents-in-laws, especially mother-in-law. One interviewee said that her mother-in-law, a single mother who raised her son all by herself, showed great understanding and support to her, as long as it doesn't touch the issue of money. She even came to stay with her family for a few weeks every year which surprised her friends of Japanese moms. The other participant whose parents divorced when she was 10, said her husband's being unthoughtful and naive has been compensated for by his parents. Given her husband as the oldest son in the family who works in a foreign country, her family background which touches her parents-in-law deeply, they treat her as if she was their own daughter with great kindness and understanding. They even agreed to buy her a house before she married her husband under the request of her mom seeking something secure for her. Although they don't see each other often, every time they went back Japan to visit, her parents-in-law would get a lot of things she likes and even packed for her. They were very happy that she has a daughter, which didn't happen in their family history for two generations, whom her husband loves so much and refuses to have another child to share his love. So to her, she likes them much more than her own parents.

In clear contrast to the previous example which is rather unusual, most reported the difficulties and misunderstandings when dealing with in-laws or their husbands with their parents. One interviewee tried to keep a certain distance from her parents-in-law from the

beginning. As she said, “I’ve met them, but do not perfectly get along with them”. Since she stayed in Japan for about 19 years, she was very clear that his mother holds very different viewpoints from Chinese because she is Japanese. When she talked about her dilemma that she couldn’t care her daughter more because of her frequent business trips, she didn’t consider the possibility to ask her mother-in-law to come and help. According to her explanation, it is simply impossible for her mother-in-law to come and help because she had to work. They belong to the traditional generation of old time, coming and helping them would logically make no sense and they would not accept. She was very frank with her feeling and said that she tried to stay out and avoid the differences which may cause problems. There is not much communication between her and her in-laws, as she basically minds her own business, no expectation, no request. She also tries to keep a certain distance from her husband because their ways of communication may be different, and she doesn’t want to trouble him and create *meiwaku*. Although sometimes she had to get her mother here to help, there would be problems between her husband and her mother which she didn’t know what to do about. In China when relatives come to visit, it is quite normal for the host to have them stay in their place. However, her husband couldn’t understand.

Actually Japanese hardly have any relatives. In China, if my relatives are visiting me, I have the responsibility to let them stay in my house, not in a hotel. But he just can’t understand. So in this kind of cases, I don’t have expectations at all, otherwise I will be very disappointed. (Appendix 1, Quotation 17)

Another interviewee shared her three month stay with her mother-in-law in order to learn how to cook after her first child was born; she described the teaching as “my mom was teaching me with love, but my mother-in-law with a stick.” She said although her mother-in-law didn’t mistreat her, she was working in her house, learning from her, felt like a “training”.

My parents would feel very sad if they saw me doing housework while carrying my

baby on my back. In the past my mom did everything, and she is very happy to take care of my baby and me. It was my parents who helped me a lot especially when my children were young. But my mother-in-law wouldn't take care of my child for me. So when she asked me to do something while I was very tired or didn't want to, I would pretend that I didn't understand. My mother-in-law and I never got into any conflict on the surface, but we knew we were not happy with each other. She cares about face very much, and will not give us any trouble, so with certain distance we get along very well. (Appendix 1, Quotation 18)

Since having the mother come over to help seems very common, one participant actually went through great confusion and frustration in dealing with the problematic situations caused by this.

After I became pregnant, I quit my job and became a housewife. I tried very hard to do housework, and learn to cook, also learn Japanese in preparation for going back to Japan someday. It was not easy, but the hardest part, which bothered me the most, in comparison to the physical labor, was the mental misery, which was the relationship between him and my parents, and my sister. When I was pregnant, I knew nothing about housework. Although I was trying hard, it was a great comfort to have my parents here help me. (Appendix 1, Quotation 19)

She stressed a few times that in China when a baby is born, the parents would definitely come to help. Chinese would think it is very normal, that the daughter needs help from family. However, her husband “couldn't stand the situation”, and thought they should have their own life and space. This mismatch of appropriateness of distance has become their first “cultural clash”.

The appropriateness of distance was also mentioned by another interviewee. Because her husband showed great understanding to Chinese culture, her mother came to help her and has

stayed with them for three years. Her husband is very grateful to her help, and he felt that her mom “really helped a lot”, and “if you find a babysitter, it would be a different story”. Thanks to her mom’s help the fights between her and her husband had reduced. Despite the great help her mother has offered, her mother-in-law has never given any money even a penny to her or her children on various occasions such as weddings, or New Year which she saw her as “very stingy”. She has never thought of asking her mother-in-law to help her because they don’t do it, and she didn’t expect her to. Besides if she had to ask her she would rather do everything herself. She said, “it’s hard to get them to serve you.” With husband’s siblings, she was not happy that it was always her husband who paid for everything when they went back, and his sister seemed to have got used to taking advantage of them. Her husband and she were very generous with them, but it was not reciprocal. So she would accept this reality because nothing would change even if she was not happy with it, after all they don’t go back very often. To her, how to keep a proper distance with the in-laws especially when money is involved is a question that she feels hard to answer. Similar confusion regarding keeping an appropriate distance with the in-laws has also been reported by one more interviewee. She expressed the difficulty of keep a right distance with her parents-in-law as follows:

Because my parent-in-law are old, I wanted to be nice to them, and take good care of them. But their culture is different from mine in everything. Sometimes I couldn’t help wondering: was I too enthusiastic? Showing too much filial piety? It is very hard to keep the right distance. (Appendix 1, Quotation 20)

8. Money

Money and finance have always been a practical issue in marriage. A few participants brought up this topic and expressed different experiences and opinions.

One participant came to Japan when she found that she was pregnant after she got married

but was living separately from her husband due to various reasons. She had never had to worry about money, because she is from a rather wealthy family, and she never needed to think about money. But when she told her husband that she was pregnant, he became rather cold, and even asked her to abort the child. That was why she decided to come to Japan to live with him because she had no clue about why he would be like that. But later after so many years when she looked back, she could understand why he was like that better.

I think he was scared. He was a student [in graduate school], no one around him was married, besides his parents could not provide financial support like others do. He started working part-timely since high school days because his parents were divorced and his mom brought him up by herself, and he has no siblings. So he didn't know what to do if he had a child while he had no job. His father never helped him. So he felt very scared. Maybe Japanese men feel they need to support the family after marriage, and it is a norm in Japan that men work outside and women stay as housewives at home. At that time, he just started looking for a job, and everything was changing, so it was natural that he felt scared. Yet he felt embarrassed to tell me. If he didn't tell me I would never be able to guess, because I have never had that kind of life experience.

To be honest with you, I had never worried about money, so maybe this is the difference between us. But he never showed the difference to me, so I took it for granted. I have no concepts toward money, and I had never thought about it, so I didn't know that he would be scared at all. (Appendix 1, Quotation 21)

To her, because she is from a wealthy family, she had never needed to worry about it. Her husband is from a single parent family, and has been working hard, but couldn't tell her directly about money. Because she loves and respects her husband very much, she chooses to let her husband manage money matters.

A few other interviewees also reported that they were in financial control. One said that

her husband thought that he should give money to her because of his sense of taking care of the family as a man. Both her husband and she are very independent, they share a common attitude toward money, and have never thought of asking parents of either side to offer them financial help. This may have something to do with her studying in Japan alone for long, and her husband's family background where he was brought up by his father and grandmother because his parents were divorced. She demonstrated her life value of not bothering parents by asking for money, instead it is "the best life attitude" to be independent financially which doesn't give parents trouble. A couple of other interviewees said that their husbands let them take control because they knew their wife didn't marry them for money.

Actually most of the interviewees expressed the strong tendency of independency with regard to finance or money. Many of them are from good families where money was not considered as an issue, and they also see work as a necessity in life not just for becoming financially independent, but also a chance to get connected to others and improve themselves. One of them shared one episode in her life that when they got married, her husband said that she could ask for money if she used all the money in the card he gave her. To her husband's surprise, she got very upset. As she explained her feeling, "I can't stand this feeling that he gave me [which made me feel like a beggar], because I also have my self-esteem." Because she was working and had her own income and pride, being given money had hurt her pride. She had quite a lot of thoughts in her mind.

When I was in China I earned my own living since college. I think I am very independent. I also received higher education, my self-esteem is not worse than yours. Even though you grew up in a developed country [Japan] and I in a developing country [China], my education level is higher than yours. I am a person with much pride, but I felt that finance is really the base of marriage, and I had to solve the problem. (Appendix 1, Quotation 22)

One participant associated her husband's not giving her monthly expenses anymore as

restricting her freedom. She said she didn't have to care much about money because she never needed to, she is from a good family, has been working and enjoying life all these years, she would not mistreat herself by spending money as she wished. But since she was married, she would spend all the money her husband gave her very fast. The consequence was that he stopped giving, which made her decide to work and make money by herself. Maybe regarding working and making money which is also connected to the life attitude, the following comment by one interviewee can serve as a general summary.

I will make my own money by working. I like to keep myself busy, and I don't want to live life like a housewife doing nothing. I want to be a career woman, have self-realization, do something I like, use my Japanese language, and make my life full and meaningful. (Appendix 1, Quotation 23)

9. Naturalization

Another big challenge has always been nationality, especially when actions of national level have to be taken by each country in order to protect its citizens in unexpected emergent situations such as earthquake or unstable political situations. Getting permanent residence or becoming naturalized is a hard decision to make for many foreigners living in Japan.

Of the four interviewees who are currently residing in Japan, three are naturalized into Japanese, one is not yet qualified for being naturalized due to the short length of stay in Japan. The reasons are either for the convenience of residence that visa doesn't need to be applied from time to time, or keep the family member together in case some emergency happens. As one interviewee explained her reason of getting naturalized, "because of the 2001 earthquake in Japan, my husband felt very anxious and worried. He doesn't want to imagine that I- the only non-Japanese person-has to be separated from family. So he hopes that by my naturalization we can stay together as a family whatever happens." Another interviewee exposed her true reason

of getting naturalized rather than convenience, she said she didn't want to be separated from her daughter who is Japanese in case of divorce, there were times that she kept thinking of divorce and had to consider many aspects especially her daughter.

On the contrary, all six who are now residing in China choose not to get naturalized for different reasons. One that has permanent residence said, "I will never get myself naturalized, my root is in China, so I am very much against it." She also stressed that as a patriot person, she loves China - her motherland. There is one more reason, as she put it, "because I'm the only child in my family, in the future all my parents' property will be inherited by me, it will be very complicated and troublesome if I get naturalized." Another participant expressed that she would not consider it at least while her parents are still alive because it feels like "a tree being pull out from the root", in other words, she will not be herself anymore where her root should be. One interviewee had very confronting feelings, on one hand, it is very convenient to have a Japanese passport which allows people to visit many countries without the need of applying for a visa, for people like her who travels quite a lot, getting naturalized will be very convenient. However, she still cannot accept it because she has her strong national esteem as a Chinese, she cannot get over the feeling [of betraying her own country and herself].

10. Self-understanding and Identity

The ideal couple relationship, as to one interviewee, has to be an equal relationship that both parties respect, support and learn from each other, she wants to be very independent, share every responsibility with her partner (not necessarily have to be married), has her own freedom and pride. In her own words, "I want freedom, my dream is to have a partner I love but don't have to marry, then have a child of my own, we raise the child together, share responsibilities together, this is the life style I have been pursuing. If we don't get along, then we separate, I can raise the child myself. This is what I have always wanted, to be a very

independent woman, no need to be very independent, but at least I have my pride.

This willingness of independency has also been echoed by another participant. “There is nothing I cannot handle, since I have lived in Beijing for so long, I have become a superwoman!”

Since independency has been repeated by the participants so many times, the definition was given by one of them as the following:

What is being independent? Financial independency is very superficial, mental independency is the most important. I have been pursuing mental independency. I told my husband that now being with you, seems you are raising me, but, let me tell you, I can live without you, and I can find a job and support myself. This is the fact. Even if I cannot guarantee your child has the same life, I can raise him. (Appendix 1, Quotation 24)

Same perspective is also found in another interviewee’s interview.

I feel that I am a career woman with my own independent career, and being a mother may hinder my full engagement in my job. When I am working, it’s my own time, although sometimes not everything is satisfying. When you work hard little by little, you’ll feel one day that it [the accomplishment] is like another child [of yours]. (Appendix 1, Quotation 25)

11. Other Perceived Differences

There are a few other topics that the participants brought up during the interview: general impressions of Japanese culture, habit such as eating, responsibilities based on gender role perceptions, meanings of words.

A few interviewees who are residing in Japan or have lived in Japan expressed their perceptions towards Japanese culture as well as differences between the two. Three reported their negative images of Japanese cultures. In general, they think life in Japan is too suppressing,

Japanese seem to be too fake, and very pretentious; the so-called social distance in Japanese society is really very hard to understand because each region, individual and company has varied distances. One said that she often quarreled with her husband when they were in Japan because she felt she was under a lot of pressure and very tired of dealing with the moms in her child's nursery school, she would release her frustration on him. Another said that she would try not to go back to Japan because she lived there for four years and found that it was very tiring to communicate with Japanese, felt the whole country was very suppressing. As her words quoted in work previously suggested, she felt a sense of being liberated after she came back to China because she felt free and didn't have to stay very sensitive and attend to others' feelings while she was in Japan. Interestingly, one Japanese husband has chosen to continue working in China because he feels that the human relationship in Japan is too complicated. He felt that in Japan there are too many rules, if he goes back he will have no power, the hierarchy is like in the military.

Eating is a daily routine, as Romano (1988, p. 35) asserted, the seemingly minor issues such as who cooks, what is served, who cleans up can become bones of contention between the spouses because they contain so many underlying meanings and spring from so many unconscious sources. A few of the participants actually talked about the problems caused by the differences of eating habit. They said that their husband would not really ask them to try the dishes first like Chinese men usually do. In China when there is something tasty, the Chinese men usually ask their girlfriends or wives to try it first, however, these participants' husbands didn't do it, instead they started eating by themselves without asking. Two of them explained the situations which shocked them. One expressed her shocking desperateness when she tried her best to cook so many dishes and her husband finished all without even asking or leaving some for her because she had to feed the baby first. She expressed her frustrations caused by the perceived mismatches.

When I first learned to cook, and I would first cook many dishes, and then started to feed my baby son. But by the time I finished feeding my son, all the dishes were gone! He finished all of them! I haven't eaten anything yet! He would say "sorry, I had too much". It happened so many times, and really drove me nuts and desperate. I felt shy to say it, but I felt very bad. I need to feed my son; I need to feed myself as well. But when I looked back, the food was gone! You know in China if a family member hasn't eaten, we would always leave some for him/her; we would never finish all the food by ourselves. Even if you are not full, at least you should ask. This is showing respect to others, this is Chinese culture, and this is what my family is like. (Appendix 1, Quotation 26)

Another participant expressed similar opinion regarding her husband's eating problem. She said her husband would start eating and meanwhile saying "I like this, I like that", but just didn't think of her.

It is not just eating that caused the interviewees' frustration, how their Japanese husbands dealt with some situations with respect to gender roles had also created serious problems between the couples. One wife complained that she had to do all the housework whether she was pregnant or sick. The husband was just not considerate and care about her. She said that while she went back to get care from her mother before she gave birth to her daughter, although it was only a few hours by train, her husband had never come back to see her. What was worse, to add fuel on fire, on the day she was to give birth, he went home with her mother. In China it is a norm that is commonly accepted or required that the husband stays in hospital taking care of his wife, but her husband just went back. She had very complicated feelings and thought about divorce on the day before her daughter was born.

I felt so sad! I knew that the hospital is not as comfortable as home, so it is ok that you went home. But at least give a call, ask me if I feel nervous or not, scared or not. But

nothing, not even a text message! So I became really sad. I am risking my life trying to give birth to your child, and you, went back home drinking and sleeping! Can't even text me a message! So I called my best friend, and told her that I am not far from divorce anymore. My best friend got really mad and scolded him. He is like that, even now he is still a naïve son to me. (Appendix 1, Quotation 27)

It is true that most of the participants' husbands can speak different levels of mandarin, some are very good, many of them also have a good understanding of Chinese culture. The husbands who show good understanding and acceptance of Chinese culture acculturate to it and their wives didn't perceive serious problems that are caused by cultural differences. However, it is not necessarily true that the husbands who can speak the language always get along well with their Chinese wives. As one interviewee concluded, "I think we can communicate on anything, but the point is your partner has to be someone who tries to show understanding, and stand on the same platform as you. There will be no way to talk with those husbands in the country such as my friends." Speaking of her friends, she refers to those Asian brides-poorer and less educated women from rural areas as was addressed as *hanayome* in most literature. And she said that this type of wives had various conflicts with their Japanese husbands.

Problems can easily occur when people add meanings in different ways from the intended meaning. One participant shared a case that happened in her husband's company. A newcomer who is Japanese from another cooperating company scolded a Chinese staff by calling him *baka*, meaning idiot, a word quite frequently used in Japanese daily life in various contexts. However, Chinese may not necessarily share the same meanings, not to mention the history and the media influence. As a result, the Chinese staff called the media and was ready to make it a scene until the Japanese staff apologized to him in front of the whole company. Taken this case as an opportunity, the interviewee talked about cultural differences and historical backgrounds with her children so that they have a better understanding of both cultures.

12. Perceptions of Marriage and Future Plans

Except for one who got divorced because of her husband domestic violence and restriction of her freedom, the others remain married and most reported that they have learned to manage their marriage and showed a high degree of satisfaction.

As one of them said, “regardless of nationalities, I think it is *yuan*, destiny that brought us together.” She also called her marriage as a gambling in which she had luck. “I didn’t think much when I got married, I just felt that he treated me with his real heart. I didn’t have any extra requirements, I just felt that as long as we were happy that would be enough.”

In comparison to the norm that women in Japan do the most domestic work while men work outside, one participant reported that there is no clear boundary between her husband and her regarding house chores. She said she had difficulties understanding it because “in China, couples share housework, there are no rules saying you have to do it, nor regulations that men have to work outside and women have to do housework. We cooperate.” Another interviewee mentioned the importance of making effort in maintaining a good marital relationship. She said, “marriage really needs to be managed with heart. I feel that we shouldn’t take everything for granted, you have to devote yourself to it by actions.” One more wife was very reflective when she talked about her marriage, thinking that her husband is much more mature than her, it was she who needed to improve.

Speaking of future, especially when their husbands get tired, a few said that they would stay in both countries, not necessarily in Japan. But the following gave a different perspective of why she would go to Japan.

In the future we probably will go back to Japan. In China you need human relationships (guanxi) like when you go to hospital, etc. without guanxi there is no way to survive. However, we have been without it for so long, and if I have to beg for others’ help when I

get old maybe others won't even care to give me face. I'd better stay in Japan. I have got used to living in Japan, with few family members, relatives and friends. So I need to maintain the strong bond with my family. I really don't have relatives or friends in Japan, but on the other hand, those who have relatives and friends are also bothered by how to get along with them. (Appendix 1, Quotation 28)

In general, although the numbers of wives living in Japan and those living in China are not equivalent, the Chinese wives in China reported a higher degree of satisfaction. When the researcher asked them to evaluate their marriage out of a full score of five, most of them scored four, and the reason was either because nothing is perfect, or they wish they could have more time to spend with the family because of the husband's job. However, among the wives in Japan, two couples got to know their husbands in a third country and they used English as their first language at the beginning, even though they now live in Japan, they didn't apply the norms of their cultures to each other. Although the total number of participants is limited, there is a tendency that Chinese wives in China didn't have face many challenges as they live in their own culture, and because their Japanese husbands have a good mastery of language and understanding of culture, their assimilation to Chinese culture has contributed to the wives' perceived marital satisfaction because they didn't feel the gender role gap as they were in Japan. However, their perception of marital satisfaction may drop if they lived in Japan because the gender roles and norms are quite different. Another characteristic of high marital satisfaction occurs when the couples take in a third culture instead of applying their own cultural norms to each other, which can be reflected in the interviews of two participants who met their husbands in a third culture.

Focused Coding

Based on the above categories emerged in initial coding, focused coding around the initial

concepts was conducted in search for explanations by constantly comparing similarities and differences among the categories and concepts. Data that appear to be conceptually similar were grouped under a conceptual label in order to reduce data to concepts, to develop concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, and to differentiate one concept from another (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 95). The following table gives one example of how the focused coding has been done.

Box 4.2 Focused Grounded Theory Coding

Initial Narrative Data to be Coded	Examples of Codes
<p>I: Interviewer A: Interviewee no. 1</p> <p>I: What was his first impression of you?</p> <p>A: My Smile. Because all the people said I like smiling a lot. When I was in the English language school, there were many kinds of people including Japanese who said they liked me, but I didn't think about why he came to talk to me. I just felt that he was very serious, while talking to him knowing that he had no friend, I felt he was so pathetic, so when I went out to eat, I would take him. At that time, I was still with my boyfriend, but we were together for long and we had our own problems. Then I gave him my cell phone number, and he didn't even have a cell phone. I really did not think he would call me; I didn't think much, just felt if there was yuan (destiny) let's be friends, very simple. I really didn't think he would call. One months later, it was Christmas holiday that morning when I suddenly got his call, and then I said something like going out for coffee or what, I forget, he even brought me a cheesecake! I always thought cheesecake was made only in shops, he told me that he made it himself. I was so amazed!</p> <p>I: You are saying that when you first met, you two just chatted a little, then you left your phone number to him, and then one month later he called you and made a cheesecake for you?</p> <p>A: In Japan they also bake Christmas cakes, but I had never</p>	<p>Perceived self by husband</p> <p>Perceived relationship with him in comparison with her Chinese boyfriend</p> <p>Cultural shock</p>

<p>done that, nor was I interested. That day because I promised him to take him and eat out, so I took him to a farther place where the Chinese food is more delicious, there were many people, so we had to wait for more than one hour. So I drove around and took him to a nearby beach, there was really nothing on the beach, we were just walking and talking, even though his English was not good, we could still talk for more than an hour, I felt very surprised, because I and my former boyfriend never had the kind of experience, no coffee, nothing, but can talk for over one hour, it is like talking to a stranger, just met but could talk for so long. I was quite impressed. I was surprised because he was a completely different type from my boyfriend, but because at that time I still focused on my boyfriend, I didn't think about anything else. For me it's like I said there were other guys who would tell me that they liked me, but I would think you were playing and I had no interest at all. For developing a relationship as boyfriend and girlfriend, I have to be able to respect him first then I will like him, there is no need for me to break up with my boyfriend just to play with that kind of people. So I had my focus on my boyfriend, and taking him out was because I simply saw him as a friend. I never mind my friends being male or female since I was little, guess I have more male friends because girls are more troublesome.</p> <p>I: Do you feel that you like to help others in your personality? A: There is, but at that time, I didn't know, I didn't think about it. But the truth is, I have always been doing that. Later I realized that it was part of my personality, I would be happy to help if there is anything I can do for others. Why not? Regardless of Chinese or foreigners, for me if there is anything I can do I would love to help.</p>	<p>Perceptions of self: keeping promise, being kind to others</p> <p>Differences felt between her Chinese boyfriend and her husband</p> <p>Feelings toward differences</p> <p>Perception of a romantic relationship</p> <p>Friends</p> <p>Self-understanding</p>
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Using focused coding, the following concepts can be induced from the data.

1. Chinese wives seek an equal marital relationship where both parties show mutual respect, and can learn from each other.

2. Chinese wives show strong awareness of becoming an independent individual both financially and mentally, in particular mentally.
3. Chinese women view work as a way to reach independency, to keep their self-esteem, to improve self, and to build *guanxi* by making more friends.
4. Chinese wives reveal stronger interdependency with in-groups such as family members and friends, whereas Japanese husbands appeared to be more independent.
5. Chinese wives cherish their marriage and make effort to keep the interdependency with the family members partly influenced by their perception of *yuan*.
6. Chinese wives report stronger face needs to be acknowledged and included with in-group members than their Japanese husbands.
7. Most conflicts were caused by the differences in invisible traits such as values, expectations, gender roles which are closely shaped and related to cultures.
8. Chinese wives are more direct and straightforward, whereas Japanese husbands are more ambiguous in both verbal and nonverbal communication. Although both cultures emphasize harmony, Japanese husbands seem to maintain it by avoiding conflicts, whereas Chinese wives try to talk through and seek mutual understanding. When in conflicts, Chinese wives tend to communicate with their husbands; whereas Japanese tend to avoid or let go without directly facing it.
9. Most of the participants reported high marital satisfaction which can be influenced by their educational levels, their perception of marriage, and their husbands' social status and assimilation to Chinese culture. Wives whose husbands show more assimilation or couples who are under the influence of a third culture reported higher level of marital satisfaction than the wives who are living in Japan and exposed in the norm of the Japanese culture.
10. Chinese wives reported that Japan has more hierarchical relationships than China, and

Japanese are more contextual and relational, whereas Chinese were less complicated with a clear boundary of in-groups and out-groups.

1. Chinese wives seek an equal marital relationship where both parties show mutual respect, and can learn from each other.

Most of the participants described their perceived foundations of marital relationship as love, mutual respect, equality, learn from each other. The power distance is not very obvious although some of their spouses are the major bread earner. When the Chinese participants considered their standards of choosing a husband, they focused on love, and whether the person is honest and innocent, unsophisticated, someone that they can “rely on” which implies their tendency of emphasizing interdependency with family members.

2. Chinese wives show strong awareness of becoming an independent individual both financially and mentally, in particular mentally.

Because Chinese wives seek an equal marital relationship with mutual respect and support where the couples can learn from each other and improve. Although on one hand, the Chinese wives wish to keep their strong interdependency with their in-groups, on the other hand, they reported their strong willingness to be independent both financially and mentally as individuals. To them, working is one way to build and maintain their pride and preferred self-identities. All of them reported that they want and like to work, not just to gain financial independency but also to make more friends, and spend life in a more meaningful and fulfilling way. Although a few of them said that they cannot work because of the current family situation, they expressed their strong willingness to work once they can. To be able to find a job in a foreign country, they actively learn the language and try to get accustomed to the new environment. In China when there are better and higher opportunities, people will change their jobs for better ones, whereas in Japan, it is still rare for people to change jobs frequently. One participant explained the reasons of her changing jobs a few times; because she wanted to seek higher goals and

improve herself more. This perspective is hard to be shared with Japanese because most companies seek staff who are loyal and have good attitudes to learn, most Japanese also want to work in a company lifelong for senses of security and stability.

3. Chinese women view work as a way to reach independency, to keep their self-esteem, to improve self, and to build *guanxi* by making more friends.

In comparison to many Japanese wives who become housewives after marriage or after the kids are born, the Chinese participants see work as a necessity in life not only to become financially independent, but more importantly, to get connected to others, to make friends, and improve themselves. This strong awareness of working has indicated the unconscious goal of developing interdependent *guanxi*, and strengthening self-esteem and maintaining prioritized identity.

Many participants view work as related to meanings of life and identity building. All of them reported that they want to remain financially independent as well as mentally dependent and strong. To many of them, having their own career is a means to maintain their self-esteem and pride which constitutes part of their identity. One expressed that she likes to keep herself busy, and doesn't want to live her life like a housewife [as Japanese usually do] doing nothing. She said that she wanted to be a career woman in order to "have self-realization" and make her life "full and meaningful". Working also helps provide the Chinese participants independency, not just financially, but more important, mentally. One of them clearly pointed out that financial independency is very superficial, but mental independency is the most important which she has been pursuing. Another mother also metaphorized her job as "another child" because she feels that she is a career woman with her own independent career, and being a mother may hinder her full engagement in her career.

Among the commonly perceived identities as a mother, a wife, a daughter, a career woman, most participants revealed their prioritized and preferred identity as an independent woman,

rather than a wife, a mother, or a daughter.

In Japan, Japanese husbands wish their spouses to take the priority of being a wife, a mother when they have children, with various expected responsibilities. However, the Chinese participants pursue equal relationships and hold different expectations regarding the daily chores. This perception gap is big and causes conflicts that are hard to deal with satisfactorily. One of the participants explained the reason why she didn't even bother to communicate with her husband seeking his understanding and support. She said, "after all he [my husband] is not Chinese, he doesn't have the spirit of devotion [to the family]. He first sees you as a mother, and you have the obligation [to take care of the child]. If you do your job well, and have done what you should do as a mother, then we can talk about what you want to do. Probably this is the difference from Chinese. I had no other options but quitting my job, unless you find a maid which is not a norm in Japan."

With regard to child education, all the expatriates and their wives chose to send their children to Japanese school, although some wives comprised. Even though most of the husbands have resided in China long and have a very good understanding of Chinese culture and can speak sufficient mandarin Chinese, they insist that the children should go to Japanese school because they are Japanese, and one day they will go back to Japan. Among the three participants living in Japan, two who have children chose to let them go to the local Japanese school, however, one had her daughter go to international school before she became an elementary school student, the other one who has three children let her second daughter go to international school because she wanted to. All the Chinese wives of expatriates try hard to speak mandarin Chinese to their children so that they can keep their mother tongue and become bilingual which is necessary and important in this global world.

Identity has been mentioned many times. According to the participants, when it comes to national level, being a Chinese has important meanings. In the case of naturalization, many of

them take pride in being Chinese, and if they choose to get naturalized, it will make them feel like a “tree being pulled out from the root”. Due to the strong national esteem as Chinese, one Chinese wife reported that getting naturalized would make her feel like “betraying her motherland and herself”. The identity of being the only child in the family has also been mentioned quite frequently, especially when it came to cultural differences such as housework, and taking care of the child. In Chinese families, especially families with only one child, the only child has all parents’ attention and receive excessive love from them (Zhong, 2005), and the child is not asked to do any housework, but to focus on their study. This implies that the only child not only has no experience in doing housework, but also has not much consciousness.

For example, one participant explained how her mother and mother-in-law treated her differently with regard to teaching her how to cook. She said that her mother was teaching her “with love” whereas her mother-in-law was teaching her “with stick”, she said her mother-in-law would not help her take care of her child because her mother-in-law didn’t consider it as her job, and she felt so sad that she had to take the “training” while carrying her baby on her back at the same time. Although both her mother-in-law and her mother are family to her, there is a big difference between them. Her mother in China will help her with anything and teaches her in a very kind way, but with her mother-in-law there seemed to be some distances which she was not sure about.

Personal distance is something different reported by the participants, especially between them and their in-laws. Although the Chinese participants want to show filial piety to their parents-in-laws, be kind and take care of them, they found it hard to keep a proper distance. One indicated the difficulty of keeping an appropriate distance from her mother-in-law by questioning, “sometimes I wondered: was I too enthusiastic? Showing too much filial piety?”

4. Chinese wives reveal stronger interdependency with in-groups such as family members and friends, whereas Japanese husbands appeared to be more independent.

Chinese wives reported higher degree of interdependency with in-groups which include family, relatives and friends. This tendency can be observed when they talk about their parents' attitudes and opinions on the intercultural marriage, and the wives' consulting the parents on important decisions, and asking parents for help whenever needed. The parents are also willing to help and support the daughter, such as come to live with the daughter's family, and help with housework and take care of the children. Some parents were against their daughter marrying a foreigner at first because they felt it was too far which made the situation difficult for them to see their daughter again. In contrast, Japanese husbands showed more independency and are reported to be more individualistic. To their Japanese spouses, the Chinese wives' strong interdependency seemed to be too much and hard to understand and accept. One participant living in Japan reported that it was hard for her husband to understand why parents should be with them long in order to take care of them, it is even unthinkable for him to understand why relatives coming to visit from China should stay in their house instead of a hotel. Conflicts arise from the different viewpoints originated from the boundary differences. Japanese revealed less interdependency than their Chinese wives, who never quit providing or getting support from their parents or siblings. To the Japanese husbands, it is normal that the parents or in-laws mind their own business and live their own lives instead of getting themselves much involved children's family matters. In Japan, when a couple is married, they form another individual unit, it is important for them to make their best instead of troubling others such as parents. In comparison to the strong interdependency and collectivistic characteristics in China, Japanese appear to be more dependent.

Monetary issues can also reflect the difference of interdependency of Chinese and independency of Japanese. Most Chinese have or had their own jobs, and didn't have to worry much about money, and their parents would also give them money. One participant said her father actually helped with buying their new house, and told her to ask for help any time she

needed. This kind of help usually lasts lifelong. However, in Japan, it seems that once the child turns adulthood, they are on their own. Family may help, but the children usually try to be independent and not to trouble the family. One participant reported that she didn't understand why her husband had been cold to her for a few years when their first child was born and she was a housewife, but now looking back after so many years, she guessed that because he was struggling with money but couldn't say it.

Another participant who lived in Japan for 24 years holds this opinion regarding money, "if we have money that's nice, but if we don't we shouldn't trouble our parents, isn't this the best life attitude?" This may have something to do with her family background, but staying in Japan for almost half of her life since she graduated from high school in China and getting acculturated to Japanese culture unconsciously may also have influenced her viewpoint. After all, she has tried to manage her life and school all by herself, having to depend on herself has trained her to be strong and independent like most of the Japanese who do the same once they reach adulthood. This in a way implies that in Japan children seem to be more independent on their parents after they become adults.

Importance of interdependency was emphasized a few times. One said that she will have to go back to Japan when her husband gets retired because they don't have a good relationship network in China, and it will be very hard for her to lose her face to beg to others, besides, others won't give her face. So due to this lack of interdependency, she will choose to stay in Japan in the future although she won't have friends, relatives, and will be pretty much alone and lonely. Because of this, she will try to get her family members closely bond, and in a way doesn't have to be bothered by the complexity of human relationships in China.

5. Chinese wives cherish their marriage and make effort to keep the interdependency with the family members partly influenced by their perception of *yuan*.

A few participants mentioned *yuan* as a result of their marriage to their husbands, and their

break ups with their former boyfriends. It is this sense of destiny that enables them to cherish their marriage even when they experience conflicts, they try not to think of divorce easily because they believe it is yuan that brought them together, they try hard to strengthen the interdependency with family members, and making effort in managing conflicts between the couples.

6. Chinese report stronger face needs to be acknowledged and included by in-group members than their Japanese husbands.

Chinese wives revealed a stronger face need to be acknowledged and included by in-group members, which is related to self-esteem, and pride. One of them talked about her feeling of being humiliated by her husband's giving her monthly expenses, thinking that "he understood" why, which may not be true. The husband might not have given too much thought to it and just did what he thought was common in Japan. But for her, it had triggered very complicated feelings, like her explanation that she is not inferior to him, "I also received higher education, my self-esteem is not worse than his, even though he grew up in a developed country and I in a developing country, in general, my education level is higher than his. I am a person with much pride." She emphasized her strong needs of being recognized and respected.

Japanese husbands who assimilate or know and understand the Chinese culture to a good extent show great understanding and support to their Chinese wives. Living in China also provides the environment where norms are taken for granted so the Chinese wives didn't really report much unsatisfactory. Most of the unsatisfactory occurred when the couples lived in Japan where norms changed and some of them revealed contradictory. During conflict the Chinese wife appeared to seek more acknowledgement and inclusion by the husband, whereas the Japanese husband used more avoiding and showed more face need for autonomy. Chinese wives expect and usually tend to communicate when they perceive conflicts; however, Japanese husbands tend to avoid communication, instead remain quieter than usual or try to get away

from the situation. When managing conflicts, participants pointed out the necessity of both parties in the marriage to show mutual understanding and stand on the same platform. The perception of *yuan*, to some extent, solidifies their positive attitudes in handling conflicts resulted from differences. As one suggested, “marriage really needs to be managed with heart” and both parties “shouldn’t take everything for granted” and “devote to marriage by actions”.

Face was also mentioned by one participant in explaining how Chinese and Japanese reacted to the word *baka*. It may be quite commonly used in the hierarchical Japanese relationship, usually from superior to subordinate, the subordinate most probably will not talk or fight back due to the power imbalance and the damage to harmony. However, using it to a Chinese has caused fatal damage to the person’s face, especially when being told in front of others. Self face reveals to be extremely important to Chinese, and one will do anything to save it. What’s more, given the historical backgrounds, being called *baka* made the Chinese feel being humiliated by a person from an “enemy country” which adds much more seriousness to it, it was no longer a personal level, it became national. The Japanese superior was not just humiliating him, but all the Chinese. It was not only this Chinese individual who lost face, but also all the Chinese people. If the Japanese didn’t apologize to the Chinese staff in front of everyone in the company, which he had the risk of losing his face, the whole company might have to suffer the consequence of making all the Chinese feel lose face caused by one individual deed which is common in Japan. From this case, it can be said that Chinese don’t have strong hierarchical relationships like Japanese, and they value more self-face than Japanese.

Face issues can also arise from conflicts borne from eating habits. Japanese husbands tried hard to finish all dishes served on the table reflected an effort of their trying to give face to their wives by not leaving any; whereas to their Chinese spouses, it was completely embarrassing and disrespectful because in China whatever the reasons, family members will definitely leave some for the one who is absent. It is a way to give face to others, to show respect and inclusion.

This difference indicates that Chinese are very strong in their interdependency with in-groups and it is critical to give each other face even on trivial things. Despite the Chinese wives' face need to be acknowledged by in-groups, Japanese husbands seem to emphasize more on other face, and value their need for autonomy even with their parents and in-laws.

7. Most conflicts were caused by the differences in invisible traits such as values, expectations, gender roles which are closely shaped and related to cultures.

Chinese value equality, and respect for each other, and can learn from the marital relationship, therefore don't have clear gender boundaries such as housework or child raising; whereas Japanese men reveal higher perceptions regarding gender roles, especially those living in Japan, expecting the wives to fulfill "their responsibility."

Different perceptions of gender roles have resulted in some conflicts, as reported by the Chinese participants. As most of them are the only child in the family, they didn't get trained to do any housework or cooking, or better to say that they didn't have to. As the only child, they carry the hopes of generations: their parents', their grandparents'. The family tend to invest heavily on the child's education, other things such as doing housework are viewed as interruptions to their development and growth academically and will hinder their bright future. This bright future is guaranteed by studying hard and getting into a good university. Most of the interviewees especially the only child in the family reported that they didn't know how to do housework before getting married. One interviewee explained the first cultural shock she experienced when her husband made a cheese cake by himself on Valentine's Day. At that time, they were still friends, and she was really shocked that he made it himself! She could never imagine that because in China this would never happen. Basically in China the students' main responsibility is to study, and study, nothing else. Since many of them are the only child in the family, it is critically important that the parents and grandparents invest all their time, money and energy to the child so that he/she will do well in the future. School systems in China, unlike

in Japan, often emphasize greatly on education, on the time the students spend on studying which allows them little time of their own because of the heavy load of homework as well as various cram schools. There is no class such as learning to cook or do housework in the curriculum as in Japan. In Japan, it is easily observed that little kids carry their own bags when they are young, and nursery schools help train life skills to take care of themselves when they are only one or two years old. The kids are expected to do whatever they can. It is quite common that the elementary school students help with serving lunch and cleaning. The Japanese have tried very hard to train the children to be self-independent since an early age. In school curriculum there are also classes to teach cooking, and other things that cannot be found in Chinese schools. After school activities are also very popular in Japan, many middle and high school students may come back home quite late such as 10p.m. after their club activities.

Given the above differences, it is not strange that the Chinese interviewees' ability of managing housework is not emphasized or practiced because it is not regarded as important or necessary, nor did they have time because studying is the most and probably the only urgent thing that they need to keep their focus on. A good score and good academic performance will guarantee their good future, a good job, which in turn will ultimately honor and benefit the whole family. However, in Japan although the children are dependent on their parents, and there is a strong interdependency in between, once the children turn into adults which is 18 in Japan, most probably they are on their own. A good example is after a baby is born, in China the families of two generations usually get involved to take care of the baby and the family. Most families in China still keep the habit of "*zuo yuezi*" which requires the new mother to lie in bed for a month to get recovered without eating or touching anything cold such as taking a shower, which is considered harmful. It is said that the woman after birth must stay in bed for a month recovering because otherwise she will have a lot of side effects all her life. It is ideal and necessary for her not to eat or drink anything cold, not to take a shower or bath at all during

that one month and eat and sleep well. It is quite common that either the young mother's mother or mother-in-law comes to take care of her and the baby, sometimes hiring a babysitter or a house helper to take care of the baby and/or do other housework such as cooking and cleaning up. Even after this one month, it still continues, sometimes this can last until the baby turns into an elementary school student or even longer. Although it is only one child, it seems that taking good care of this one child is the most important project which needs lifelong investment and care.

In Japan, it is quite common to see a few children in one family, and only the parents are in charge. Although sometimes the mother may come and help her daughter after she gave birth, it won't last more than one month. After that she is on her own. For those Chinese moms who first came to Japan, it is simply incredible to see young moms taking kids to nursery schools, with one on her back, two in her hands, maybe one more kid walking by himself/herself while carrying a few bags. So although Japanese show interdependency when they are young, independency takes over when they become grown-ups. This gap of perceptions was perceived as one cause of conflict between the intercultural couples. One reported that she had to learn to juggle among her work, housework and child care because her husband and his family perceive these to be her job, and she got stuck and had to find a way to balance "her problems". She had to quit her job in order to do her expected job well at housework and child raising, to her it was a great compromise for the family and she doesn't wish to be put in a similar dilemma again when her second career is developing. She quit the idea of having her husband's family for help because it is not within consideration at all.

Most of the participants are from big cities in China, well-educated with the majority holding bachelor's degrees. They are from financially good families, and many are the only child. This means they were the center of the family with all good education and best chances provided for them. All of them started working after graduating, and very few of them had to

worry about money issues. They don't share the same perceptions that men work outside, and women do domestic jobs. The equality awareness is very strong, and this can be said to be the result of the new China government's principle when the new country of People's Republic of China was founded. Men and women are equal, and both belong to working class. Therefore, the gender role awareness in China especially in the bigger cities is no longer as strong as in the past. It is a norm regardless of gender difference, that women work. It is not strange to see many female leaders in the higher level management team. For the Chinese participants who take this as a norm, it is a stressful and frustrating experience that they have to stay home as housewives, especially when they were in Japan, and it was boring and stressful to deal with the Japanese "mama friends" who just "enjoy life everyday having fun".

In Japan, once a couple is married, they become an individual unit, although they are interdependent as a family, there is still a clear boundary regarding gender roles such as who is responsible to housework and child raising. Although various policies such as the Child Leave came into act, the traditional role of a woman as a wife, and a mother still remains dominant, and most of domestic burden falls on her shoulder even though she has to work. Japanese culture is homogeneous, and it is highly valued that each person takes good care of him/herself and minds own business, not to bother others and bring others trouble even to parents. Therefore, everyone is expected to behave according to his/her expected role, in this way, social order has been maintained. This feature indicates more of an independent tendency in Japanese culture rather than interdependent which is a characteristic of collectivistic culture. Although Japanese culture has been categorized as collectivistic, this individualistic feature is strong in Japanese society. In contrast, there seems to be a much stronger interdependency in China. Family, not only the immediate family, but also the extended family like relatives, and friends are considered in-groups, equally important, who greatly depend on each other and help each other when needed. This strong interdependency is necessary and important for Chinese to stay strong

and survive in the harsh competitive society. A good relationship network guarantees good exchange of information, more opportunities, and more privileges. Given the rich diversity of ethnicities and cultures as well as the large population, it is highly critical to have a strong network as a back force.

8. Chinese are more direct and straightforward than Japanese, whereas Japanese are more ambiguous in both verbal and nonverbal communication. Although both cultures emphasize harmony, Japanese seem to maintain it by avoiding conflicts, whereas Chinese wives try to talk through and seek mutual understanding.

In Japan it seems that there are various contexts and human relationships, and a person needs to communicate with the other based on the context, age, gender, social status, when they communicate they also need to pay attention to their language use, and their nonverbal codes. The ability to sense the other's moods and feelings can be a challenge since in Japanese culture showing emotions doesn't seem to be a wise thing to do as it may destroy the harmony of all as a group. All these differences, to Chinese participants, are troublesome and hard to follow. On top of that, most of these are intangible, which makes it much more difficult to learn. This unpredictability adds to the degree of Chinese feeling suppressed, and strengthens their sense of feeling free and liberated when they came back to China. According to interviewee, her Japanese husband expressed the feeling of not wanting to go back to Japan because he felt the human relationship in Japan is too complicated, there are also too many rules, and the hierarchy is so strong like the military. In China, you may need to show respect to your superior, however, it is mutual, being sensitive to both parties' face and trying not to destroy it requires both parties. Given that Chinese culture is a very diverse culture, numerous dialects and minority cultures coexist, speaking more clearly and straightforward is also important to get the meaning conveyed correctly. Although harmony is equally important, Chinese tend to be more direct in their communication, especially with in-groups.

When in Japan, staying sensitive to others and attend to others' feelings made the participants feel tired and frustrated. In China, people are more straightforward and direct in their communication, whereas in Japan you have to guess. Going back to China made them feel free.

9. Most of the participants reported high marital satisfaction which can be influenced by their educational levels, their perception of marriage, and their husbands' social status and assimilation to Chinese culture. Wives whose husbands show more assimilation or couples who are under the influence of a third culture reported higher level of marital satisfaction than the wives who are living in Japan and exposed in the norm of the Japanese culture.

Most participants in China who are expatriates' wives reported high marital satisfaction. The reasons may be related to social and financial status, their educational level, and their husbands' assimilation to Chinese culture. The more understanding the Japanese husbands show and the longer they live in China, the more they assimilate, the better they understand and support their Chinese wives' decisions. Therefore, Chinese wives in China don't have to face and deal with cultural differences due to their husbands' assimilation. Similarly, the couples who incorporated a third culture also reported higher marital satisfaction as they don't apply their home cultural norms to each other.

10. Chinese wives reported that Japan has more hierarchical relationships than China, and Japanese are more contextual and relational, whereas Chinese is less complicated with a clear boundary of in-groups and out-groups.

Chinese wives reported that Japanese relationships are too complicated. According to them, Japanese are too fake, superficial, and pretentious. It is very hard to grasp social distance due to its complexity in various contexts and relationships. In China, there is only one boundary of in-groups and out-groups, if a person doesn't belong to the in-groups, then he/she is in the out-groups. To Chinese in-group members may include family members, relatives and friends. And

there is a very strong interdependency within in-group members, and the more in-group members a person has, the easier life will be with the help of in-groups. That is why *guanxi* is so important. However, in Japan, as the participants reported, although how in-groups and out-groups are distinguished is not clear, the interdependency among in-groups of family members seems weaker than Chinese, and interpersonal distance between in-group members is farther than in China.

To summarize, a few major differences between Chinese wives and Japanese husbands emerged from the results. One difference lies in the boundary the Chinese wives draw to distinguish in-groups from out-groups; based on this boundary they have their attitudes and expectations towards marriage and in-group members which may be different from their Japanese husbands. As individuals, Chinese wives showed very strong independency by working and becoming independent financially and independently, whereas with in-group members they expect and make effort to maintain a solid interdependency. This strong network with in-group members, also called *guanxi*, is important in Chinese society which indicates more security and convenience. The distinctions of in-groups and out-groups as well as the level of independency and interdependency, have become some of the causes of conflicts between the couples. In managing conflicts, Chinese wives tend to employ a more conversing style whereas their Japanese husbands either kept silent or tried to avoid the situation.

The Chinese participants revealed strong interdependency between them and their perceived in-group members, which included family members, relatives, friends, or anyone else they consider to be *zi ji ren* (in-group members). This interdependency can be reflected in various contexts in daily lives, when needed, one will try to do the other a favor in order to give the other face and ensure the self not to lose face. Maintaining a good relationship (*guanxi*) or developing new *guanxi* is important as the more *zi ji ren* a person has, the easier his/her life will

be. Perceiving their Japanese husbands as in-group members, Chinese wives expect their husbands to give them face in conflict situations, and they expect to be acknowledged, and included. In conflicting situations, they tend to use more direct and straightforward communication styles with their Japanese husbands. The Chinese participants also report a strong identity associated with being an independent woman, seeking an equal marital relationship where both parties show understanding and learn from each other. While cherishing the interdependency with in-groups and *guanxi*, the Chinese wives revealed very strong needs to be independent both financially and mentally. To find the answer to why Chinese wives have strong independency financially and mentally, there is a need to look at the political, socioeconomic backgrounds in China, especially since the founding of the People's Republic of China. The One Child Policy started in 1979 should also be taken into consideration because most of the participants reported that they are the only child in the family which has influenced their values, and their perceptions of gender roles. The concept of *yuan*, or, whether the Chinese wives consider their encounters with their husbands is destined or not, was also a concept influencing the participants' attitudes towards marriage, which was mentioned when the participants talked about how they managed conflicts.

In contrast, the Japanese husbands were reported by their Chinese wives to be less interdependent with in-groups such as family. They seem to have larger distance to their family than Chinese, and are more independent. In conflicting situations, the Japanese husbands are more often avoidant, and search for autonomy in comparison to their Chinese wives' face need to be included. The Japanese culture is more hierarchical, and power distance was reported to be large. Traditional gender roles such as men work outside and women take care of house chores and child(ren) are still evident; however, less conflict and higher marital satisfaction is reported by the Chinese wives whose husbands assimilated to the Chinese culture.

Most participants reported higher degrees of marital satisfaction with their Japanese

husbands. A few reasons can be withdrawn from the data. First, most of them have stronger financial situations because of their husbands' jobs which provide them a good sense of security, they themselves have also been rather independent financially having their own career. This sense of security has eased their anxiety of life in comparison to the *hanayome* who came to Japan for a better life. Second, there is no language barrier for these couples because all of the participants are well educated, and either bilingual or trilingual. The same situation can be told about most of the Japanese husbands. As a matter of fact, two Chinese wives majored in Japanese in university, three studied in Japanese universities with one of them holding Master's degree, they all have excellent language efficiency. Similarly, seven out of the ten husbands are reported to be able to speak good Chinese, some are so good that one participant expressed as "my husband's mandarin is so good and you can't tell that he is Japanese" (Interviewee no. 10). This kind of language proficiency has provided a solid foundation for the intercultural couples to communicate, especially when they are in conflict situations, whereas *hanayome* may find it a struggle to communicate themselves using a foreign language which may lead to more new problems and frustrations. The couples' attitudes and perceptions of marriage may also attribute to this higher marital satisfaction. As many participants claimed, they seek a marital relationship that both parties are equal, can show mutual respect and learn from each other in marriage. This egalitarian point of view encourages them to communicate with their husbands when they perceive conflict in order to solve the problems and maintain harmony. An obvious common feature of all the Japanese expatriates is that they have a good amount of knowledge and understanding of both the Chinese language and the culture by learning mandarin and living in China. Many of them have gotten very much used to the life in China by speaking the language, eating Chinese cuisines, communicating with Chinese friends and colleagues on a daily basis. This acculturation helped the couples, especially the wife feel less pressure and stress caused by cultural differences because their husbands are not much different from Chinese men, or

even better because they can be trusted more. Therefore, the communication between the couples is easier, the couples are more willing to maintain a good marriage by communicating, showing understanding, appreciation, and support, sometimes compromising when considered necessary. Even with the Chinese wives who live in Japan, two of them met in a third country, their first mutual language was English, which means by using the language, they have learned to communicate in a more open and cautious way when they try to interpret the messages, in order to get their true intentions through. This may help erase unnecessary misunderstandings or soften cultural differences so that both parties can adapt to each other for a happy marriage. Last but not the least, all the Chinese wives revealed very solid self-identities which include being independent women, meaning “not just on a superficial level of being financially independent, but also mentally, introvertly”, as interviewee no. 6 advocated. By feeling satisfied with themselves as individuals, their self-esteem is met and pride is gained, which in turn improves their marital satisfaction. Although at the time of the interviews, six of the participants were living in China, due to their husbands’ nature of work, there is a high possibility that one day they will come back to Japan. Some of them have actually been in and out a few times. Either way, living in a foreign country where the norms may be completely different and *guanxi* is hard to obtain as in China, it is of great importance for the Chinese participants to make effort to maintain their relationship with their family members, they will add more significance to the interdependency with in-groupss, and meanwhile learn to deal with daily challenges, many of which may be unpredictable. This process will train them to become more independent as a foreign individual, and more interdependent with their perceived in-groupss which are mainly family members in Japan given the cultural difference.

Based on the above findings, literature review will be conducted. First, I will take a general look at the research studies in the West which have been dominating, on various aspects of marriage such as marital satisfaction, marital quality, and marital adjustment, which have been

constantly examined by scholars of mostly the West. Next, along with an increasing number of cross-cultural comparisons and intercultural marriage in Asia, there was a shift of focus from the West to the East. However, many of the scholars, Western or Eastern, applied the West-originated theories to examine marriage of different cultures, which neglect the authenticity and diversity of Asian cultures. Among Asian countries, Japan, China, Korea have been mostly targeted cultures in cross-cultural or intercultural studies of marriage. Literature on cross-cultural comparisons with Asian cultures or intercultural marriage in Asian will be reviewed, as well as literature on Chinese and Japanese cultures, which are the focus of this study.

To explore intercultural marriage between Chinese and Japanese, various aspects should be taken into consideration. *Kokusai kekkon* in Japan can be dated back a few decades ago, so when discussing the current situation, political, social and economic backgrounds have to be examined. Along with these backgrounds, Japanese attitudes, especially women's, towards marriage as well as intercultural marriage have undergone tremendous changes, which in turn, correlates to a number of social phenomena which deserve close and urgent attention.

Conflict is inevitable in any human relationships, not to mention in marital relationship where both parties are highly interdependent. Face, as mentioned a number of times in the interviews, will be examined as well. Although face is claimed to be universal, studies on individualistic and collectivistic cultures have revealed differences with regards to face needs in conflict. Ting-Toomey's Face Negotiation Theory has been widely used to explain the differences. Chinese and Japanese, although both are categorized as collectivistic, may have different face needs in close relationships such as marriage. As the interview results showed, Chinese wives have more face needs of being acknowledged and included when they are in conflict with their Japanese husbands; whereas the Japanese husbands had a tendency to value their own autonomy by avoiding conflict. Literature on conflict and conflict management in marital relationship should be reviewed. Face, as an important concept in both Chinese and

Japanese cultures, will also be examined. A closer look at Ting-Toomey's (1988) Face Negotiation Theory will follow. Even though research studies on marriage and intercultural/interethnic/interracial marriage from a Western viewpoint have been dominating, more and more researchers have emphasized the importance of examining Eastern cultures, focus more on analyzing the culture from their own perspectives, and call for caution of the western bias. Some of the literature on the western bias will be reviewed.

By reviewing the existing literature on the key concepts such as conflict, face, which are important in Chinese and Japanese cultures, as well as in marital relationship, it is expected to testify the existing literature, explore the similarities and differences within Asian "collectivistic" cultures on a micro level, and discover the trivial but important characteristics between Chinese and Japanese cultures in the context of intercultural marriage, which has been overlooked. This study also hopes to examine what face needs are reported by Chinese and Japanese, how face functions in these two "collectivistic" cultures, and what are the effects of the facework, hence add new updates to Face Negotiation Theory, and meanwhile add new insights to the understanding of intercultural marriages between Chinese and Japanese.

Chapter 5. Marriage

Marriage and marital relationship, one of the most important human relationships, has never ceased to be one of the foci of communication scholars. Research studies on various dimensions of marital relationship such as marital satisfaction, marital quality, marital happiness, marital well-being, and marital adjustment have been daunting (e.g., Amato, 2003; Fincham & Bradbury, 1987; Kelly & Burgoon, 1991; Navran, 1967; Norton, 1983; Spanier, 1976; Spanier & Lewis, 1980; Stanley et al., 2006; Veroff, *et al.*, 1998). While the majority of the studies have focused on white Americans, they either examined their marital relationships of whites, or interethnic/interracial marriages with them. Although some studies examined marriages of Americans cross-culturally with other cultures, and some others explored international/intercultural marriages of Americans with others, these search studies were mostly conducted within the U. S. with white Americans as their research participants.

Marriage has also gained the attention of Asian scholars (e. g., Fu, 2008; Fu & Wolfinger, 2011; Fujihara & Uchikoshi, 2018; Nie & Xing, 2019; Yong, *et al.*, 2019), and studies on diverse Asian cultures have been increasing (e.g., Davin, 2007; Kline *et al.*, 2012; Wangge & Ishii, 2017; Piper & Lee, 2016; Jones, 2002); however, the number of research studies has not been thoroughly and sufficiently examined, and most of the research studies were conducted in and by scholars of East or Southeast cultures such as Japan, China or South Korea, with some focusing on marriage migration, or Asian brides/*hanayome*.

1. Literature Review on Marital Relationship in the West

Earlier research studies in the U.S. had their foci on marriage from a psychotherapeutical or psychoanalytical perspective (e.g., Bolte, 1970; Epstein, N. & Jackson, E., 1978; Navran,

1967; Stanley et al., 1997). Some were conducted in counselling circumstances of treating marital discord in order to foster better communication or train the couples to manage conflict and enhance verbal expressiveness as a means to improve their marital relationship (e.g., Ely, Guerney, & Stover, 1973; Wells, Figurel, & McNamee, 1975; Epstein & Jackson, 1978). The majority of the studies, however, focused on various dimensions of marital relationships such as marital satisfaction, happiness, well-being, and marital quality, with a number of studies examining interethnic and/or interracial marriages.

Some studies focused on how studying communication skills as tools to improve marital satisfaction. Studies of psychotherapeutical purposes aimed to provide effective and practical tools to improve marital satisfaction or reduce marital discord. For example, according to Epstein and Jackson (1978), after having fifteen couples take a three-week communication training which included active practice such as role playing in order to improve couples' verbal interaction, they concluded that training the couples to be more assertive in their direct expression of feelings and opinions can help reduce the statements of disagreement. Markman et al. (1993) examined prevention of marital distress and found that couples reported higher levels of positive and lower levels of negative communication skills and lower levels of marital violence after participating in a communication and conflict management training. In order to teach couples to communicate effectively, manage conflicts without damaging closeness, and enhance love, Stanley et al. (1997) introduced the speaker/listener technique, a key component of the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP), as a practical tool for couples to practice with. Although western studies including the literature mentioned above focused on various aspects of marriage and marital relationship, a common feature of these studies emphasized verbal expressiveness and listening as elements of communication competence, which helps improve marital satisfaction and reduce conflict in the West. However, these practical and effective tools in the West may not work and have effect in the same way

within Eastern cultures such as China and Japan.

Among the countless research studies on marriage, marital satisfaction, marital happiness, marital well-being, marital quality, and marital adjustment have been the most frequently examined aspects.

2. Marital Satisfaction

There are a few versions of conceptual definitions of marital satisfaction. For example, Hawkins (1968:648) defined marital satisfaction as “the subjective feelings of happiness, satisfaction, and pleasure experienced by a spouse when considering all current aspects of his marriage”. Lenthall (1977) has conceptualized marital satisfaction as a function of the comparison between one’s marital expectations and one’s marital outcomes; and Burr et al. (1979) defined marital satisfaction as the “subjectively experienced reaction” to one’s marriage from an intrapersonal perspective. Subjectivity is a common term in these diverse conceptual definitions.

Children seem to be one important variable that greatly affect marital satisfaction. For example, Burr (1970) examined satisfaction of marriage by assessing six aspects of marriage: finances, social activities, spouses’ performance of household tasks, companionship in marriage, sexual interaction, and relationships with children. The results suggested that relationship with children is the greatest variable, followed by finances and companionship. The reason for this, as explained, lies in “the presence of children plays a strong role in determining the amount of discussion shared between spouses, as well as in determining the level of marital satisfaction perceived by wives.” Apart from children, the results also revealed that wives’ perceptions of their spouses’ empathy is key to their perceived marital quality.

Spouses’ subjective feeling of support was also reported to be an important variable influencing marital satisfaction. Patrick et al. (2007) considered “support for wives” as a crucial

factor in that “it is the only variable based on her experiences of the relationship that predicts satisfaction.” In other words, if a wife feels supported, she is believed to be more capable of coping with difficulties in marriage, and she feels more satisfied with her marriage. Resonating with these results, the participants in this study have revealed higher degree of satisfaction when they perceived that their Japanese husbands are kind to the children, have good salary and try to support them. One of them reported that her husband, unlike many Chinese men who would play games after coming home, supervises with the child’s homework, and takes care of the child very well, so in general she was very happy. Another participant described conflicts cannot be avoided, and as long as there are solutions then they are still a couple, after all they have kids, and they should be responsible. So in a way children have an influence on couple’s marriage.

3. Marital Happiness and Marital Well-being

Marital happiness and marital well-being appear to be frequently used concepts in existing literature while examining marital relationships (Badr & Acitelli, 2008; Berlin & Connolly, 2018; Guven et al., 2012; Qari, 2014; Stafford et al., 2004; Veroff et al., 1998; Waite et al., 2009). Subjective well-being is referred to as how people feel satisfied about their lives (Diener, 1984), and marital well-being is defined by Manalel et al. (2019) as “a multifaceted construct that captures the positive dimension of the marital tie, including martial happiness, marital satisfaction, and perceived relationship stability.” Although the boundaries of marital well-being, marital happiness, and marital satisfaction are not clearly defined, both marital well-being and marital happiness have been used to indicate positive aspects of how the couples view their marital relationships.

Malley (1989), Malley and Veroff (1990) suggested that marital well-being is strongly influenced by a balance between an individual mastery of one’s experiences and a relational

connection with others in marriage. Sense of self or self-identity was reported to be critical, as “an absence of a sense of self in marriage could decrease the fulfillment experienced in a loving marital relationship” and “a person may not feel that he/she is in a loving relationship without at the same time experiencing a solid sense of self.” The sense of self-identity has been constantly mentioned in the interviews by the Chinese wives, especially with regard to the way they chose to live their lives and spend their time, as well as how they handle conflicts. As one of the interviewees talked about her life, “I don’t want to live a housewife’s life. I want to have self-realization, do things I like and feel full about my life.” Veroff et al. (1998) introduced an affective balance, which refers to how the couples feel about their positive over negative experiences. The researchers examined happiness in stable marriages in the first four years of 199 black and 174 white couples in search for the factors that are associated with marital happiness, and these couples were chosen because they have never thought about separating from their partners. By integrating three conceptual frameworks of gender role expectation, affective balance and the assumption of the balance, they found that gender role orientation is key to expectation, and appeared to be stronger among working class people than the more affluent classes. Regarding affective balance in personal style, the results indicated that white husbands showed high satisfaction with their marriages if their spouses are zestful and agreeable through their cooperative and considerate ways. It was found that black wives’ anxious styles have a positive impact on their husbands’ marital satisfaction, the reason is “when wives are anxious, men can be the caretakers”. However, the reverse is not true. Regarding affective balance in interactive style, sharing leisure activities and time together, the frequency and style of conflict, the partners’ supportiveness of each other, and sex have been reported to influence marital happiness. For white husbands, sex appears to be key to their happiness; whereas for the black husbands, sharing time and activities together revealed to be the basis of their happiness. For both white wives and black husbands, support is viewed as important, and

the absence of support from a spouse is negative for the marital happiness; however, this doesn't apply to white husbands. Understanding appeared to be important for both white and black women's marital well-being, lack of understanding has been reported to affect most on women's well-being in that "the greater lack of understanding by husbands, the less happiness in wives", and "husbands' lack of understanding may have accumulative effects over time". The findings revealed that conflict plays a more significant role in the happiness (or unhappiness) of young black couples than it does for white couples. Style of conflict behavior is also significantly related to black couples' marital happiness; more conflict should lead to more unhappiness in the marriage. For many blacks, being more open and expressive may mean less fear that conflict will inevitably lead to violence or disruption of relationships. In comparison with these results, the result of this study is in line with Veroff et al.'s (1998) conclusion that gender role orientation is key to expectation, and appeared to be stronger among working class people than the more affluent classes. Given all the participants in this current study have at least university degrees and are financially independent, their orientation toward gender roles is to be equal, and those who are happier with their marriage expect more equality and mutual support from their husbands. For example, one participants expressed her anger while she had to quit her job and became a housewife after coming to Japan. When she received a credit card from her husband for daily expenses, she felt being insulted. "I think I have to become financially independent. I can't stand this feeling (of being given money like a favor), because I also I have my pride and self-esteem." Similar to the black participants in the Veroff et al.'s study, the Chinese wives are more expressive and open to discuss their conflicts than their Japanese husbands. The same interviewee explained that she had been trying very hard to explain how Chinese think and do things, what is the norm for a husband and father to solve the conflicts between them.

Stafford et al. (2004) had a longitudinal study on marital well-being by drawing data from

1987-1988 and 1992-1994 National Survey of Families and Households, and reported that time has a significant effect on companionship, sexual interaction, relationship satisfaction, and commitment, conflict and arguments increased over time and couples found it difficult to remain calm and keep their opinions to themselves when their perception of marital satisfaction decreased. As Berger and Kellner (1964) claimed, “the shift to marriage invokes redefinition of an individual’s self and relationship perceptions”, disagreement and conflict appear inevitable in close relationships, and conflict increases over time. Similar finding was reported by Rash et al. (1974) that conflict is inevitable when partners in a close relationship seek to satisfy their varied needs, and they argued that clear communication is a prerequisite for conflict resolution. As conflict increases over time, constructive conflict management techniques are associated with relationship satisfaction and stability, regardless of couple type (Brown, 2000). Although in this study the Chinese wives tended to use more clear communication skills for conflict resolution, this may not be a prerequisite for their Japanese husbands.

Perceived responsibilities based on gender roles such as housework also caught some researchers’ attention while examining marital relationship. For instance, Badr and Acitelli (2008) reported that marital satisfaction with the division of housework is positively related to closeness and negatively related to conflict when they were examining the interactive effects of attachment insecurity and perceptions of housework on marital well-being. This resonates with the findings of Ward (1993) and Coltrane (2000). Ward (1993) examined household equity and marital happiness in later life and found that housework may play a particularly salient role in women’s benefit/equity perception. Highly anxious men reported greater equity and highly anxious women reported less equity when their partners did more routine housework. In this study, since all of the Chinese wives were seeking an equal relationship, their perceived gender roles were reported to be different from their husbands’, especially when they live in Japan with the husband knowing nothing much about the norm in China. The more differences the Chinese

wives felt in gender roles, the less satisfaction they felt with their marriage. For example, one mentioned her husband's perception of her as first, a mother, then a wife which had brought her great pressure and stress because she saw herself as a career woman first. She didn't try to communicate her cultural norm because she felt that it would be pointless, "after all, he is not like Chinese men, he doesn't have the spirit of sacrifice and self-devotion for family. in his mind, you are first his child's mother, and this is your obligation. So first do your job well, only after this you can talk about what you want. It is just different from China." This difference and frustration it had brought almost led her to divorce her husband.

Although housework may be one factor affecting marital satisfaction, it is not the only factor, as income emerged as a significant predictor of marital satisfaction. Income as a factor of affecting marital relationship can also be found in the study by Brown et al. (2012) which investigated patterns of marital well-being over time among black and white Americans in their first 7 years. The results indicated that "race, income, and premarital child" affected husbands' marital well-being, and "education, wives' employment status, and divorced parents" influenced wives' marital well-being in their first year of marriage. Corra et al. (2009) reported the influence of employment to marital happiness. By examining trends in marital happiness by gender and race from 1973 to 2006, they found that wives' employment status was reported to be positively related to the marital well-being among black American wives, but negative among white American wives. Being unemployed was negatively related to marital well-being among black American wives, and positive among white American wives. Being employed and having their own income appears to affect black American wives' perception of their marital happiness. Interestingly, the Chinese wives in this study reported similar result as of the black American wives. Like the black American wives, the Chinese wives claimed that they want to have a career through employment because it is one way to find their values, explore their identity and reach self-realizations as well as making friends and having connections with the

outside world. Since most of the Chinese wives are only child in the family, they may not have to worry about their financial situation, but working allows them to use their knowledge and skills which makes them feel more satisfying and fulfilling with their lives.

Waite et al. (2009) examined the consequences for psychological well-being of marital stability and change over the five-year period between the two waves of the National Survey of Families and Households in 1987-1988 and 1992-1993, and reported that marital disruption can cause a few problems such as distress, emotional and behavioral problems for children, and reduce emotional well-being.

4. Marital Quality

Marital quality has been another frequently examined dimension of marital relationship (Anderson, et al., 1983; Fincham & Bradbury, 1987; Norton, 1983; Perrone & Worthington, 2001; Rogers & Amato, 2000, Spanier & Lewis, 1980). As Lewis and Spanier (1979) defined, marital quality is “the subjective evaluation of a married couple’s relationship on a number of dimensions and evaluations,” and high marital quality is “associated with good adjustment, adequate communication, a high level of marital happiness, integration, and a high degree of satisfaction with the relationship.”

Spanier and Lewis (1980) reviewed the research studies on marital quality in the seventies by examining 150 published articles and 182 American doctoral dissertations, and argued that marital quality, and related concepts like adjustment, happiness, and satisfaction may be the most frequently studied variables in the field, involving “multidimensional phenomena,” continue to be “the focus of much family research.”

In the 1960s research studies it was commonly agreed that children tended to distract rather than to contribute to the marital quality of their parents (Hicks & Platt, 1970). Burr (1970) also shared the point of view that children appeared to be a key factor that influence marital

satisfaction. Anderson et al. (1983) argued that the total number of children, and family life cycle and family life-cycle categories were significant predictors of marital quality after analyzing perceived marital quality.

Spanier and Lewis (1980) summarized a few changes of the literature in the 1970s in comparison to the 1960s. One is, as Laws (1971) pointed out, in the 1970s there was a growing awareness of the traditional biases in the portrayal of male and female roles which existed in the literature prior to 1970. Second, the overwhelming majority of research on marriage is still conducted and published in North America. Although research which is international in scope, cross-cultural research, and non-American research is likely to continue, American research studies will continue to predominate. A third one is in the sample size, national samples such as the General Social Survey (Glenn, 1975; Glenn and Weaver, 1977, 1978), and techniques of multivariate analysis have provided an important advance in the study of marital quality.

Bochner et al. (1982) discussed expectations (what one expects one's spouse to do) and enactment (what one perceives the spouse as doing), and examined subjective evaluations (role expectations) and marital adjustment. According to them, role expectations include institutional roles and companionship roles, the former conforms mainly to traditional role specifications, customs, and traditions, husbands are instrumental (provider, decision-maker, authority figure), wives are expressive/integrative (homemaker, caretaker, source of emotional support.) Companionship roles stress mutual interests, joint organization, and equality emphasizing sociality, open communication. By pointing out that "previous research has measured only institutional roles at the expense of companionship roles, which may better represent the functioning of the wife in many marriages", the researchers assume that subjective evaluations of marriage ("happiness," "satisfaction," "adjustment") revolve around the evaluator's expectations. Dissatisfaction arises when one experiences a discrepancy between expectations set and expectations met - that is, between what one expects one's spouse to do (expectations)

and what one perceives the spouse as doing (enactment). By examining 126 married couples, mainly white and middle- to upper-middle-class using Spanier's Dyadic Adjustment Scale, the results suggested that interventions that reduce the cleavage between expectations set and perceptions of expectations met may have a positive effect on marital satisfaction. Speaking of Chinese and Japanese cultures it is easy to have the misunderstanding that there are more similarities than differences as both are Asian and collectivistic. However, the high divorce rate between Chinese wives and Japanese husbands, as well as the results of this study, indicate that there might be a huge gap in the Chinese wives' expectations set and expectations met, which affects their perceptions of marital quality.

5. Marital Adjustment

Marital adjustment has been constantly examined by communication scholars so far (Locke, 1951; Locke, Sabagh, & Thomes, 1956; Locke, & Wallace, 1959; Locke, & Williamson, 1958; Narvan, 1967; Spanier, 1976; Sabatelli, 1988). Sabatelli (1988) conceptualized it as a process whereby couples move along a continuum, being well adjusted or maladjusted.

Narvan (1967) examined communication and adjustment in marriage, and claimed that as the married couples have to face the issues of managing money, relating to in-laws and deciding on the division of labor associated with the state of matrimony which in turn brings new problems, and the couples are challenged in their capacities to "communicate-i.e., to listen, to understand each other and to express themselves clearly and accurately." After investigating 24 "happy couples" and 24 "unhappy couples" by using two test instruments: the Marital Relationship Inventory which was designed to measure marital adjustment (Burgess, Locke, & Thomes, 1963; Locke, 1951; Locke & Wallace, 1959; Locke & Williamson, 1958), and the Primary Communication Inventory which was created to measure communication in marriage (Locke, Sabagh, & Tomes, 1956), Narvan concluded that there is a positive association between

communication and marital adjustment, suggesting the entry to improving a marital relationship may lie in focusing the couple's attention on how they communicate, and good verbal communication is definitely more strongly associated with good marital adjustment than is good nonverbal communication. This echoes Epstein and Jackson's result (1978) in the effect of verbal assertiveness in decreasing conflict. Through the results of this study, it is apparent that the Chinese wives in the study also tend to utilize verbal communication, as Narvan (1967) suggested, in managing conflicts their husbands. One interviewee shared that she kept informing and explaining Chinese culture and how Chinese communicate with in-groups for a few years until gradually her husband understood. She didn't want to quit by divorce because of the love between them, but to decrease the conflicts triggered by the cultural and familial difference she tried to assert herself and converse with her husband.

6. Theories

A few theories have been developed to measure various dimensions of marital relationship; most were constructed in the 1970s and 1980s. To name a few, there are theories of measuring marital satisfaction such as Theory of Marital Satisfaction (Burr, 1973), Model of Marital Satisfaction (Miller, 1976), Theory of Marital Satisfaction of Parents (Rollins & Galligan, 1978), and Symbolic Interaction Theory of Marital Satisfaction (Burr, et al., 1979). There are also theories to measure marital quality or instability such as Inductive Theory of Marital Quality and Stability, the six-item Quality Index (Norton, 1983); the five-item Marital Instability (Booth, Johnson, & Edwards, 1983), The Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale (IOS; Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). And for assessing marital adjustment, Spanier's (1976) Dyadic Adjustment Scale has been one of the most frequently used scales.

Although variables such as marital satisfaction, marital quality, marital happiness, marital well-being, marital adjustment have been the foci for the past decades, there has been no clear

agreement on these concepts. Spanier and Lewis (1980) summarized about the definitional ambiguity of the research studies on marital relationships in the 1970s and argued about the ambiguity of these concepts which creates a considerable confusion (Sabatelli, 1988).

Amato et al. (2007) have reviewed the marriage changing in America by using two national surveys of 1980 and 2000, and concluded that times have changed in that marriage is becoming one lifestyle that many choose instead of a privileged social status (pp. 1-2). This conclusion reflects the individualistic nature of the U.S. culture in that people perceive marriage as an individual choice. Marry or not, marry early or late are viewed as decisions that individuals should make by themselves with full awareness of taking responsibilities for whatever they choose. The same situation may apply to couples' choice of having children, as the survey in 2000 revealed, only few couples had children. Amato et al. also reported that later age at marriage indicates lower divorce tendency and higher marital satisfaction, economic security together with gender equality are positively related to marital quality and marital satisfaction. Gender equality, together with economic security appear to be a "good recipe" for ensuring marital success. With wives' unemployment declining and employment increasing, income had an indirect effect on marital quality. Marriages became more egalitarian over time, sharing house chores and playing fair in household labor predicted higher marital quality. The results of this study have revealed the same tendency regarding the Chinese wives in seeking egalitarianism and sharing house chores which will lead to higher marital satisfaction.

7. Interethnic/Interracial Marriage in the West

With most research studies on marriage conducted in the U.S. with U.S. Americans as their main participants, some studies focused on other cultures, races or ethnicities, or interethnic/interracial marriage (Bizman, 1987; Bugay & Delevi, 2010; Dainton, 2015; Fu & Wolfinger, 2011; Gaines, et al., 2015; Hanassabe & Tidwell, 1998; Liversage, 2012). The

majority of intercultural marriages in the U.S. are ones in which one partner is non-Hispanic white and the other partner is of Hispanic descent (Berg, 1998). The number of such intercultural marriages in this country has doubled to more than a million since 1970 (Crohn, 1998). For example, Bizman (1987) examined perceived causes and compatibility of interethnic marriage in Israel; Hanassabe and Tidwell (1998) investigated Iranians living in the U.S.; Bugay and Delevi (2010) examined Turkish's perceptions of meaning of life focusing on Turkish who studied in the U.S., and Schuehs (2015) discussed the barriers to interracial marriage between U.S. citizens and undocumented Latino/a immigrants.

Despite that fact that various dimensions of marital relationships have been constantly and frequently examined, other cultures which may be similar to or different from the U.S. culture have not been thoroughly explored. The results that were reported contain western (mainly American) cultural biases and were assumed adaptable to other cultures such as Asian countries which have much greater diverse cultural backgrounds and may possess very different characteristics. For example, Primary Communication Inventory is used to measure marital adjustment, emphasizing that verbal communication is key to good marital adjustment between couples. However, this measurement may not be valid in collectivistic cultures such as Asia as it is in individualistic cultures like the U.S. Simply applying tools or theories that were developed or designed in the West may not be sufficient and efficient in measuring non-Western cultures.

Another common point of the existing literature lies in that most employed quantitative research method instead of qualitative methods. Although "American research studies will continue to predominate," Spanier and Lewis (1980) advocated that "the field must try new directions" and "research which is international in scope, cross-cultural research, and non-American research is likely to continue."

To summarize, although research studies on various aspects or dimensions of marital relationship have been numerous and diverse, research studies in the U.S. have been dominating. Most of the studies either set their targets on white Americans in the U.S., or were conducted in the U.S. which reflects relatively strong individualistic characteristics. For example, as Amato et al. (2007) summarized the marriage change in the U.S., marriage at a later age, choosing not to marry or having children or not have been gradually accepted as a personal choice, in comparison to being a social necessity as commonly perceived and accepted in collectivistic cultures in Asian cultures such as China.

Communication competence in the West also emphasizes importance of verbal communication skills such as verbal expressiveness or listening, which are viewed as practical tools or solutions in managing conflict and increasing marital quality of couples. In comparison, Chinese wives also reported to utilize verbal communication in dealing with conflict with their husbands. There are a few other similar characteristics which can be implied in comparison to the existing literature. First, Chinese wives reported higher marital satisfaction when they felt being supported resonating with Patrick et al.'s (2007) study. The Chinese wives reported that they were happy when their husband tried help with housework, child rearing and show understanding and support to them. In line with Veroff et al.'s (1998) conclusion that gender role orientation is key to expectation, the participants are oriented to equal gender roles. When this expectation is met, they report more marital satisfaction. Similar to the black participants in the Veroff et al.'s study, the Chinese wives are more expressive and open to discuss their conflicts than their Japanese husbands. Chinese wives also report more satisfaction by having their career, one way to find their values, explore their identity and reach self-realizations as well as making friends and having connections with the outside world. Working has allowed them to shape their self-identity.

Self-identity which has been frequently mentioned by the Chinese wives was also reported

to be critical in marital relationship and marital wellbeing. Chinese seeking egalitarianism and sharing house chores leads to higher marital satisfaction, as Amato et al. (2007) stated.

Although China is commonly viewed as one collectivistic culture in Asian, the results of this study has revealed some similar features in comparison to the results of existing literature on marriage in the West. Under the same category, Japanese cultures is often regarded as sharing more similarities with other Asian cultures, differences have not been given enough attention. However, both the high divorce rate between Chinese wives and Japanese husbands and the results of this study indicate that there might be some important differences that have been overlooked which demand to be fully examined.

Chapter 6. Cross-Cultural Comparisons and Intercultural Marriage in Asia

This chapter will discuss cross-cultural comparisons of marital relationship and intercultural marriage in Asia. Chinese culture and Japanese culture will also be examined.

1. Cross-cultural Comparisons and Intercultural Marriage in Asia

An increasing number of literature on Asian cultures have been published. Some research studies focus on cross-cultural comparisons, some interracial, interethnic, and some intercultural/international (Bugay & Delevi, 2010; Dainton, 2015; Gaines Jr. et al., 2015; Kline, et al., 2012; McGrath, 2015). Although studies on U.S. Americans are still prevalent, more and more scholars have started to examine Asian cultures (Elwood, 2001; Hidaka, 2010; Schueths, 2015; Yoo & Lee, 2019).

Intercultural/interethnic marriage is no longer a rare phenomenon as “ethnic diversity is increasing, more and more couples of differing cultural background are choosing to marry” (Fame, 2004). Ho’s (1990) generic term “intercultural marriages” refers to marriage between partners from different racial, ethnic, national or religious backgrounds. Given the diverse cultural systems which include different backgrounds, language systems, and value systems, marriage partners need to adjust to their cultural differences (Blount & Curry, 1993; Tseng, McDermott, & Marezki, 1977).

Some psychologists/researchers such as Frame (2004), Waldman and Rubalcava (2005) examined intercultural marriages from psychological or psychoanalytic perspectives. Frame (2004) studied some common problems couples face such as values, gender, money, child-rearing, and suggested that “a third identity” should be integrated while giving pastoral

counseling - an identity that incorporated multiple perspectives and cultural backgrounds, also as Perel (2000) put it, a foundation upon which partners can be “their separate and idiosyncratic selves while maintaining sensitivity to each other’s reactions” (p.201). Waldman and Rubalcava (2005) asserted the importance of understanding the cultural organizing principle while counseling intercultural couples as “we bring our cultural and relational history into the present in our current worldview, in the expectations we bring to marriage, in our assumptions about gender roles and in our ways of understanding and modulating emotional expression.” Hardy and Laszloffy (1995) claimed that many of the problems intercultural couples face stem from “unrecognized differences” in the couples’ perceptions, values and behaviors deeply rooted in their cultural organizing principles, most often unconscious. Because of this, both counterparts’ perceptions and feelings are subjective and culturally influenced, however, being presumed as objective and true by them. This “unrecognized differences” may be especially true within cultures that are perceived to be under the same category such as collectivistic or individualistic. Asian cultures such as Chinese and Japanese cultures are more often treated as having the same/similar collectivistic traits than differences which have not been thoroughly examined or given enough attention to. For instance, notable conflicts may occur if the wife has an egalitarian view of marriage and her husband a male-dominated one. As a result, it was suggested that the first step for psychotherapists is to raise the couples’ awareness of their differences in perceptions and feelings. This was reported by the Chinese wives in this study very frequently as one major cause of some conflicts which was related to the differences in perceptions and feelings between the participants and their Japanese husbands. Chinese wives are seeking an egalitarian relationship with their Japanese husbands where both parties show respect to each other, however, some of Japanese husbands how are from Japan, a male-dominated culture, hold different perceptions regarding house chores and child rearing. This mismatch has raised some conflicts in the couples’ marriage.

Intercultural couples have been reported to face various challenges stemming from diverse values, perspectives, and communication styles (Cools, 2006; Oetzel, Dhar & Kirschbaum, 2007; Orbe & Harris, 2008). As Hofstede (1984) identified in the Country Individualism Index (p. 158), U.S. ranked top as the most individualistic culture, followed by mostly European American countries, whereas Japan was no. 22, the Philippines 28th. House et al. (2004) distinguished between institutional and in-group collectivism, the results showed American scores were low on in-group collectivism, but a little higher on institutional collectivism, however, the Filipina, Chinese, and Korean cultures ranked high on both, and Japanese culture ranked higher on institutional collectivism than in-group collectivism. From this index, we can tell that although Chinese and Japanese are both categorized as being collectivism, difference exists in that Chinese culture ranked high on both institutional and in-group collectivism, whereas Japanese culture ranked higher on institutional collectivism than in-group collectivism. The results of this current study has confirmed this difference. According to the interviewees, there is a higher interdependency between them and their perceived in-group members than their Japanese husbands. To the Chinese wives, the distance with their in-laws are sometimes hard to take, and a few of them mentioned the conflicts that were caused by the differences in perceived interdependency.

Murray and Kimura (2003) found that both individualist and collectivist dimensions are present in Japanese marital relationships, and the couples value individual happiness and personal freedom, but meanwhile expect loyalty and family obligation. Influenced by Shinto religion as well as the imported Confucianism and Buddhism, the traditional gender role portraying women as a “good wife and wise mother” is still dominating (Fujimura-Fanselow & Kameda, 1995). These results are different from the results of this study in how the Chinese women view marriage and their attitude towards gender roles. Obviously, in comparison to above results, Chinese wives in this study value equality and mutual respect that differ from the

Japanese couples' individual happiness and personal freedom, as Murray and Kimura (2003) suggested. Meanwhile, different from the dominating traditional gender role of women as "good wife and wise mother", Chinese wives see themselves first as independent individuals who are independent both financially and mentally than a good wife and mother. This kind of differences in perception have become some causes of conflicts among some couples. This reflects the Chinese wives' individualistic traits in general, and at the same time they also reported their stronger interdependency with their perceived in-group members, which is collectivistic. Similarly, Lindsey (2011) argued that career aspirations of Japanese women are partly constrained by the cultural expectation that they become full time homemakers and mothers despite equal rights and women's educational achievements. Leung and Bond (2009) reported that love and caring in Chinese couples is characterized by harmony, unity, and togetherness, but also a control of strong emotions. In contrast, for Japanese couples it's characterized by satisfaction of social expectations (Hidaka, 2010). Although a few Chinese wives in the study were housewives because of the husbands' jobs or their young children, all of them asserted their strong willingness to work instead of becoming housewives. Having a career is viewed to be related to their self-value and identity which carries important meanings to them. Different from Hidaka's (2010) result that Japanese couples are characterized by satisfaction of social expectations; Chinese wives didn't mention anything that is related to social expectations.

Kline et al. (2012) examined cross-cultural similarities and differences in marital role conceptions in six countries: The U.S., China, South Korea, Japan, India and Malaysia. As they suggested, recent cross-cultural studies have focused on the characteristics young adults prefer in a spouse, typically with lists of preferred traits developed from U.S. samples. According to some researchers (Buss, 1989, 1994; Buss, Shackelford, Kirkpatrick, & Larsen, 2001), men and women reveal different preferences in a spouse: men value physical attractiveness and youth in their potential mates whereas women prefer industriousness, intelligence, and financial

potential.

East Asian cultures have emphasized a common preference that a good wife should display respectfulness and modesty. For example, Gabrenya and Hwang (1996) and Gao et al. (1996) concluded that Chinese value face support and the Confucian concepts of seeking respect, modesty, warmth and refinement; similarly, Japanese also reveal great concern for *wakimae*, or discernment of one's role in a given situation, and face, expressed as the desire to show modesty (*kensu*) [*kenson*] as well as respect and consideration (*omoiyari*) (Elwood, 2001). Face plays an important role in East Asian cultures such as China and Japan.

A number of literature entries examined international marriage as a means for women to migrate across cultures (Kim, 2010; Lan, 2008; Lee, 2008; Piper & Lee, 2016). Davin (2007) suggested that marriage migration is highly gender specific in that women are using marriage to escape poverty in the hope of achieving a better life for themselves and being able to help their families, and also to move up through the spatial hierarchy to more prosperous areas, marriage migration is considered predominantly a rural phenomenon. A similar phenomenon can be observed in an increasing number of women from China, the Philippines and Korea coming to Japan as marriage migrants.

Two factors, according to Constable (2005), have contributed to the increase of international marriage in East and Southeast Asia. The first is the deliberate and targeted search for spouses outside the country by those disadvantaged in domestic labor markets. This pattern of transnational marriage typically involves men from wealthier countries of the region who are poorer, less educated, and/or in rural areas, and women from the poorer countries. This can be observed in most studies on marriage migration which reflected government's attempt to solve a national reproductive crisis by utilizing migrant women to provide paid and unpaid forms of reproductive work. As one result, migrant women by transnational marriage usually have to face new forms of precarity beyond the workplace. Given the majority of the marriage migrants

are foreign spouses, also called *hanayome* with an implication of those who are mostly from developing countries in Southeast Asia and East Asia, international marriage is seen as one chance for less-educated women to migrate legally and gain access to employment abroad with prospects for permanent residency. As Piper (2003) suggested, “marriage migration appears to be a secure way of achieving a less precarious life legally, socially, and economically”, but it was also argued that the men who marry such women are often categorized as undesirable men by local women given their less favorable socio-economic backgrounds. Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea had to incorporate new policies to solve this dilemma of bride shortage by assisting single male citizens to meet women from Southeast Asia and China (e.g. Piper, 2003; Lee, 2008). The second factor related to the increase in marriages arises in a less targeted way from the increased mobility of people in the region and beyond: through tourism, business travel, international study and student exchanges, short-term temporary skilled migration, unskilled labor migration, and other forms of international mobility (Constable, 2005). The above research targets are mostly from less developed areas and countries, thus don't have an egalitarian status as their Japanese husbands, and they don't really have any choice but to assimilate to the Japanese culture. This study will not focus on this type of women through marriage but on women who seek and hold more equality to their husbands in order to find cultural influences on their perception and management of marriage.

The low marriage rate in Japan may be partly influenced by women's changes in their attitudes towards marriage and their improvement in social status. Over the decades, women in Japan have gradually had more opportunities to pursue higher education as well as their professional career. Meanwhile, women's attitudes towards marriage and divorce have been undergoing tremendous transformation, which in turn, as one result, many, particularly those with university degrees or higher, are postponing marriage or choosing to remain single. The divorce rate is also growing in that women can achieve financial independence on their own.

Similar results have been reported in Lan's (2008) study which reported significantly more Taiwanese women of marriageable age are now pursuing university degrees, participating in the labor market, building careers, and enjoying financial independence in comparison to the past. They combine a concern for the high costs of child rearing with a desire for an equal partnership.

Research studies on more diverse cultures such as in Asia have been steadily increasing. Liu and Liu (2004) categorized the marriages of Chinese women to Japanese men into three types: well educated single women which are the focus of this study, divorced or widowed women, and low educated women. A number of studies on marriage have focused on the second and/or the last, in which women from rural areas migrate by marriage as a means of improving their life quality. For example, Davin (2007) examined marriage migration in China and East Asia and reported marriage outside the village remained as the norm in rural areas as women seek a better life through marriage. There are some other studies, to name a few. Ishii (2016) reviewed the marriage migration in Asia; Scobey-Thal (2015) analyzed the bride market in Asia; Jones (2002) examined the "Flight from marriage" in South-East and East Asia. Jones and Shen (2008) examined international marriages with foreign brides in East and Southeast Asia such as Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan. Kline et al. (2012) examined the role of communication and cultural concepts in expectations about marriage. As the international marriage has been increasing due to the much greater mobility, the technology development, and the commercialization of international marriage, the marriage migrants have to face various reality such as citizenships of their own, and their children, access to employment and public welfare services, and custody of children. International couples must deal with the issues not only of how to gain citizenship and rights upon entering a nation-state, but also on how to exit a nation-state if necessary (Jones & Shen 2008). Some of these issues were mentioned by the participants in this study such as whether getting naturalized or not, where they will go after

their husbands' retirements, what kind of education they should let their children have.

2. Chinese Culture

In comparison to the U.S. which is commonly recognized as being individualistic (Hofstede, 1984), Asian cultures such as China and Japan have been perceived as being collectivistic. Individualism has been defined as “the subordination of the goals of the collectivities to individual goals” while collectivism involves the opposite, namely, “the subordination of individual goals to the goals of a collective” (Hui & Triandis, 1986, pp.244-245). Individualistic cultures such as the U.S. culture emphasize individual's self-interest and that of one's immediate family, and value individual's rights and autonomy. Personal identity is defined by the individual's attributes. Individuals value independence and show more concern for personal needs and interests over others. In contrast, collectivistic societies such as many East Asian cultures, emphasize the importance of the individual's interdependency with the group, which in turn safeguards the interests and well-being of the individual. Individuals show a stronger concern for interpersonal bonds, greater awareness of and responsiveness to the needs of others reflecting a sense of interconnectedness, and interdependence (Hui & Triandis, 1986).

The study on the mate selection process in the United States (Gibbons, Richter, Wiley, & Stiles, 1996) reported that, as an individualistic culture, individuals are free to make their own decisions based on what is best for them, and U.S. teens, unlike those in collectivistic cultures, seek partners who are wealthy, attractive, sexy, exciting, and fun. Studies on Asian cultures reveals significant differences. For example, as Dion and Dion (1993) suggested, in more collectivistic societies such as China, traditionally, love and intimacy between a woman and a man were less important than other factors as a basis for marriage. Dion and Dion's result that love and intimacy were less important than other factors as a basis for marriage didn't match

the results of this study because most Chinese wives reported that they married their husbands because of love. The result of this study indicated a change of Chinese in choosing their spouses, the traditional traits were not found from the interview data in this study. The Chinese wives reported more individualistic traits than collectivistic. The same can be said to Hsu's (1981) result as well. Hsu (1981) argued that the concepts of romantic love did not fit particularly well with traditional Chinese society since the individual was expected to take into account the wishes of others, especially one's parents and other family members, when choosing a spouse. The Western ideal of romantic love characterized by intense feelings, disregard to others' views of one's love, and complete mutual absorption would be regarded as disruptive. This tradition is challenged by the result of the interview data. In comparison to the general perception of marriage in the United States as individual responsibility between the two, and communication and self-disclosure have significant impact on their marital satisfaction, Chinese emphasize "maintenance of long-term prosperity and stability of interpersonal relationships far more than individuals' personal needs and feeling" because "obtaining a stable marriage (even though the relationship may not be satisfactory) might be a particularly salient index of personal success and familial solidarity" (Hwang, 2000). Chinese couples tend to value family honor, reputation, and prosperity over individual needs (Cao et al., 2007). However, gender seems to play a role, women seemed to show a stronger degree of interdependency than men. As Hui (1988) found, women university students both from the U.S. and Hong Kong cultural groups scored higher on collectivism with regard to parents and friends than did their male peers after measuring their individualism-collectivism. Although the above results may still remain true, this study has indicated that love comes first when the Chinese wives chose their husbands, and meanwhile they value the stability of marriage and try their best to maintain this stability with the help of their in-group members.

Xiaohe and Whyte (1990) studied the predictors of marital satisfaction among Chinese

women and reported that degree of freedom of choice was the strongest positive predictor of marital satisfaction suggesting the importance of individualistic factors (choice) and collectivistic factors (relations with other members of the family system) as correlates of Chinese women's satisfaction with their marital relationship. With dependency on the family and the virtues of filial piety and devotion emphasized across the life span (Ho, 1975), and the primary ties of intimacy strongly connected to the family relationships with parents, siblings, and other relatives (Hsu, 1985), a generation of individualists who may attach greater importance than earlier cohorts to self-discovery and personal fulfillment is likely to emerge out of the One Child Policy (Davin, 2007). Results of the study also reveal that self-discovery and personal fulfillment are very important to the Chinese wives, which is closely related to their perceived self-value and meaning of life. The results are also in resonance with Jia and Jia's (2006) conclusion in "the emerging and construction of individualistic identity in modern China."

The concept of "face" plays a significant role in Chinese relationships. Although originated in China, "the concept of face is a universal" (Hu, 1944). Hu distinguished two sets of criteria of "face", one is *mien-tzu*, which is "the kind of prestige that is emphasized in this country: a reputation achieved through getting on in life, through success and ostentation" (p. 45). The other kind, *lien*, is "the respect of the group for a man with a good moral reputation: the man who will fulfill his obligations regardless of the hardships involved, who under all circumstances shows himself a decent human being". *Lien* "represents the confidence of society in the integrity of ego's moral character, the loss of which makes it impossible for him to function properly within the community. Lien is both a social sanction for enforcing moral standards and an internalized sanction" (p. 45). Goffman (1955) defines face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self-delineated in terms of approved social

attributes.” Chinese are reported to distinguish between in-group and out-group communication (*zi ji ren* vs. *wai ren*) in their communication between professional and intimate couple relationship contexts. According to the Chinese wives, their in-group members include their own family, extended family and relatives, and friends, whom they rely on in various situations and are strongly interdependent with. However, they reported that the same extent of interdependency is not shared by their Japanese and in-laws, who seemed to be rather independent from each other, which caused them confusion and stress. Gao et al. (1998) suggested two distinctive aspects of Chinese culture that influence their communicative behaviors: *mian zi* (face) and *zi ji ren* versus *wai ren*. *zi ji ren* are believed to be more direct and disclosing with each other than *wai ren* (Gudykunst & Matsumoto, 1996). Gao and colleagues (1998) proposed that the collectivistic and hierarchical values in Chinese culture are associated with three distinctive features in Chinese communication: *hanxu*, *tinghua*, and *ke qi*. *Hanxu* refers to a mode of communication that is reserved, implicit, and indirect. *Tinghua* can be interpreted as listening, heading, and obeying, and *ke qi* means politeness. *Tinghua* helps maintaining harmony, is especially important with in-group members who have seniority and authority. *Ke qi* helps preserve face and social harmony. Although traditionally, as Tang et al. (2010) suggested, that China has been thought of as a fairly patriarchal society where husbands dominate, while traditional gender roles are gradually being displaced by more egalitarian roles in many parts of China. The results of this study confirmed this change of gender roles in China, with all the Chinese wives seeking egalitarianism and mutual respect and support from their husbands. Although traditionally in order to maintain harmony and face, the features such as *hanxu* or *ke qi* have been valued, they are more applied with *wai ren*, out-group rather than *zi ji ren*, in-group. While talking with *zi ji ren* Chinese wives reported to be more direct than with *wai ren*, as stated by Gudykunst and Matsumoto (1996).

Hiew et al. (2015b) suggested that Chinese and Western cultures may hold different

standards in judging what makes a good and satisfying relationship. Chinese place greater importance on maintaining couple relationship harmony and respect for family elders than Westerners. Cao et al. (2017) examined marital well-being and depression in Chinese marriages, and suggested that obtaining a stable marriage (even though the relationship may not be satisfactory) might be a particularly salient index of personal success and familial solidarity, whereas experiencing marital disruption often makes individuals and their families lose face. Cao et al. further explained that Chinese couples tend to value family honor, reputation, and prosperity over individual needs, it is widely believed that divorce should be avoided as much as possible since it brings great shame on the family as a whole and cause them to public embarrassment and loss of face. The result suggested that in comparison to the emphasis on intimacy, happiness, and personal fulfillment in Western marriages (Amato, 2009), stability and commitment may play particularly influential roles in shaping Chinese spouses' personal well-being. It is true that the Chinese wives in the study value stability and commitment, they also place great emphasis on happiness and personal fulfillment which is a feature in Western marriages, reported by Amato (2009).

Yuan, according to Goodwin and Tang (1996), refers to “relational fatalism”, which is the belief that personal relationships were predestined to succeed or fail, and that the interactants themselves have only limited control over this process. Marital relationship must be tolerated and cherished because “*yuan*” has brought them together (Chang & Holt, 1991). As a concept derived from Buddhism, *yuan* is defined by Chang and Holt (1991) as a “secondary causation” which is thought to be the chief force in determining whether people will or will not be associated with each other, and plays a significant role in influencing present-day Chinese relationships. Chang and Holt argued that despite the tendency that Westerners tend to view relational outcomes as primary dependent on communication, Chinese consider the people whom they associate with to be very special and important because only those who have *yuan*

are destined to be associated, therefore they respect and make the best use of this opportunity when it presents itself. Goodwin and Findlay (1997) see “*yuan*” as a unique Chinese response to personal relationships that originated from the unique religious and philosophical history of Chinese culture, and *yuan* has a binding function in close relationships. They examined the influence of the belief in *yuan* among Hong Kong Chinese and British respondents, the results revealed the Chinese respondents scored higher than the British respondents. Chen (2009) examined the influence of “*yuan*” on the perceptions of romantic relationships by young Chinese adults in Hong Kong, and the result revealed a significant and positive correlation between participants’ believing in *yuan* and relationship satisfaction. The result also indicated that highly satisfied couples appear to argue less and perceive frequent arguments more positively – a tendency that is enhanced when they believe in *yuan*. Based on the above results which emphasize the concept of *yuan* and the common usage and influence of it on Chinese interpersonal communication, it is vital to have cultural specific knowledge if we are to avoid the pitfalls of trying unreflectingly to apply Western models of communication to Eastern interpersonal relationships (Kincaid, 1987). One Chinese wife in the current study described her breaking up with former boyfriend as “no *yuan* after all”, implying it was *yuan* that brought her husband and her together. Although the word *yuan* was not mentioned many times, the fact that the Chinese wives cherish their marriage and tried their best to manage all the challenges and conflicts may indicate their deep rooted consciousness of *yuan*.

Education also appears to be relevant to marriage. Women are reported in many cultures that the higher level of their education, the later they will marry, and/or the less likely they are to marry. For this study no participants got married before they finished their university, most of them got married after a few years of working. When they chose their spouses, they tended to choose those who have same educational levels or above. This result is in alignment with the following studies by Smits et al. (1998) and Nie and Xing (2019). Smits et al. (1998) suggested

that individuals who attempt to achieve the highest possible socio-economic status tend to take education level into account when selecting their partners. In China too, education is associated with later marriage for Chinese women. Nie and Xing (2019) studied the pattern of assortative marriage in China since 1990 and its impact on income inequality, and found that there is an increasing tendency for men in China to marry women of similar education levels.

3. Japanese Culture

Japan, as another Asian country being categorized as collectivistic, has been gathering numerous and continuous attention of communication scholars. Given its uniqueness in various aspects, words and the implied meanings in its social and cultural structure have been discussed. As Ho (1982) argued, many important concepts in Asian societies, such as *amae*, are inherently relational, and they reflect a sense of self as interdependent, rather than independent (Hsu, 1971; Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

For example, Doi (1962) examined *amae* - a key concept for understanding Japanese personality structure. *Amae*, the noun form of *amaeru*, meaning “to depend and presume upon another’s benevolence”, is generally used to describe a child’s attitude or behavior toward his parents, particularly his mother; however, it can also be used to describe relationships between adults such as a husband and a wife. Doi further argued that although given its uniqueness that there is no single word equivalent to *amaeru* in English, it does not mean that the psychology of *amae* is alien to the people of English-speaking countries. Doi discussed a British psychoanalyst, Balint’s (1952) observation that in the final phase of the treatment patients begin to express an infantile wish which he called “primary love” also “passive object love”, this was considered by Doi as *amaeru*.

Sumanai is another word observed while treating neurotic patients, which is considered to be connected to *amaeru*. Literally it means that a person has not done what he was supposed to

do, thereby causing the other person trouble or harm. However, when neurotic patients said it, much hidden aggression was engendered by frustration of their wish to *amaeru*. In other words, Doi expressed it as a way of patients “forcing” others to cater to his wish by apologizing.

Among contemporary middle-class Japanese couples, it has been suggested that there continues to be relatively little psychological intimacy in the marital relationship for many couples (Roland, 1988). Although in the North American sample, many aspects of reported marital communication were related to marital satisfaction, it is not likely to be the case with the Japanese sample. It was reported that despite the desire for a more intimate marital relationship, it was difficult for some more educated Japanese women to have the intimacy from their husbands given their spouse’s long hours at work with their extensive postwork socializing. Thus for many middle-class Japanese women, the relationship with their children and to a lesser extent, long-standing friendships with women who were former classmates, are the principal sources of intimacy (Roland, 1988). This may be the norm in Japanese culture, in the context of intercultural marriage it may cause serious conflicts. Actually one Chinese wife in this study reported that she had suffered so much because of her husband’s absence due to long hours of work in Japan, and she said she felt deeply hurt and these feelings cannot be forgotten even today. She described her husband as someone “who is very dedicated to work” and “can focus on work seven days a week”. This dedication to work and complete ignorance of her and her young child had made her suffer a great deal simply because she felt that as a wife she should support him; but this support had hurt her so deeply. She felt so helpless on a foreign land because she couldn’t speak the language, didn’t know anything about the culture and her husband who was the only person she could rely on was not there most of the time. So this norm to many Japanese women is a great challenge to Chinese wives.

Japan witnessed rapid economic growth from 1950 to 1970, followed by stable economic development until the early 1990s (Smits et al., 1998). Although traditional values in the parents’

generation have persisted, the number of “love marriages” which value love as a basis has increased over the past four decades in Japan (Fukada, 1991). As one of the most ethnically homogenous populations among industrialized nations, the number of legal and illegal foreign workers in Japan is on a sharp rise due to the labor shortage caused by the nation’s low birth rate and aging population (Sakuragi, 2008). Walby (1990) argued that marriage is an institution of gender inequality, “mail order brides” or female labor migrants see international marriage as a means of getting secure and legal residence status. Because women have been marginalized in the labor market, this “marriages-of-convenience” may bring them a better chance of economic security. Piper (1999) examined labor migration, trafficking and international marriage by focusing on female cross-border movements in Japan, and noted that the evidence indicates that most of the increase in international marriages is to be accounted for by the importation of foreign brides (*hanayome*) by Japanese men who cannot find Japanese brides, therefore it is not surprising that the majority of international marriages in Japan are between Asian women and Japanese men. The increase in these marriages, particularly in rural areas of Japan facing “wife shortages”, has coincided with emigration pressures and rising demand for labor in gender-specific sectors of the labor market (Piper, 1997b).

Given the majority of (the diverse types of marriages) the research has been limited to white couples, and less research has examined marital trajectories among ethnically and economically diverse husbands and wives (Brown et al., 2012), more research studies focusing on more diverse cultural backgrounds have been increasing. Many of the recent studies on marriages in Asian cultures such as China or Japan have been either cross-cultural comparisons or intercultural marriages with the West (Dion & Dion, 1993; Sakuragi, 2008). Additional conceptual and empirical analysis of culture and close relationships will be needed to compare different individualistic societies and different collectivistic societies, respectively (Dion & Dion, 1993). Markus et al. (1997) noted that all selves are culture specific; however, similarities

between China and Japan, both as collectivistic cultures, are more frequently discussed than differences (Sueda, 2009). For example, the concept of face, which is important in both cultures, may function differently in the close relationships such as intercultural couples of Japanese and Chinese. Sueda (2009) suggested that “discussing face needs only within the individualistic versus collectivistic culture dimension may be too simplistic; the degree of positive-face needs may differ in different countries with collectivistic culture.”

Despite the fact that Chinese wives constituted the majority of foreign wives with Japanese husbands in intercultural marriages in Japan, there has not been sufficient studies examining marriages between Japanese and Chinese, in particular, Japanese husbands and Chinese wives. Some studies focused on marriage migrations where women cross the borders to seek a more secure life by marrying men in rural areas of Japan; however, very few focused on those who have higher education backgrounds. Situations such as the rapid social and economic developments in China and the One Child Policy have influenced to a great extent on perceptions of marriage and gender roles of couples, which remain to be explored. Face, a key concept in both cultures, has not been fully examined in marital relationships. Although more and more communication scholars have been examining marriage from various dimensions, studies of the West have been dominating, with many research samples targeted on the whites or in relation to them. Quantitative research method such as survey have been widely used as the major tool to examine the variables, with only a limited number of studies employing qualitative methods. Even though there is a shift from Western European cultures to Asian cultures, a majority of studies have attempted to apply the western based theories on a macro-level, very limited studies focused on examining the diverse cultures from an emic perspective in Asia. Given the diversity and unique characteristics of Asian cultures, it is important and urgent to study in their own cultural frameworks and perspectives. This study has filled this gap by examining Chinese and Japanese cultures in the context of intercultural marriage. By

interviewing the Chinese wives on their perceptions of their marriages to their Japanese husbands, some important similarities and/or differences of these two “collectivistic” cultures have been examined from an emic perspective.

This study has reported some findings which support and challenge the results of existing literature on cross-cultural and intercultural marriage in Asian.

First, the results of this current study has confirmed the difference between Chinese and Japanese in their extent of collectivism, as indicated by Hofstede’s (1984) the Country Individualism Index (p. 158). It is reported that Chinese culture ranked high on both institutional and in-group collectivism, whereas Japanese culture ranked higher on institutional collectivism than in-group collectivism. The Chinese wives reported stronger interdependency between them and their perceived in-group members than their Japanese husbands, which is in accordance with Hofstede’s index that Chinese and Japanese are different in their collectivism.

The results also prove that notable conflicts may occur if the wife an egalitarian view of marriage and her husband a male-dominant one (Hardy & Laszloffy, 1995). According to the Chinese wives, their attitude to marriage in egalitarian, and they seek equality and mutual respect in marriage, meanwhile expect to be independent as individuals. Many of them are also the only child in their family, and they have been taken great care of by their parents. Most of them have never done any housework before they got married. However, in Japan the traditional gender roles are still dominant, and women’s role of being as a good wife and mother is in clear contrast with Chinese women’s perceived gender role, this big difference is reported to be one of the causes of conflicts between the couples of Chinese wives and Japanese husbands.

Different from Murray and Kimura’s (2003) result that the Japanese couples value individual happiness and personal freedom, the Chinese interviewees reported a common attitude of equality and mutual respect. Similar to the result of Gibbons et al. (1996) that

individuals in individualistic cultures such as the U.S. are free to make their own decisions based on what is best for them based on the other party's individual qualities, the Chinese wives also placed great emphasis on selecting their husbands. This result also challenged Dion and Dion's (1993) suggestion that in more collectivistic societies such as China, traditionally, love and intimacy between a woman and a man were less important than other factors as a basis for marriage because most Chinese wives reported that they married their husbands because of love. This indicated an emergent individualistic change of Chinese in choosing their spouses that differed from the traditional feature.

The individualism can also be found in the Chinese wives' perceived self-identity. All of the interviewees in this study view themselves as independent individuals both financially and mentally. All participants do not wish to be housewives, but instead want to have their own career as working will help them find their values, improve themselves, make friends thus add meaning to their lives. Collectivistic traits are strong with in-groups, as the Chinese wives reported in their strong interdependency with their *zi ji ren* such as family, relatives and friends. However, the same extent of interdependency is not shared by their Japanese and in-laws, who seemed to be rather independent from each other, which caused them confusion and stress.

It may be true that obtaining a stable a marriage might be a particularly salient index of personal success and familial solidarity, as Cao et al. (2017) suggested, and divorce will make individuals and their families lose face, thus should be avoided as much as possible. However, the participants also emphasized on intimacy, happiness, and personal fulfillment which were reported as a feature in Western marriages (Amato, 2009).

Education also appears to be relevant to marriage. The results of the study reveal same tendency as a few existing literatures reported. In this study, no participants got married before they finished their university, most of them got married after a few years of working. When they chose their spouses, they tended to choose those who have same educational levels or

above. This is in alignment with the following studies by Smits et al. (1998) and Nie and Xing (2019). Smits et al. (1998) suggested that individuals who attempt to achieve the highest possible socio-economic status tend to take education level into account when selecting their partners. Nie and Xing's (2019) studied the pattern of assortative marriage in China and found that there is an increasing tendency for men in China to marry women of similar education levels.

The concept of *yuan* is also mentioned in the interviews. As one participant explained the reason she broke up with her former boyfriend, she concluded as “no *yuan* at all”, which indicated a deeply rooted belief in daily life of China, a unique Chinese response to personal relationships (Goodwin & Findlay, 1997). Despite many challenges that the Chinese interviewees had to face, they tried very hard to cherish their marriage. This is reported in Chang and Holt's suggestion that marital relationship must be tolerated and cherished because “*yuan*” has brought them together (Chang & Holt, 1991). Different from the Westerners' view of relational outcomes as primary dependent on communication, Chinese consider the people whom they associate with to be very special and important because of *yuan*. And it has a binding function in close relationships. accordingly, Chen's (2009) examination of the influence of “*yuan*” on the perceptions of romantic relationships also revealed a positive correlation between participants' believing in *yuan* and relationship satisfaction. The result indicated that with highly satisfied couples they argue less and perceive frequent arguments more positively which may be enhanced by their belief in *yuan*.

Chapter 7. Conflict, Face and Western Bias

1. Conflict and Conflict Management in Marital Relationship

While examining communication in intercultural marriages, it is necessary to understand the role of conflict and conflict communication specific to the context (Tiffany & Barker, 2015) because it is important to identify and understand differences in value orientations across cultures that are one of the most common causes of conflict in intercultural relationships, including marriages (Frame, 2004; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). Conflict is “the interaction of interdependent people who perceive opposition of goals, aims, and values and who see the other party as potentially interfering with the realization of these goals” (Putnam & Pooles, 1987, p. 552). Ting-Toomey (1994) defined conflict as “the perceived and/or actual incompatibility of values, expectations, processes, or outcomes between two or more parties over substantive and/or relational issues” (p. 360)

Intercultural couples face myriad distinctive stressors such as mismatched cultural expectations and differing communication styles which are challenging. Because of these divorce is more common in intercultural than intracultural couples, and divorce rate tends to be highest in intercultural couples whose cultures of origin are very different (Hiew et al., 2014). This can be used to explain the high divorce rate between Japanese and foreign spouses in Japan as indicated in Table 2-8, in particular, between the Chinese wives and Japanese husbands. This study has revealed a few major stressors or differences between the Chinese wives and Japanese husbands such as attitudes towards marriage, gender roles and conflict management.

Intercultural marriages are more likely to bring the cultural differences of two people into

an intimate confrontation (Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005). Many communication scholars studied conflict in romantic and/or marital relationships. For instance, Skowronski et al. (2014) analyzed a few major cultural factors which influence Western and non-Western intercultural couples' marital satisfaction. These factors include acculturation, language and communication, attitudes toward marriage, individual traits and behaviors, support of the family, societal views, gender roles, managing of the household finances and child rearing. Taking the attitudes of marriage and share of housework as an example, conflicts occur due to the couple's cultural perception differences in the attitudes of marriage and share of housework. This study also has a few main factors revealed from the interview data, which include: attitudes towards intercultural marriage, gender roles, work, with in-laws, money, naturalization, self-understanding and identity, other perceived differences, and perceptions of marriage and future plans. Differences in these factors caused conflicts between the Chinese wives and their husbands.

Romano (1988) also discussed intercultural marriage from various aspects of daily life. A simple event like food and drink may trigger serious conflict because these seemingly minor issues such as who cooks, and who cleans up become bones of contention between the couples as they contain many underlying meanings and spring from so many unconscious sources. Indeed, from the result of the study, it can be concluded the above factors have a great impact on couples' perceived marital satisfaction. For example, a few interviewees expressed their confusion and stress when their husbands finished all the dishes that they tried very hard to cook instead of leaving some to them, the feeling of desperation was caused by the difference between Japanese and Chinese cultures. In Japan it is considered good and respectful not to leave any food by trying to finish all that is provided, leaving food unfinished will be seen as wasting food and being disrespectful thus make the other person lose face. However, the norm is very different in China. In China it is expected to provide as many dishes as possible,

especially when there are guests. It will be a face loss if the food is not enough. In the same way, if one family member cannot eat together due to some reason, other family members will usually leave some for him/her, failing to do this will be seen as very rude and lack of consideration. Because the Japanese tried really hard to finish all the food that was provided by their wives in order to show his appreciation to her effort, the Chinese wife had nothing left to eat because she had to feed her young child first. This lack of understanding had caused some Chinese wives great stress and confusion at the beginning of their marriage.

In contrast, the Chinese wives whose Japanese husbands know the language and culture well, and are willing to assimilate to Chinese culture, and also have the experience of residing in China for some period of time, reported higher level of marital satisfaction. One of the interviewees said that she felt that her husband was just like a Chinese boyfriend when they were dating, not to mention that he speaks very good Chinese, know a great deal of Chinese culture, since they started dating, she would often take him back home and have meals together, on holidays she would also take him to visit relatives, so all her relatives had met him. On weekends she took him to visit friends or relatives, play Majiang or drink tea. Another interviewee also expressed how much her husband appreciated her mother's coming to help in her place. She said it was her husband who asked her mother to come help her after she gave birth to her child because he knew that his parents in Japan wouldn't do it, and he felt grateful to have her mother to help with the house chores and care of the whole family.

Perceived support of the family, to Chinese participants it means including the extended family like both parties' parents and siblings, was reported to be one of the factors that relate to their satisfaction of their marriage. Cultural differences are reported to be the trigger of some of the conflicts by the Chinese wives in the study. Many of the conflicts between the couples were actually caused by different attitudes towards marriage and perceptions of sharing housework based on gendered roles. Most Westerners view marriage as an egalitarian

relationship, hence household chores should be equally divided between the husband and wife (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2010). In non-Western societies such as China and Japan, the results suggested there are differences of Chinese wives and their Japanese husbands in how they view their marriage. All Chinese participants reported or implied that they were seeking an egalitarian relationship with their husband, revealing a more individualistic characteristic. However, this seemed to be influenced by where they families locate, if they are in China where men and women are more equal both domestic and societal, and the husband is knowledgeable of the language and culture and willing to acculturate, less conflict and higher level of marital satisfaction was reported. In contrast, the participants in Japan reported lower level of marital satisfaction and more conflict due to the more hierarchical gender roles and the Japanese social norms which posed more challenges and caused more conflicts to the Chinese wives who are used to egalitarian relationships in their homeland. Just like Romano (1988) noted, the differences of perceptions and attitudes such as of gender roles may become issues when the man comes from the more male-dominant culture and the woman from the more egalitarian one. The wider the gap between the partners' cultures, the more severe the problems may be. Nevertheless, Romano (1988) suggests that just because two people do not review the male/female roles identically does not mean they will not get along. The problem usually occurs when reality does not match expectations. When the man is from a male-dominant culture and the woman from an egalitarian one, the problem is usually greater than the other way around. This can be used to explain the situations of Chinese wives who married Japanese, especially those who live in Japan where the culture is more male-dominant and hierarchical than in China. Romano further suggested that women in general, irrespective of culture, tend to be more relationship-oriented than men, and give more to keep the relationship going, but with a man who already considers women to be inferior, the woman generally has to give much more - and has to give up more. Romano argued that the intercultural couples are not truly prepared

sometimes for the subtle differences as their cultures are seemingly more similar than they really are. Some unexpectedly difficult combinations are those between English and Americans, Danes and Swedes, and between Filipinos and Indonesians because these cultures which appear similar on the surface are really much more diverse than either partner imagines. Chinese and Japanese, for instance, being put under the same category of being collectivistic, sharing Chinese characters or Kanji and so many other cultural traits, are often considered as having more similarities than differences. This perception has been challenged when marital life started and differences started to reveal themselves unexpectedly one by one causing discomfort and conflict, until divorce. As the results of this study show, there are a number of significant differences between Chinese wives and Japanese husbands, which were the challenges that the Chinese wives had to face.

It is true that, as Nabeshima (2005) suggested, compared to the Western viewpoint of marriage as a personal decision, non-Western cultures such as China and Japan regard it as a family decision. The results of the study are in line with this tendency in that families of all the participants played a part in the decision making process. However, there is a difference. Comparatively, Chinese parents appeared to be more involved in this process than the Japanese husbands' parents by offering feedback and advice, even helping with their daughter's housework and child rearing; whereas Japanese parents didn't interfere much with their son's decision. All the participants talked about how their parents were involved in their decision of marriage with different opinions, and are actively helping their daughter and her family. However, no much was mentioned on the involvement of their husbands' parents. One interviewee said that before they got married, her husband's parents simply asked the son with the question "are you sure?"

Fitzpatrick's (1988) Typology introduced three types of happily married couples: traditionals, independents, and separates with different approaches to marital relationship and

conflict. Traditional couples tend to avoid conflict, but they will argue about the most important issues in their marriage; sex roles tend to be stereotyped. They both emphasize we-ness over individual goals and values. There is a high degree of sharing of space. They tend to have a regular daily schedule. Independents are quite different from traditionals. They believe that individuality should be emphasized and strengthened by the marriage, and they believe that each partner should be allowed privacy and independence. They thrive on conflict, and neither is openly afraid of expressing disagreement. There is little sex-role stereotype. The marriage is supposed to be egalitarian, and they each see themselves as androgynous. They engage in conflict, bargaining, and negotiation. They disclose a lot, both positive and negative feelings. In their home they tend to have separate physical spaces and control accessibility to them. They have no regular daily schedule. The separates are characterized by separateness and interpersonal distance. There is a low level of companionship and sharing. Their values resemble those of traditionals, but they value separateness and maintain autonomy in the use of space. They tend to avoid all marital conflicts. These three types are the categories of “happy” couples because both parties share same or similar perceptions such as values, attitudes and approaches to conflict. If we are to analyze the Chinese wives in this study to this Western-based typology, Chinese wives are closer to the independents in their strong pursuit of egalitarianism and independence; whereas couples are more like traditionals, emphasizing we-ness over individual value and goals.

Braiker and Kelly (1979) categorized conflict topics and issues into three levels: specific and concrete behaviors, relational rules and norms, and personality traits. A fourth type of conflict was also identified by Kelley et al. (1978) as conflict about the process of conflict itself which includes complaints about communication behaviors such as nagging, withdrawing, sulking, and temper tantrums. In addition, Cupach and Metts (1994) reported that complaints that are made not only to a partner but also about a partner are particularly face threatening.

Canary et al. (1995) examined conflict in parent-child, friendship, and romantic relationships. By summarizing the existing literature on dating and marital relationship, they proposed three dimensions of conflict behavior: engagement versus avoidance, positivity versus negativity of affect, and constructive or destructive for the parties' relationship. In the first one, conflict engagement implies overt verbal confrontation of conflict issues, whereas avoidance suggests withdrawal and aversion to dealing directly with conflict issues (p.105). This dimension is similar to the style reported by the Chinese wives of the study in how they managed conflicts. As they noted, they usually chose to express their feelings straightforwardly and tried to talk through their problems, however, their husbands mostly employ avoidant behaviors. With regard to positivity versus negativity of affect, the type of affect exhibited by relationship partners is said to be gender related. According to Levenson and Gottman (1985), husbands' negative affect consists largely of anger and contempt (78%), whereas wives' negative affect is comprised mostly of sadness, fear, and whining (93%) (p. 106). Lastly, constructive behavior is assumed to be cooperative, prosocial, and relationship preserving, whereas destructive behavior is considered competitive, antisocial, and relationship undermining. Despite the dimensions of the behaviors which are associated with marital satisfaction, adjustment and stability, Canary et al.(1995) emphasized the importance of perceptions of the communicator's competence in regard to conflict and satisfaction, which is, "conflict behaviors do not appear to have a direct influence on relational outcome; rather, people first interpret conflict behaviors in terms of how appropriate and effective the partner was, and these interpretations filter the effects due to conflict behavior" (p. 107) .

Gottman (1994) has named four negative behaviors which are destructive to marital stability as the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," which emerge in the following order: complaining/criticizing (about some features of the partner) leads to contempt (i.e., acting as if sickened by the partner), which in turn leads to defensiveness (i.e., protecting self), which leads

to stonewalling (i.e., emotional withdrawal and refusal to participate in conversation). According to Gottman, couples either regulate or do not regulate their conflict response. Regulate is the ability of both partners to respond in significantly more positive than negative messages during interaction, and a nonregulated couple includes at least one partner who does not demonstrate such ability. Stable and satisfied couples are reported to interact more positively than negatively. The Chinese wives who reported higher marital satisfaction reported the same tendency.

Mackey and O'Brien (1998) examined influences gender and ethnicity have on conflict and conflict management between couples. By interviewing 60 ethnically diverse couples, the results showed significant difference in how husbands and wives managed conflict, ethnicity was reported to have an effect on how husbands and wives perceived themselves and their spouses in conflict management. Specifically, of all three ethnic groups which included white, African Americans, and Mexican Americans over three stages of life which were early marriage, parenthood, and "empty nest" (when children left home), major conflicts occurred most often during the child-rearing years. In particular, white respondents reported the most conflict during this period. Compared to white respondents, half of African Americans reported higher maturity in child rearing than white and Mexican American couples. Another finding was in regard to husbands and wives' conflict management styles. A confrontational style here included any efforts to express one's thoughts and feelings to the spouse in a face-to-face manner, while avoidant style refers to any stratagem to deny or escape face-to-face encounters. These two opposite styles of confrontational and avoidant styles can be used to describe the Chinese wives and Japanese husbands' styles in managing conflicts.

Gender seemed to have an effect on how couples managed their perceived conflicts. It was reported that in the early and child-rearing years, a majority of husbands avoided face-to-face discussion of conflict whereas a majority of wives used confrontational styles. Mackey et al.

(2000) explored conflict management styles of spouses in lasting marriages by interviewing 72 couples whose marriage lasted in average 35 years. Despite most previous studying focusing on younger subjects, they examined styles of conflict management among spouses in middle and old ages. In their study, conflict was a state of reported disharmony in marital relationships that developed because of differences between spouses. The results revealed that the most powerful factor in shaping conflict management styles in the recent years of these relationships was the style of managing conflict in previous years.

Chen and Starosta (1997-8) categorized four factors that influence Chinese conflict management after examining eight articles on Chinese conflict management and resolution. They are harmony, inter-relation (*guanxi*), face (*miantze*), and power. To Chinese, harmony is the end rather than the means of human communication, “all conflict is part of the lessons of life, like rain and sunshine” (Zhang, 2009), conflicts are not treated as problems of communication, but rather as detractors from harmony, hence human communication is a process in which we try to adapt and relocate ourselves in the dynamic process of interdependence and cooperation. This may be used to explain why Chinese wives saw conflicts as a natural part of life, and unavoidable, so when they perceived conflicts they would converse with their husbands in order to reach harmony. However, their Japanese husband might see conflicts as negative, and would try to avoid conflicts as much as possible as it destroys harmony. Accompanied with this value, Chinese practice *li* as prevention of conflict. *Li* refers to norms and rules of proper behaviors in a social context. It is an external means to achieve the ideal state of harmony by showing a feeling of respect or reverence to others (Chen & Xiao, 1993). This can be reflected in shared tendency of *li shang wang lai* (reciprocity) and *xian li hou bin* (courteous before the use of force) in the daily life of Chinese. Chen and Starosta further explained that harmony, the Chinese ultimate goal of interaction, is supported by *guanxi* and *miantze*. *Guanxi* forms the structural pattern of the Chinese social fabric and *miantze* is the

operational mechanism that connects the *guanxi* network. *Guanxi* refers to relationships between two parties, which include friends, family, supervisor/subordinate, and many others. Based on this, a clear boundary has been drawn to distinguish in-group and out-group relationships. This distinction has a great impact on how Chinese treat others depending on whether they are perceived to be in-group or out-group members. The “we feeling”-also called *zi ji ren*, means that among in-group members greatly reduces the possibility of confrontation or conflict, while harmony often becomes a victim of distrusting outgroup membership. *Miantze*, or face, is another important concept in Chinese culture; it refers to the projected image of ourselves in a relationship network (Ting-Toomey, 1988). One should show due respect to others’ feelings and act to save their face in order to follow the principle of *li*. Having no concern for face saving in social interactions often leads to emotional uneasiness or to a serious conflict. Power is also an important factor that influences conflict management, in China power is embedded in the concepts of seniority and authority. A third party, usually the one perceived to have power, is often relied on to get involved to help mediate and resolve conflicts.

Zhang (2007) examined family communication patterns and conflict styles in Chinese parent-child relationships and found that Chinese children are more satisfied with the conversation orientation than with the conformity orientation. This may be strongly influenced by the influence of globalization which has created an opportunity for Chinese young people to get exposed to the Western ideology of equality and independence, reflecting a gradual transformation of Chinese culture from a highly hierarchical society to one that endorses equality and freedom.

Miyahara et al. (1998) compared conflict resolution styles between two “collectivist” cultures: Japanese and Koreans, the results indicated that the Japanese are simply not as collectivistic as the Koreans in their preferred conflict management behaviors; Japanese appeared to value directness and frankness more than did the Koreans. This seemingly other-

centered styles of communication may be a manifestation of the Japanese desire to protect their own ego and save their face, rather than their genuine concern for others' feelings. Given the general umbrella terms of individualism and collectivism, the results have indicated important differences even within "collectivistic" cultures. As the authors suggested, "there are many subtler dimensions in the 'collectivistic' styles and strategies of communication than may have been believed." In the same way, this study also revealed some subtle dimensions within two "collectivistic" cultures.

2. Face Negotiation Theory

One culturally sensitive framework for understanding cross-cultural conflict is face-negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 1988; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). Face-negotiation theory argues that face is an explanatory mechanism for different styles of conflict management in different cultural groups. "Face" represents an individual's claimed sense of positive image in the context of social interaction (Ting-Toomey, 1988). Ting-Toomey argued that everyone has face concerns during conflict, but that members of different cultures negotiate face in different ways because of different levels of face concerns. The different ways of individuals negotiate face is "facework", or the communication strategies individuals use to challenge or uphold face.

Face, *mientze* or *miantze* in Chinese and *mentsu* in Japanese, claimed to be universal in all cultures (Ting-Toomey, 1988), is especially crucial in Asian cultures such as China and Japan. According to Ting-Toomey, face is a projected image of one's self in a relational situation. Facework refers to specific verbal and nonverbal messages that help to maintain and restore face loss, and to uphold and honor face gain. Based on Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness theory, Ting-Toomey listed three face concerns: self-face, other-face, and mutual-face, and two face needs: negative face and positive face. Negative face emphasizes the need for dissociation

or autonomy, whereas positive face emphasizes the need for inclusion and association.

Ting-Toomey combined Hofstede's (1980) notion of individualism-collectivism and Hall's (1976) notion of low-context and high-context in her Face Negotiation Theory. In individualistic cultures such as the U.S., Australia, the consistency between maintaining a private self-image and a public self-image is of paramount importance, whereas in collectivistic cultures such as China, Korea, and Japan, the "self" is a situationally and relationally based concept. From the collectivistic perspective, the self is never free as it is bounded by mutual role obligations and duties, and structured by a patterned process of give-and-take reciprocal facework negotiation. The individualistic self is a free entity-free to pursue its own personal wants, needs, and desires. Individualistic cultures are concerned with self-face maintenance, whereas collectivistic cultures are concerned with both self-face and other-face maintenance. While individualistic culture values autonomy, choices, and negative-face need, collectivistic culture values interdependence, reciprocal obligations, and positive-face need. Although in both Chinese and Japanese culture self is relational and not a free entity, what self needs are valued and what facework is employed to maintain the face needs may be different. In this study the Chinese wives reported a collectivistic tendency in that they value the relationship with their husbands, and in situations of conflicts, they usually use verbal communication by asserting themselves and conversing with them in order to feel being acknowledged and included-a need for self-positive face. However, their Japanese husbands were reported to use avoidance in conflicts by seeking autonomy which indicates a self-negative face need as individualistic.

Low context culture such as the U.S. value individuality, line logic, direct verbal interaction, and individualistic nonverbal style. In contrast, high context culture such as Japan, China are group-oriented, value spiral logic, indirect verbal interaction, and contextual nonverbal style. Individuals in low context culture express meanings through direct communication, while meanings in high context culture are implicitly embedded at different

level of the sociocultural context. Face negotiation in low context culture is based on an immediate cost-reward-comparison model, hence immediate reciprocity of face-giving and face-saving is important to the success of face negotiation moves, whereas in the high context culture, face negotiation is an accumulative, long-term process, so eventual reciprocity of face-honoring and face-compensating is important for the maintenance of both social and personal relationship developments. In high-context culture such as China and Japan where indirect interaction is valued, a direct mode of communicating can be perceived as highly face-threatening. Although in general high- and low-context have been used to explain the differences among cultures, and the West such as the U.S. and the East such as China and Japan have been commonly viewed as being the opposite, the results of this study indicate that China and Japan may hold some differences in their degree of high-context, Japanese may be stronger in their degree of high-context. As the interviewees stated, when they were in conflict, they usually talked directly and expressed their feelings, but most of the Japanese husbands would either stay quiet or go to the room instead of talking back directly. This difference from Hall's summary may be related to the different face needs by the Chinese wives and the Japanese husbands. When Chinese wives try to save their own positive face they are more direct and self-assertive, whereas Japanese husbands make effort to save self-negative face by keeping silent or avoidance.

As conflict is a pervasive phenomenon that penetrates all forms of social and personal relationships in all cultures, Ting-Toomey (1988) argued that partners in a conflict situation are constantly bargaining, hence conflict is defined as a "communication process that involves different styles of interchanges between two interdependent negotiators who perceive incompatible needs or goals and perceive each other's potential interference in achieving those goals". Conflict is viewed as a problematic situation that demands active facework management from the two interdependent conflict parties, therefore it is viewed as a face-negotiation process

in which the “faces” or the situated identities of the conflict parties are being threatened and called into question. Ting-Toomey suggested that Chinese tend to use obliging communication and avoid confrontation as a means to maintain each other’s face. However, it was not clear whether Chinese use the same strategy with in-groups and out-groups.

Ting-Toomey et al. (1991) tested Face Negotiation Theory (1988) with participants from Japan, China, South Korea, Taiwan, and the United States, and reported that with most of the collectivistic countries revealed a predominating other-face maintenance tendency, whereas in individualistic cultures both self- and other-face maintenance were prevalent. Another surprising result indicated the Japanese used self-face maintenance strategies to a greater extent than did the U. S. respondents, which Morisaki and Gudykunst (1994) commented as the scale used to measure facework did not account for the interdependent aspects of Japanese face. The current study also reported a similar individualistic trait of the Japanese husbands in valuing self-face while in conflicts with their Chinese wives.

Cocroft and Ting-Toomey (1994) examined the relationship between cultural variability and facework strategies in face-threatening situation in Japan and the United States. Responses to the individualism-collectivism items, strategy items, and face concern items were analyzed. Japanese respondents reported more collectivistic tendencies and more individualistic tendencies than U. S. respondents. North Americans reported using more antisocial, self-presentation, self-attribution, and hint strategies than Japanese respondents. Japanese respondents reported using more indirect facework strategies than North American respondents. Males reported using more antisocial, order, and self-presentation strategies than females. The feature of Japanese using more indirect facework strategies is also reported by the Chinese wives in this study.

In 1998 Ting-Toomey updated Face-Negotiation Theory by introducing a facework competence model for intercultural conflict training; and discussed several major training and

research issues in using Face-Negotiation Theory and its companion model, the Facework Competence Model.

The original Face-Negotiation Theory (1988) used the individualism-collectivism and the low- and high-context as the starting points. Another dimension of power distance was also introduced (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). Power distance is defined as the extent to which the less powerful member of institutions accept that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 1991). Power refers to the extent of influence and the degree of compliance between two or more interactants in negotiating their differences. In small power distance cultures (e.g. Austria, New Zealand) people tend to value equal power distributions, equal rights, symmetrical relations and equitable rewards and costs based on personal performance. Their defending and asserting one's personal rights is reflective of self-face behaviors. Individuals are concerned with horizontal facework interaction. In large power distance cultures (e. g. Malaysia, Arab countries) people tend to accept unequal power distributions, hierarchical roles, asymmetrical relations and rewards and sanctions based on rank, role, status, age and perhaps even gender identity. Paying one's role optimally and carrying out one's ascribed duties responsibly and asymmetrically, constitute appropriate facework interaction. Individuals are concerned with vertical facework interaction. A third-party mediator is usually involved to manage the conflict. This study has revealed differed power distance between Chinese and Japanese cultures. According to the Chinese wives, Japan is more hierarchical, and this hierarchy is also reflected inside the family where women are not actually equal to their husbands due to the fact that they are housewives and have no income of their own. However, the power distance is small with the Chinese wives because they pursue an egalitarian marriage, seeking to be equal to their husbands, and most of them also have their own career.

Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) discovered that "self-construal is a better predictor of conflict styles than ethnic/cultural background." Ting-Toomey claimed that the relationship

between culture-level analysis and conflict behavior is mediated by individual-level factors. One such factor is self-construal or the distinction between independent and interdependent self-construal. Independent self-construal tends to be more self-face oriented than other-face oriented with a competing/dominating conflict style, whereas interdependent self-construal values other-face and mutual-face concerns, and have the tendency of employing avoiding style in conflicting situations. Leung's (1988) results suggested that Chinese are much more likely to pursue conflict with outsiders (outgroup members). Oetzel et al. (2001) also proposed that based on the perception of the others as in-group or out-group members, collectivists tend to have self-face concerns with outgroup members and other-face concerns with in-group members, whereas individualists tend to have self-face concerns with both in-groups and outgroups. If Chinese and Japanese are collectivistic cultures, then as Oetzel et al. proposed, they have other-face concerns with in-group members, however, this study suggested that the Chinese wives revealed more of independent self-construal by being self-face oriented in comparison to their Japanese husbands who used avoidance.

Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) revised the traditional Five-Style Conflict Grid pointing out the bias that those styles have surfaced in work situations in Western countries, and therefore added three other conflict styles that American individualistic-based scholarship has missed. They are emotional expression, passive aggression, and third-party help. Ting-Toomey pointed out that the practice of third-party help in collectivistic culture is different from individualistic culture. Most people with an independent self-construal think first of getting a lawyer. Oetzel et al (2001) examined face and facework during conflict across four cultures: China, Germany, Japan, and the United States. One finding is self-construal had the strongest effects on face concerns and facework, specifically, independent self-construal is positively related to self-face and dominating facework, interdependence is positively associated with other- and mutual-face and integrating and avoiding facework. It was also concluded that there are also differences

within individualistic (i.e., between U.S. and Germany) and collectivistic cultures (i.e., between China and Japan). There are seemingly potential differences between China and Japan in that Chinese have concern for face in general, however, Japanese have high other- and mutual-face concerns, but not necessarily high self-concerns. According to their results, Chinese were found to have more self-face, which is consistent to the result of this study, and involve a third party more than Japanese. Chinese also had a higher self-face concern than U.S. Americans. An explanation for this is that face is a strong concern in Chinese society and imbedded in everyday discourse (Gao, 1998; Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998). Other differences were also discovered in that Japanese used pretend, give in, and remain calm more and defend less than Chinese. This difference is reported by the Chinese wives that their husbands remained silent and defended less than them. Although both Chinese and Japanese share the norm of maintaining harmony, upholding other- and mutual-face, and avoiding confrontation, the results showed that the manner in which these two cultures avoid confrontation and uphold other-face is different. Chinese were reported that they can become direct and confrontive under certain conditions. One interviewee in this study said that when she lived in Japan she was so desperate because her husband didn't help with anything. So she tried to communicate directly with her husband, by explaining the differences such as gender roles in China, what a father and a husband is expected to do.

Although the concept of "face" is universal, which governs the active negotiation processes in all cultures, Ting-Toomey pointed out that the nuances and subtleties that attach to facets of facework management would vary from one culture to the next, specific situations in specific cultures remain to be explored. Nevertheless, as Griffin (2006) commented on the theory which explains that cultural knowledge, mindfulness, and facework interaction skill are the three requirements for effectively communicating across cultures. It not only provides a framework for people to understand conflict management styles from cultural level based on

cultural dimensions, but also becomes more objective since it is based on individual level as well.

Sueda (2009) examined the perceived differences of face by Chinese and Japanese, and found that *men-tsu* is crucial in Japanese vertical relations, whereas Chinese *men-tzu* is crucial between people of close relationships. Although China and Japan are often used as examples of collectivistic cultures, similarities between the two cultures are more frequently discussed than differences. Sueda called for the need to examine cultures more widely and specifically because “discussion face needs only within the individualistic versus collectivistic culture dimensions may be too simplistic; the degree of positive-face needs may differ in different countries with collectivistic culture.” This study echoes Sueda’s argument and suggests some differences in face needs and facework in couples of Chinese wives and Japanese husbands.

3. Western Bias

The Eurocentrism or Western bias has been pointed out by many scholars suggesting that culture-specific studies are needed to examine Eastern cultures more thoroughly instead of simply applying Western originated theories (e. g. Ishii, 2006; Kim, 2010; Martin & Nakayama, 2000; Miike, 2006; Starosta & Chen, 2003).

For example, Kim (2010) had a critical review on intercultural communication research in “Asia” over the past 20 years. Although the academic field of intercultural communication has its roots in Western societies, the academic study of communication is still relatively new, and most cross-cultural research on intercultural communication has explored how it applies/operates in the US culture in comparison to other cultures (typically Asian countries). The theoretical understanding of intercultural communication is often based on assumptions that have been shaped by Western traditions and ways of thinking, what’s more, Asian communication specialists often use Western models of communication as immediate starting

points of comparison which limits their studies due to the Eurocentric vantage point (p.173).

There is also a general tendency of trying to “paint all ‘Asians’ with the same road brush as collectivistic, and thus reserved and indirect” (Kim, 2010, p. 169). She argued that “the implausible notion of ‘Asia’ is itself Eurocentric, being merely a label of convenience for non-European areas of the Eurasian continent”, and proposed that “a realistic attempt to survey the field of ‘Asian’ communication would therefore have to span Islamic, Central Asian, Southeast Asian, and Indian regions in addition to the areas that Americans commonly think of as ‘Asia’, i.e., China and the surrounding ‘East Asia’ countries” (p.167).

Although intercultural communication has caught many Asian scholars’ attention since the 1990s, the studies have been limited to a few Asian countries such as China, Singapore, Korea, Japan, and India. Byant and Yang (2004) examined studies relating to Asian communication issues published in nine major communication journals between 1998 and 2002, and found that the countries received the most emphasis were China, Japan and India. Almost 40% of the analyzed studies rely on cross-cultural comparisons and more than half are based on comparisons between the United States and a single Asian country. Ito (1992) also criticized the fact that most intercultural studies have been of Japanese and American communication than any other Asian cultures. Miike (2009) argued that what is problematic in many intercultural studies is that the mental layer of European cultures is frequently used to analyze the behavioral and material layers of non-European cultures, and the field of intercultural communication “suffers from Eurocentric otherization” in its obsessive focus on European American culture and values (p. 247). According to Miike (2007), there are two types of bias in Eurocentric scholarship. First, Eurocentric theory often proclaims itself “human” theory without recognizing and incorporating non-Eurocentric counterparts. Second, Eurocentric theory favors some phenomena over others due to their cultural origins and orientations. Fougere and Moulettes (2007) also discussed this problem by arguing that the individualist

standard tends to be more related to the “civilized” cultures and the collectivistic standard tends to be related to the “primitive” ones. The “collectivistic” individual, who is less verbal, interacting within the “individualistic” social group, is potentially at a disadvantage socially, and perceived as less attractive than other potential communication partners. These tendencies involving culture dichotomies can lead to “the intrusion of the ‘good guy-bad guy’ dichotomy in intercultural communication research involving “Asia”.

Furthermore, many scholars have become aware of this trend of one-sided import and imitation of Western communication theories, and have started to question the applicability of “mainstream” intercultural communication theories to Asia. Despite the Eurocentric problems, there is a growing awareness of the limitations of theory which either ignores completely or oversimplifies the complexity of the “rest” of the world. Since the 1980s, scholars in Asia have sought to formulate and conceptualize their respective understanding of human communication and have opened up interesting and fruitful lines of inquiry related to Asian theories of communication. A few cross-national studies have been published on communication within East Asian, comparing, for example, China and South Korea, or Japan and South Korea (Miyahara & Kim, 1994). For example, Miyahara et al. (1998) compared the conflict resolutions styles between Japanese and Koreans, and found that Koreans are more collectivistic in conflicting communication styles than Japanese, therefore they asserted that “the subtle but important cultural attributes among different ‘collectivistic’ cultures (e.g. Japanese and Koreans) from the East seem to have been distorted or simply overlooked.”

Murray and Kimura (2003) studied the multiplicity of paths to couple formation in Japan, and reported that “both individualist and collectivist dimensions are present in Japanese marital relationships, with couples valuing individual happiness and personal freedom but also expecting that marriage provide loyalty and compassion”. China, as a “high-context culture” has been challenged by various elements such as “the One Child Policy” (Zhong, 2005). Zhong

argued that because of the unique upbringing, China's only-children form a culture that is unique from their previous generations. It has become "the norm" among the only-child generation to have only one child in each family. As the results revealed, the only-child focused more on the self than the parents, which suggests that the only-children are more self-centered, and lonely. Although the respondents reported loneliness as a major feeling in life, they also expressed a strong desire to be independent, to "escape the overly generous care and overwhelming interference in their lives by their parents." Besides the desire of seeking independence, the participants were also reported that they are not inclined to express themselves. These characteristics challenged the collectivism Chinese culture that was widely considered for centuries, and indicated some individualistic traits. Jia and Jia (2006) also pointed out "the emerging and construction of individualistic identity in modern China".

Although research studies on international/interethnic marriages between Asian especially Japan and Western countries/cultures have been extensively examined, intercultural marriages between couples of Asian cultures have not been sufficiently/fully examined. Many researchers focused on cross cultural comparisons in various dimensions such as individualistic and collectivistic, low- and high-context, small and large power distance, or independent and interdependent self-construal, Asian cultures which have been generally identified as being collectivistic, high-context, with large power distance and interdependent self-construal, overlooking minor but significant differences that have not been given enough attention or carefully studied.

Even among the existing studies, most focused on marriages in rural areas, very few on couples that are college graduated level or above. China and Japan have been overlooked as Asian, with interdependent self-construal and collectivistic; similarities and/or differences have not been fully and sufficiently explored. Evidence also showed that traditional gender roles are gradually being displaced by more egalitarian roles in many parts of China (Tang, Chua, & Jia,

2010). Halford et al. (2018) examined indirect couple communication and relationship satisfaction in Chinese, Western, and Chinese-Western intercultural couples residing in Australia, and found that avoidance was notably higher in couples in which the wife was Chinese, however, the common view of Chinese communication as being indirect and implicit was not reflected in the couple communication of Chinese couples living in Australia. China media research on the One Child Policy also suggested that the traditional Chinese conflict management has been changing. All of these backgrounds raise a number of important directions on further examining “collectivistic cultures” such Chinese culture and communication, reevaluating and revising prior theories, developing new insights with more depth on cultural level as well as individual level. By reviewing literatures on various aspects of marriage and intercultural marriage, and examining intercultural marital relationship within “collectivistic cultures” between Chinese and Japanese, this study has provided important findings on similarities and differences of the intercultural marriage, questions such as what challenges and conflicts they had with respect to the cultural differences? What face needs were valued in conflicts and what facework was used to manage the conflicts?

To summarize, as Waldman and Rubalcava (2005) suggested, intercultural marriages are more likely to bring the cultural differences of two people into an intimate confrontation. Even though both Chinese and Japanese cultures were claimed to be “collectivistic”, some scholars (i.e. Kim, 2010; Miike, 2006) criticized the Western bias for labeling all Asian culture as collectivistic, and overlooking some subtle yet significant characteristics among these “collectivistic” cultures.

Consistent with Gottman’s (1994) result on marital stability and conflict management between couples that couples who interact more positively are more stable and satisfied with their marriage. the Chinese wives who communicated more actively with their husbands

reported higher marital satisfaction. The result of this study also revealed a few traits that were viewed as being Western. For example, in accordance with Kail and Cavanaugh's (2010) argument that most Westerners view marriage as an egalitarian relationship, hence household chores should be equally divided between the husband and wife, all Chinese participants in this study reported their expectations of an egalitarian relationship in marriage, indicating an individualistic characteristic. A few differences between Chinese wives and Japanese husbands were found in this study, which, as Romano (1988) noted, the differences of perceptions and attitudes such as of gender roles may become issues when the man comes from the more male-dominant culture and the woman from the more egalitarian one. All the Chinese wives in this study hold an egalitarian attitude toward their marriage and gender roles, they have received higher education, and a few of them are also the only child in their family. These factors have contributed to their individualistic characteristic. Some major conflicts were reported to be caused by the gap between the different perceptions of gender roles between the Chinese wives and their Japanese husbands.

The perceptions of conflict may be different for Chinese and Japanese. According to Zhang (2009), conflicts are not problems of communication, but rather as detractors from harmony, hence human communication is a process in which we try to adapt and relocate ourselves in the dynamic process of interdependence and cooperation. This was reported by the Chinese wives in this study in that they view conflicts as unavoidable, a natural part in the process of reaching harmony, therefore is not negative, so when they perceived conflicts they would converse with their husbands in order to reach harmony. However, their Japanese husband might see conflicts as negative because they usually used avoidance in conflicts.

Ting-Toomey's (1988) Face Negotiation Theory has been a framework widely used in discussing conflicts. In this theory, the following dimensions were introduced: individualism and collectivism, high- and low-context, power distance, self-construal. In this study the

Chinese wives reported a collectivistic tendency in that they value the relationship with their husbands, and in situations of conflicts, they usually use verbal communication by asserting themselves and conversing with them in order to feel being acknowledged and included—a need for self-positive face. However, their Japanese husbands were reported to use avoidance in conflicts by seeking autonomy which indicates a self-negative face need as individualistic.

The interview data also implied differed power distance between Chinese and Japanese cultures. In comparison to Chinese wives who seek egalitarianism with small power distance, the Japanese culture appeared to be more hierarchical, women are less likely to feel unsatisfied in their duties based on the perceived gender roles.

Although as Murray and Kimura (2003) concluded about Japanese culture that “both individualist and collectivist dimensions are present in Japanese marital relationships, with couples valuing individual happiness and personal freedom but also expecting that marriage provide loyalty and compassion”, the interview data of this study also indicated a mixture of individualistic and collectivistic features in Chinese culture. Chinese wives revealed an individualistic tendency by valuing their self-face more and using more conversational and assertive strategies in conflicts, whereas their Japanese used more avoidance which is considered a collectivistic feature.

Chapter 8. Discussion

This study has focused on intercultural marriage between Chinese wives and Japanese husbands. Over the past few decades, Chinese and Japanese cultures have been perceived as “collectivistic”, and similarities of both cultures have been emphasized, and differences have been overlooked. More and more scholars called for the importance and urgency of examining Asian cultures from their own respective perspectives instead of grouping these cultures as one “Asian culture” by applying to them the Western based theories and frameworks which indicate a deep rooted Western bias. Existing literatures have been limited to those that either apply Western theories to Eastern cultures, or cross-cultural comparisons between a Western culture, mostly the U.S. and an Eastern culture. Most of the studies were also examined utilizing a quantitative approach which has its limits in clarifying cultural traits on their own merits.

By employing a qualitative method and conducting in-depth interviews with ten Chinese wives, this study aimed to explore the underlying differences between the intercultural couples from the wives’ perspectives, in the hope of finding some major cultural differences which may have impact on their perceptions, attitudes toward marriage and conflicts, as well as specific actions they use to manage the conflicts. Although existing literature views face as an important concept in both Chinese and Japanese cultures, and people may employ different facework to maintain or save various face needs, what specific face needs Chinese and Japanese value in the context of marriage and what facework they use for the face needs have not been examined from an emic perspective. In order to fill this gap and provide more new insights to intercultural marriage among Asian cultures, this study has examined intercultural marriage between

Chinese wives and Japanese husbands, and the results of the study report the following:

1. There are some important cultural differences which cause/trigger conflicts between the couple of Chinese wives and Japanese husbands.
2. Main differences are related to the following themes: attitudes toward intercultural marriage and marriage, gender roles, work, money, naturalization, self-understanding and identity. Other differences perceived by the participants with regard to perceptions of Japanese culture are also reported.

Based on the results, the following implications can be made.

1. The result is in match with Hofstede's (1984) Country Individualism Index (p.184) in that both as collectivistic cultures, Chinese have stronger interdependency with in-group members whereas Japanese culture ranked higher on institutional collectivism than in-group collectivism.
2. Chinese wives are more individualistic than described in existing literature in that they chose their spouses based on love and intimacy, which is emphasized as being essential in Western literature on marriage. This individualistic feature is also reported in the participants' attitudes towards marriage and gender roles.
3. A big gap has been revealed in perceptions of gender roles in China and Japan, especially with women, which has not been thoroughly examined by any researcher. More conflicts arise when the couples' expectations of gender roles were not met, and Chinese wives whose husbands knew more about and assimilated more to Chinese culture reported higher marital satisfaction.
4. There are differences in face needs and facework between married couples of Chinese and Japanese. Chinese wives reported more self-positive need of being included, whereas Japanese husbands were reported by their Chinese spouses to use more avoidant strategies in search for autonomy, which demonstrates a self-negative face need. Chinese wives use

more assertive and conversing styles to communicate with their Japanese husbands in conflicts, but their husbands are avoidant.

5. Another new finding is that Chinese women are strongly independent both financially and mentally, indicating their individualistic feature. Meanwhile, they also show strong interdependency with their in-group members as collectivists.

In comparison to the findings reported in existing literature, the results resonate with Veroff et al.'s (1998) conclusion that gender role orientation is key to expectation. Since in this study the Chinese were seeking egalitarian relationships and expecting equal share of housework and child rearing, their husbands' understanding and support led to higher marital satisfaction, as Amato et al. (2007) suggested. Lan's (2008) study also reported that Taiwanese women seek an equal marital relationship while participating in the labor market, building careers, and enjoying financial independence in comparison to the past. It is also true that when wives feel supported they report higher marital satisfaction, which was reported by Patrick et al. (2007). However, if the husband is from a male-dominated culture and the wife an egalitarian one, then the gap is big and notable conflicts may occur (Hardy & Laszloffy, 1995). The interviewees reported some major conflicts caused by the different perceptions of gender roles. Many of the Chinese wives are the only child in their family, and they have been taken great care of by their parents. Most of them have never done any housework before they got married. However, in Japan the traditional gender roles are still dominant, and women's role of being a good wife and mother is in clear contrast with Chinese women's perceived gender role, and this major difference is reported to be one of the causes of conflicts between the couples of Chinese wives and Japanese husbands.

Some scholars (Dion & Dion, 1993) reported the collectivism of Chinese culture by saying that love and intimacy between a man and a woman were less important than other factors as a basis of marriage, and individuals in individualistic cultures such as the U. S are free to make

their own decisions based on what is best for them (Gibbons et al., 1996). The results of this study, though, challenge the above in that the Chinese participants reported love was the most important to them, and they chose their spouses based on what they thought was best for them, both indicating an emergent individualistic feature.

Communication competence in the West emphasizes importance of verbal communication skills such as verbal expressiveness and listening to verbal messages, which are viewed as practical tools or solutions in managing conflict and increasing marital quality of couples. This feature was consistent with Zhang's (2007) study on family communication patterns and conflict styles in Chinese parent-child relationships which suggests that Chinese family communication patterns are more conversation-oriented than conformity-oriented. This result indicates a transformation of Chinese culture from a highly hierarchical society to one that endorses equality and freedom, which can be attributed to the influence of globalization where Chinese young people are open to Western ideology of equality and independence. This individualism can also be found in the Chinese wives' perceived self-identity as financially and mentally independent individuals. All of them view working as a means to explore their values, improve themselves, and make friends thus add meaning to their lives. This may sound contradictory to Chinese strong interdependency with in-groups; however, it reflects the tremendous socioeconomic and political changes as well as perception changes in China over the past few decades. Major policies such as the "Open-up" reform in 1978 proposed by then leader Deng Xiaoping, followed by the One Child Policy in 1979 have both had enormous impact on China. Results of some literature on China may not reflect these changes and are outdated to explain some of the new phenomena among the new generation. For example, as Su (2005) suggested, Chinese women's gender roles have gone through dramatic change; as "half the sky", their social functions and education were greatly emphasized, which liberated them from traditional gender roles. As a result, Chinese women enjoyed the equality to men in

various aspects of life (p. 49), and many women were seeking financial independence (p. 110). To most Chinese women, becoming a housewife after marriage is not really considered as an option, and having a career is particularly important because it is the mental support for Chinese women to become strong and independent (p. 68). Su also suggested that the implementation of the One Child Policy since 1979 also helped lift up the Chinese women's social and familial status as they have more time socializing, working and focusing on activities they like (p.119). Zhong (2005) argues that the generation of Chinese only-children considers only-child families "the norm". By examining the writings of 97 children in the book "The Only-Child Declaration" edited by Danyan Chen (1997), Zhong reported that the participants' self-reflections are related to self-centeredness, loneliness, and independence. While their parents have excessive love to them and sometimes even with great sacrifices, these children are also living under pressure and feel a sense of helplessness because of their feelings of being under tremendous pressure to study hard and obtain good grades, to be obedient, to be responsible, to behave well, and to succeed in everything they do. These only children's relationships with their parents were reported to controlled by two bipolar forces: one is a loving feeling from being cared for by the parents, the other is the unwanted pressure from the parents. The only-children also revealed the feelings of being too dependent on their parents in life and expressed their desires to be independent of them.

Jia and Jia (2006) also pointed out that the emergent individualistic identity has become part of the social reality, and one of his research participants argued that the integration of the value of Western individualism such as independence, ambition, individual initiative, competition, change, and so on and the traditional value of collectivism, such as modesty, faithfulness, cooperative spirit, harmony, order and so on is needed in modern China. Jia and Jia argued that although the Chinese government has been making efforts to encourage the development of individualistic identity within the framework of the traditional ideological

discourse, balancing the newly emerging ideological discourse and the more established traditional ideological discourse may be a challenge. Nevertheless, it indicates that China has been undergoing dramatic changes, and is no longer a collectivistic culture, as categorized by the West. Some individualistic traits can also be observed in Chinese young generation, especially the only-children, who have experienced much exposure to Western ideologies through media and who are a unique generation that view one child as “the norm”.

Given all the dramatic changes in China in the past few decades, there is a strong need to explore Chinese culture and Chinese communication thoroughly. With the rapid economic growth, and more and more Chinese have much more opportunities to go abroad for various reasons than before, having a better understanding of Chinese culture and Chinese communication will undoubtedly ensure smooth communication with others, and more updates are to be done by social scientists.

Collectivistic traits are strong with in-groups, as the Chinese wives reported their strong interdependency with their *zi ji ren* such as family, relatives and friends. However, the same extent of interdependency is not shared by their Japanese husbands or in-laws, who seemed to be rather independent from each other, which caused them confusion and stress. For example, when talking about the word “mother”, the meanings vary in Chinese and Japanese cultures. In China, parents, especially the mother is willing to make great sacrifice and do anything for her child and her grandchild, even at the price of leaving her own husband home alone. This is viewed as quite normal by many Chinese, reflecting the high interdependency among in-group members. However, with Japanese parents, this cannot be expected at all because the norm in Japan is once you get married, you will learn to deal with the hardships alone with your husband as an immediate family unit.

Nadamitsu et al. (2001) argued that differences between Chinese and Japanese cultures have been largely overlooked. By interviewing Chinese interpretations of their experience with

Japanese as part of their cultural practice, they found a few major differences between Chinese and Japanese. One of the differences is that Chinese depict themselves as independent of and unattached to social groups in general, with the important exception of family and close friends. This individualistic attitude is also demonstrated in their way of creating personal support networks through friendship. Another important finding is that Chinese informants perceived a lack of closeness in most Japanese interpersonal relationships, in contrast to the great value that Chinese place on close ties among family and friends. The results of this study have confirmed these findings.

By reviewing Ting-Toomey's (1988) Face Negotiation Theory and related literature on face and facework, this study also has a few findings with regard to the dimensions of the theory. Chinese show individualistic traits in selecting their spouses, their attitudes towards marriage and gender roles as well as their face need in conflicts; at the same time reveal collectivistic characteristics by maintaining strong interdependency with the in-group members. Although face and facework have been examined in different cultures and contexts, they have not been explored specifically in the context of intercultural marriage between two collectivistic cultures. This study has added some new insights to the understanding the intercultural marriages between Chinese and Japanese, and it has also examined Face Negotiation Theory within two collectivistic cultures from a more cultural specific perspective.

This study has examined intercultural marriages between Chinese wives and Japanese husbands, and major differences were reported. Given the large population in China and marriage migration across borders has become a common phenomenon, intercultural marriages between Chinese and foreigners will definitely increase. Nowadays more and more foreigners go to China for different reasons, with some of them marry the locals. Similarly, due to the depopulation and the labor shortage, the number of foreigners in Japan has increased. Not only limited to Chinese, people from other countries such as Vietnam and Nepal have also increased.

This indicates that intercultural marriages in Japan will continue to increase, and meanwhile it also poses new challenges that intercultural couples have to face and manage. More studies are needed to provide deeper understandings of these cultures. When people of seemingly similar cultures meet, such as the Chinese and Japanese discussed in this study, it is necessary to explore the respective cultures on their own merits. This will help reduce the “problems” caused by the cultural differences and eliminate unnecessary misunderstandings between the intercultural couples.

Chapter 9. Conclusion

This study has aimed to investigate intercultural couples of Chinese and Japanese, as Chinese wives are reported to be the majority in intercultural marriage in Japan. Although intercultural marriage has been popular among communication scholars for decades, most studies have had their focus on either Western cultures, typically the U.S., or comparisons of individualistic and collectivistic cultures using Western cultures and Asian cultures, such as Japan. Very limited studies had their focus on examining seemingly subtle yet important traits within collectivistic cultures.

Main findings

This study has examined intercultural marriage between Chinese and Japanese by interviewing ten Chinese wives who married Japanese, the main goal was to find out how they view their marriage, what conflicts they have had, how they understand and manage the conflicts. One result of this study is in match with Hofstede's (1984) Country Individualism Index (p. 184) in that both as collectivistic cultures, Chinese have stronger interdependency with in-group members whereas Japanese culture ranked higher on institutional collectivism than in-group collectivism. However, some new characteristics and differences between these two collectivistic cultures can be implied in comparison to the existing literatures.

1. Chinese wives are more individualistic than described in existing literatures in that they chose their spouses based on love and intimacy, which is oriented in Western literatures on marriage. This individualistic feature is also reported in their attitudes towards marriage and gender roles.

2. There is a big gap in perceptions of gender roles in China and Japan, especially with women, which has not been thoroughly examined by any literature. More conflicts arise when the couples' expectations of gender roles were not met, and Chinese wives whose husbands assimilated more reported higher marital satisfaction.
3. There are differences in face needs and facework between married couples of Chinese and Japanese. Chinese wives reported more self-positive need of being included, whereas Japanese husbands were said to use more avoidant strategy in search for autonomy, which is a self-negative face need. Chinese wives use more assertive and conversing style to communicate with their Japanese husbands in conflicts, but their husbands are avoidant.
4. Another new finding is that Chinese women are strongly independent both financially and mentally, indicating the individualistic feature. Meanwhile, they also show strong interdependency with their in-group members as collectivists.

Limitations

One limitation of this study may relate to the number of interviews. Ten interviews may not be sufficient enough. As Charmaz (2014) suggested, the number of interviews depends on the research purpose. When researchers pursue straightforward research questions to resolve problem in local practice in applied fields, a small number of interviews may be enough (p. 106). Although some discoveries were found with regard to how the Chinese participant view and manage their marriage, the number of the Chinese wives living in Japan may not be enough. Whether participants live in their own culture or host culture, how much they are willing to and have assimilated to the host culture may have different impact on their perception of marital relationship.

This time the study focused on the Chinese wives' perceptions by examining their lives in interaction with their Japanese husbands, in the future, investigating marital relationship from

the opposite side - how the Japanese husbands perceive the marriage will add new insights to the understanding of intercultural marriage between Chinese and Japanese. By comparing both the husband and wife's perspectives regarding their marriage, a clearer and thorough picture will come into view. Not limited to intercultural marriage between Chinese and Japanese, marriage between Japanese and other nationalities such as Nepalese and Vietnamese also calls for attention of scholars in the increasing diversified Japanese society.

As a novice researcher, I have been learning interviewing techniques through practice. However, I need to admit that there are weak points which can be paid more attention to and improved next time. For example, regarding the questioning skills during the interviews, Charmaz (2014) warned that asking "why" questions is not favored in that why question can be taken as hostile challenges in some cultures (p.71). This reminded me that with one interviewee, when I asked her to explain why she felt like that (why she felt that her parents needed to stay in her house and helped her during her pregnancy is a norm), she became quite emotional and rushed to justify her viewpoint by asking me loudly instead with, "don't you think we Chinese are all like that?!" Her strong reaction to this and response indicated that she felt being challenged and was not comfortable with it.

Personal reflection

Charmaz (2014) explained numerous times on conducting initial coding without having preconceived concepts as a rule in grounded theory, however, this is different from having an empty head. It requires an open mind so the researcher can see what he/she can learn while coding and where it can take him/her. With this open mind, researchers should also make efforts to learn and examine how their past influences the way they see the world and the data (p. 117). Different from the emerged categories and concepts, I have somehow found some of my answers to the interview questions are different from some of the participants'. My past

experience definitely has influenced the ways I see the world and the data.

Living in a different culture instead of my home country China, dealing with cultural differences sound very challenging; in comparison to many of the participants who tried to acculturate at varied levels, I found myself constantly resisting to acculturate to Japanese culture, which to some extent is similar to the participants who live in Japan. Those who are now in China reported higher marital satisfaction which can be partly explained by their husbands' acculturation. However, a couple of participants in Japan said that they had no choice but to assimilate.

Looking back, my background may serve as a fundamental base for my perception of self-identity as well as marriage and marital satisfaction. Being an English majored student at college, and then an English teacher, followed by experience of working as a senior officer in a foreign company in China, I had my pride as an independent career woman. Even after coming to Japan English was one of my major tool of communication both at home and work, I realized that some individualistic characteristics remain strong in myself. Although coming from one Asian culture and getting into another, I assumed that my life would probably stay quite the same except that I am on a foreign land and Japanese would be a necessity to learn. I felt good that I got chances to use English or Mandarin, which is closely related to my preferred self-identity. It would be overwhelming that I had to surround myself with only Japanese language and culture. What's more, being alone on a foreign land where there are no in-group members such as parents or siblings around, like the Chinese wives living in Japan, I have learned to be stronger. Having gone through countless times of confusion and frustration, I have learned to be straightforward, not to compromise to the cultural differences while struggling to maintain my individual self. This strong sense of self identity cannot be separated from my past experience and may explain why I have tried hard to be myself. This choice of not "going with the flow" may have generated more conflicts between me and my surroundings as I have

perceived now.

Most of the participants in China reported that their husbands seemed to enjoy living in China because they know the language and the culture, thus in a way this has contributed to their marital satisfaction because their husbands can assimilate to the host culture; however, a few Chinese wives complained about not being able to conform themselves to the Japanese culture when they lived in Japan; whereas three participants living in Japan in long terms expressed their frustration of having to assimilate to Japanese culture as they felt they didn't have any other options, and their assimilation would ensure a better and smoother communication between them and their husbands. Therefore, if one of the couple can assimilate to the host culture, and choose to "go with the flow" the other one would feel more satisfied with their marriage. If the assimilating party doesn't mind assimilating and find himself/herself comfortable with the host culture, there is less conflict and frustration in the marriage, otherwise, if one party finds it stressful and hard, or in the first place, unwilling to assimilate because it threatens the self-identity and the cost is high, then there may be more conflicts and less perceived marital satisfaction.

Like all Chinese wives in Japan, including the one in the pilot study and myself, living on a foreign land and in a seemingly similar culture which is actually different, we are sojourners who need to face more challenges every day. Coming from a strong interdependent culture with in-groups, and getting used to relying on them, then all of a sudden getting into a culture where interpersonal distance is farther than expected, we have to learn to manage everything by ourselves. The cultural differences, if not handled well, may cause emotions of loneliness, and helplessness, as well as frustration and depression, which require the sojourners either to find ways to better handle their lives or retreat by getting a divorce.

Martin and Nakayama (2014, pp.114-115) explained four stages of minority identity development of minority group members in the United States. In the first stage of unexamined

identity, minority members may have a strong desire to assimilate into the dominant culture by accepting the values and attitudes of the majority culture. In the second conformity state, minority individuals internalize the value of norms of the majority culture, they may even hold negative, self-deprecating attitudes toward their own cultural groups. Through experiencing various incidents including negative ones, the third stage occurs with the characteristics of resistance and separatism. This stage is featured with a growing awareness that not all the values of the dominant group are beneficial to minorities, thereby accompanied by rejection of the values of norms of the host culture. The last stage, integration, arrives when one feels a strong sense of own group identity and meanwhile an appreciation for other cultural groups. In my case if I am to evaluate myself as a minority individual in Japan, I feel that mostly I have been wondering around between the third and fourth stages, depending on the cases. Similarly, this can be said to the Chinese participants living in Japan. In contrast, those whose Japanese husbands are now living in China and know the language and culture well reported high marital satisfaction, which may imply that the Japanese husbands, influenced by Japanese culture, have found it easier to assimilate to the host culture.

Future prospects

Although there has been continuously increasing literature on Asian cultures which have been commonly categorized under the same umbrella term “collectivistic”, more thorough and sufficient studies call for scholars’ attention to examine the similarities and differences among these cultures on a more cultural specific level. Not only can researchers continue to explore cultures between the West and the East, which has been dominating so far, cultures that look similar such as China and Japan may actually differ, which need more complete examination in order to provide a more complete and better understanding of interpersonal and intercultural relationships. In the past few decades there have been tremendous changes in some of the Asian

cultures such as China, economic or social, the existing theories of communication that originated from the West are now facing new challenges, and may not sufficiently explain new emerging phenomena anymore. There is a need to revise and update the theories so that they will function better in the field of human communication.

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One of the biggest challenges is that I had to cope with the gender roles which I felt were very different from Chinese ones. As a foreigner, a *gaijin*, in particular, an Asian, who is considered different from Whites, I have been told that I am very lucky to have a full-time job in a university, a decent job that all of sudden increased my social status from a “nobody” to “somebody”, from a “*sengyoushufu*”, quoting one professor who taught me in the past, although at that time I had no idea what this word meant, to a career woman. Being a woman in Japan has many implications in this men-dominating society, which indicates that women are weaker than men. What's more, being a foreign woman, a “lucky” one who has a job, I am not freed from expectations based on the gender roles here. I have to learn with all my efforts to be a good wife, a wise mother, and a loyal staff at work. Trying to juggle among these duties has been a mission impossible and a desperate journey for me. However, I have been very lucky because I have met some great people with big hearts, Dr. Miyahara is one of them. He is not just my supervisor, my mentor, but also a great teacher and an excellent friend. When I was complaining about my hardships and expressing my frustrations, he was always a patient

listener with great empathy and support. I owe him my deepest gratitude and sincere respect.

Since I came to Japan, especially after I got married, I have had countless hardships that I had never expected before I came to Japan. In dealing with all differences and challenges, all the stress accumulated day by day had struck me. About five years ago, I was found to have tumors in my thyroids. After two years of commuting to the hospital, I was advised to take the surgery to get my thyroid glands removed. I remember when I went to hospital I couldn't help questioning myself, Did I do something wrong in my previous life? Was it karma? Why I should suffer? But after the operation which turned out to be successful and I was not diagnosed as cancer, while talking to other patients, I realized I had been really lucky that I was not cancer. Since then I started to see the world and people around me differently. Once I started to see everything positively my world suddenly became bright.

My marriage to my Japanese husband in general is alright, not perfect because there have been frequent clashes between his family and me, as well as between him and me, both cultural and individual. Every time when I felt there was a problem, I got the feeling that I was the problem kid who created new problems because nobody else around ever saw or felt a problem. Now since I have been in the field of communication quite long, I have learned to interpret my situations and reflect my life better. I have had too many expectations toward my family in Japan, or I should say to my husband's family, which includes his extended family. I expected them to make effort to understand me and my culture, whereas they expected me to assimilate to their culture. This mismatch has generated many challenges for me. Now since this dissertation is on intercultural marriages between Chinese wives and Japanese husbands, and it has been a hard journey with lots of personal emotions involved, it also provides the answers to my questions regarding my own situations.

Now in completing the dissertation, it is more like a journey of my life as a foreigner, a woman, a mother, a wife to Japanese. My identities have been challenged at varied situations

and times, however, I feel truly blessed and grateful that I have met some great people who have offered countless support and played significantly positive roles in my life. Therefore, I would like to show my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Akira Miyahara, who has been very kind and greatly patient with me, as an empathetic listener to my hardships, a trustworthy supervisor and a respectful teacher to both my academic and personal life. I couldn't appreciate more. Thank you! I would also like to thank my family, my husband and my two sons. Although from time to time cultural and individual differences became the causes or the trigger of conflicts between my husband and me, I appreciate his nonjudgmental attitude and support, which I truly needed. I also want to thank my sons for making me a mother, which has added a lot of meanings to my life. By trying to be a good mother, I have learned to be a good role model and a better person. Deep gratitude also goes to all my friends, regardless of their nationalities, for their unconditional love and support.

Although this is about my academic accomplishments, it means much more to me in that it is an opportunity for me to reflect my own marriage and life, which has added more insights to my perception of life. I would like to thank all the interviewees who have kindly let me walk into their life journeys and also share their life experiences as well as their feelings and thoughts with me.

Appendix: Quoted segments in sequence (Chapter 4 Results)

1. 我父母倒是一直知道我在跟日本人谈，一开始不同意就是说日本人也不了解，在加上以前历史的偏见啊，所以对日本人印象不太好，说你干嘛要找一个日本人？我父母对以前上海那个还觉得挺好的，挺会照顾人，也实诚，还说我呢怎么不要他了？我说哎哟，这当中有很多细节的东西，真的，比如说有个人对你太好你有时也有点受不了。他连洗脚水都给你打好了你说你受得了吗？比如说就是生理期的时候然后我去洗手，他说等一下等一下，不能用冷水要用热水。你会觉得这是个男人吗？我真受不了。一开始你会觉得有点暖，但后来就觉得这这这，这还是个男的吗？我是找了个老公还是找了老妈？(Interview No. 10, p.10)

My parents knew I was dating a Japanese, but at the beginning they said they didn't know much about Japanese, and there was also the historical background, so they didn't have any good impression on Japanese and questioned me why I had to date a Japanese? You know that Shanghai men are very thoughtful and considerate, they can take care of you so well in all aspects of daily life. My parents thought highly of my ex Shanghai boyfriend, thinking that he is good at taking care of me, also honest. Why did I discard him? You know, there are so many details in here, really. For example, he would get the hot water for feet wash ready for you. Could you stand it?! Also like when I had my period, and was about to wash my hands, he would say, "wait! Wait! You can't use cold water, use hot water." Would you think this is a man?! I really couldn't stand it! Is this still a man? Have I found a husband or a mother?!

2. 我从来没想过要跟上海以外的人结婚，包括中国人。之所以对我来说跟东京人跟北京人结婚，其是对我来说是一样的，对我来说就是说没有觉得他是一个日本人又怎么样，就是不是一个上海人，就是我连我连跟上海以外的中国人结婚都没有考虑过。(Interview No. 8, p.4)

我父母觉得他家太远了，我先生好像是说他们父母也好像没有反对。(p.8)

I had never thought of marrying a person outside of Shanghai city, even a Chinese from other cities. So it meant the same to me whether I marry a person from Tokyo or Beijing. To me a Japanese man just means he is not a Shanghainese, and this didn't bother me at all since I had never considered that I would marry even a non-Shanghai Chinese guy. My parents were against our marriage because they thought he lived too far from Shanghai, but

my husband said that his parents weren't against it.

3. 我父母当时是反对的，因为他觉得我就这么一个女儿呀，就觉得跟着他去了日本以后，那个时候签证也没有现在那么方便吗，要见一面女儿的话是不容易的。家里也都不是农村的人，都是城里的人，对国际婚姻的话能够接受，但是考虑到他们自己老后的生活还是有反对的，但是通过周边的一些，因为我妈妈也很多朋友女儿就是嫁给欧美国家的或者是自己去的欧美国家，然后跟他的姐妹聊天就会说今后的话交通会越来越方便，国际之间的交流也会越来越多，就像把女儿嫁的北京也是一样的，也要飞机要两个多小时吗。所以就那么一想会有点想开了。(Interview No. 5, p.2)

My parents are from the city, so they can accept an international marriage. However, considering that in the future it would be hard to see me, they were a bit against it at first. Because many people around them had their daughters marry Westerners or study in the West, and they told my parents that in the future it would be more convenient, like flying only two hours to Beijing, so they were kind of having it thought through. My parents were a little worried, and they thought that I should get married in China and then they could take care of my children.

4. 她就是不放心这种国际婚，因为像我们这种家庭很普通的小城市的家庭，祖祖辈辈也没有这种国际婚姻啊。虽然不是蓝眼睛但他也是外国人，那我妈妈就说那买个房子写我妈妈的名字，现在已经给我了，去年刚改的。她觉得我们已经稳定了，她把房子转给我。我妈她也不是想要那房子，她就是将来万一他不要我了，那最起码我回来还有个房子住。(Interview No. 9, p.13) 很喜欢他的憨厚，然后没有那么多心眼，家庭也不错，然后唯一他们就是觉得太远了。(p.5)

My mom was worried about the international marriage because we are very ordinary family in a small town, and in generations we have never had any international marriages. Although he doesn't have blue eyes, but he is a foreigner. So my mom, in order to get a security for me, asked my husband to buy a house for me under my name, in case in the future if he divorces me, at least I have a place to live in. Because my mom is divorced, she had to leave us without anything, so she knew the feeling. My parents like him because he is honest, innocent, not complicated or sly. And he has a good family. The only pity they felt is they think it is too far because at that time I was the only child in the family before my mother had my sister. Given my family background, I wanted to get married early because I wanted security. I felt since I had already cohabited with him, if I broke up with him, it would be very hard for me to find another boyfriend. That was the perception I had. My parents like my husband because they think he is honest and good. They are very satisfied with him.

5. 然后大概那这事情以后不到一个月，他父母就过来见了我。担心他儿子被骗，因为他们听过很多那种在酒吧认识的或者是クラブ认识的为了钱那种，他父母就很担心就害怕我不是好孩子，所以就特意飞过来看我。(Interview No. 9, p.4)

Within a month his parents came to see me right after he informed them. They were quite worried, because they heard a lot about getting to know each other in a pub, the girl is after money, etc. His parents worried that I was not a good girl. That was why they flew to China to meet me.

6. 他们以前知道我带他们去公司都会嘲笑我，会说给你什么？有没有给你戒指啊房子车子啊？什么都没有那你还跟他在一起干嘛？你要喜欢日本人你要喜欢外国人上海外国人多的去了，我们不是有很多外资企业吗？他们上次还跟我说我给你介绍这个人吧？他是法国人还是什么人，反正都是外国人，都是精英那种，说得我后来都不敢在办公室提。因为那个时候还有一个女生跟我差不多，她也是要结婚，一天到晚就是你看这个戒指，我们房子买好了怎样怎样，所以后来我什么都不敢说了。那我不是怀孕了，我那个事情我也不敢说。(Interview No. 1, p.9)

In the past when I took him to my company, they would laugh at me asking what he could give me. They would ask me questions like did he give you diamond rings, houses? Nothing?! Why are you still staying with him? If you like to marry a foreigner there are many, should I introduce one to you? Anyway all that they were trying to introduce to me were foreign elites, made me feel so awkward to tell them more about my boyfriend. Because at the same time another girl who was similar to me in many ways was also getting married, and she would brag about her ring, and her houses, things like that. In the end I didn't want to say anything until I got pregnant.

7. 她们把这个说成成功我很奇怪，我说我是嫁给的爱情，不是把自己卖到国外。我要想找外国国籍很容易，因为我当时是教外国学生，我是对外汉语教学专业，我要想嫁外国人，我可以去选欧美啊，我为什么一定要选择日本人啊。(Interview No. 7, p.3)

They [my colleagues] used the word succeed to describe my marriage. But I said I married for love, not selling myself to foreign countries. It was very easy for me to find a foreigner especially Westerners. Why would I have to choose a Japanese!

8. 就是吵架的时候他会说日本的女的優しい的，没有像我这样気が強い。可是我就会说那我已算很好的了，那中国的男生可能 gentleman 一点，那我都没有用那样的标准来衡量，你也不能用那样的标准来衡量我。那他就不会再说什么了。(Interview No. 1, p. 15)

My husband complained that I was too strong, and not as gentle as Japanese women. I would reply by saying that Chinese men are more gentle than Japanese men, and I have

already done a very good job. If I don't judge you in my standard, then you shouldn't judge me in your standard, either. Then he would not say it anymore.

9. 但是我觉得他想要提升是件好事作为妻子我应该支持他，可这个支持确实对我的伤害非常大。我在这两年之中他几乎没有管过孩子，孩子的尿布他没有换过，孩子洗澡没有洗过。我曾经在我孩子一岁多的时候被一个用英语跟我交流的一个韩国妈妈，当然她在日本生活很多年了，说你是不是 single mother。那个人说我是 Single mother 的时候我觉得我一下就通透了，原来我的症结在这里，我一个人承担了几乎所有的事情，然后现在吵架的时候我会说你欠我的，后来我说你欠我的，在孩子两岁之前你的那些做法真的是伤害太深，在中国的话我可能会很好的多，毕竟我是中国人。(Interview No. 7, pp.8-9)

As a wife, I thought I should support him, but this support had really hurt me so deeply. During the first two years he hardly did anything for the child, and even he had never changed his diapers or bathed him. One Korean mom once even asked me if I was a single mother! I realized that all my problems lay in the fact that I had done everything by myself! Every time we got into a fight, even now, I would say to him that "you owe me, and you really hurt me so much before our elder son was two. If I were in China, my situation would be much better because I am Chinese."

10. 即使孩子很小的时候我都要去帮忙的，帮忙做那种，只要孩子睡着了，我哪怕再爬起来都会帮他妈妈做事情，我觉得家里就一个这么两个女的，他妈妈有年纪比较大，男的都那么不懂事，所以我是尽力在做。后来他爸爸有句话也算是让我释然了，他说你是很适合做我们家儿媳妇的，以前我日文都听不懂，再后来我慢慢能交流的时候他爸爸说的这句话我觉得那就是对我的认可了，我也欣然接受，我问心无愧，一直都很努力地在。(Interview No. 7, p.17)

I tried to help even when my child was very small. Once he fell asleep, I would make efforts to help my husband's mom no matter how exhausted I was. There were only two women in this house. His mom is already old, and the men in the family are not thoughtful and considerate enough, so I would try my best to help. Maybe because of this, his father one day said I was suitable to be his daughter-in-law which I took as a sign of acceptance.

11. 我都不给我老公做早饭的。如果他来不及了他就会叫我说请帮我做一下，我就帮他弄。(Interview No. 10, p.18) 每次我老公会说，你难道不感谢我吗？(p.20)

I never cook breakfast for my husband. If he is late he would say please make me something, then I would. I never had this idea that he works hard and I should thank him. Every time my husband would say don't you thank me? [for working hard, and being so considerate and showing great understanding by not asking me to make breakfast for him every day which a norm in Japan?]

12. 我觉得没有太多的意义,你跟自己孩子的父亲讲自己的事业,他毕竟不是跟中国男人一样,他没有那种献身精神。他第 1 心里想的是你是孩子的母亲,有这个义务。你先把自己的义务担起来,做好自己的本职之后再说你做什么。他可能就是觉得跟国内观念不是一样。当时如果我不放弃工作就根本没有几个方案。除非你找第三者的帮助,日本又没有保姆,没有任何可以代替自己的。(Interview No. 2, pp.3-4)

I didn't bother to tell him my opinion because it doesn't make much sense. After all he is not like Chinese men, as he doesn't have the spirit of devotion [to the family]. He first sees you as a mother, having the obligation [to raise a child]. If you do your job well, and have done what you should do as a mother, then we can talk about what you want to do. Probably this is the difference from Chinese. I had no other options but quitting my job because I could not find a maid which is not a norm in Japan.

13. 因为我也是第 1 次有孩子,一个人不会语言在一个陌生的国度,我的老公是一个对工作非常敬业的人,他一周七天都可以放在工作上。我曾经在我孩子一岁多的时候被一个用英语跟我交流的一个韩国妈妈,当然她在日本生活很多年了,说你是不是 single mother,我当时你想我心里的状态是什么,孩子生病的情况下我叫他回来他都不能回来,他在东京上班,我住在横滨,其实很近电车就一个小时。我是不会说语言的,我当时带着孩子,我还带着被子,这个细节我记得很清楚,我担心孩子住院,因为你知道中国的医院那个状态。(Interview No. 7, p.8)

It was the first time for me to have a baby, and I was alone in a foreign country, where I didn't know the language. My husband was such a devoting person to his work, and he could work seven days a week. Do you know what kind of state I was in and what was on my mind? When my son was sick, and I called him to come back, he wouldn't do so even if it was only one hour away by train. I couldn't speak the language, so I even carried one quilt in case my son had to stay in hospital [in China many things are to be prepared by the patient's family].

14. 我很热爱上班,我就觉得不想跟那些日本妈妈在一起整天吃喝玩乐,就是那个话题太无聊了,就想再上上班,认识一些新的朋友,中国的国内的朋友。(Interview No. 5, p.8)

I love working. I felt that I didn't want to be like those Japanese moms who just enjoy life every day by eating, and having fun. The topics they were talking about were too boring. I want to work, and make some new friends, Chinese friends.

15. 在日本我还是要気になる、干什么事情都要気になる,就是特别累特别辛苦。就是我必须要跟他们的同流合污,说的难听点。就是他们怎么样我就要去怎么样,就是要去合わせる,在日本就特别累。然后来了中国之后我就觉得我自由了,我想干嘛就干嘛。(Interview No. 5,

p.8)

In Japan, I have to stay very sensitive and conscious to others' feelings and how they may think, I felt very tired and hard since I have to conform to others, and I find it very exhausting. But now I am back to China, on my own motherland, I can do whatever I want. I don't care how others think of me. I am free.

16. 是支持。我觉得日本男人比较中国男人可能日本的尤其是需要得到老婆的认可，这点的话可能去他们觉得有存在的价值。因为中国的女性确实太强了。(Interview No. 2, p.7)

I try to support his work consciously. I think Japanese husbands, in comparison to Chinese men, may particularly need wife's acknowledgement. Only in this way can they feel their value of existence. Chinese women are really too strong.

17. 其实日本人也没有什么亲戚几乎没有。比如说亲戚来的时候我是有责任让亲戚住在家里，而不是住在酒店。但他就不能理解，所以就是这种情况就根本就不希望对他有期待，要不然就会有失望。(Interview No. 2, p.5)

Actually Japanese hardly have any relatives. In China, if my relatives are visiting me, I have the responsibility to let them stay in my house, not in a hotel. But he just can't understand. So in this kind of cases, I don't have expectations at all, otherwise I will be very disappointed.

18. 在他们家三个月，他妈教我，然后我就是从那个丝瓜皮或是黄瓜的皮怎么削的我都不会，什么都不会。他妈妈就教我，一开始就把手刮了什么的。然后那个时候孩子还小，但是爷爷帮我看。哭的时候就背着。我婆婆跟我说背在身上，这个绝对不能让我爸妈看到。我爸妈看到我背着孩子做事的话他们会难伤心死了。虽然我在我婆婆家我婆婆没亏待我，但是我在他家里干活呀，这跟他一起学就像修行的感觉。但是教我怎么样做事情，还有照顾照顾孩子。我之前的话真的是除了喂奶我都是让我妈，她很乐意给我带孩子。但是我婆婆不是，她不会帮你带孩子，帮你带一下手。(Interview No. 5, p.4) 但妈妈跟婆婆教的时候是不一样的，妈妈是用爱在教，婆婆是用棒子在教。妈妈就说你那你看你来看，我教你怎么做吗，她就会给你写上怎么样，不过婆婆就会说你怎么还学不会怎么样。(p.6)

My parents would feel very sad if they saw me doing housework while carrying my baby on my back. In the past my mom did everything, and she is very happy to take care of my baby and me. It was my parents who helped me a lot especially when my children were young. But my mother-in-law wouldn't take care of my child for me. So when she asked me to do something while I was very tired or didn't want to, I would pretend that I didn't understand. My mother-in-law and I never got into any conflict on the surface, but we knew we were not happy with each other. She cares about face very much, and will not give us

any trouble, so with certain distance we get along very well.

19. 后来我就想我要准备下日语，因为毕竟要去日本生活，所以我就辞职了回来在家做一个家庭主妇，把家务都料理起来，不会做饭我就想办法学，虽然那个时候做的不好我就一直在学。我觉得这种体力上的辛苦相比最大的是心志上的痛苦就是他和父母关系及跟我姐的关系让我非常痛苦。他觉得他们距离太近了。虽然我努力尝试在做，但有父母呢肯定女儿很舒服的。(Interview No. 7, pp.6-7)

After I became pregnant, I quit my job and became a housewife. I tried very hard to do housework, and learn to cook, also learn Japanese in preparation of going back to Japan someday. It was not easy, but the hardest part, which bothered me the most, in comparison to the physical labor, was the mental misery, which was the relationship between him and my parents, and my sister. When I was pregnant, I knew nothing about housework. Although I was trying hard, it was a great comfort to have my parents here help me.

20. 我是很想跟公公婆婆一起，因为他年龄也大我想孝顺他们，但是他们的文化什么都不一样。有些时候我就觉得是不是过度热情了，过度孝顺了，就是一个度把握不好。(Interview No. 5, p.5)

Because my parent-in-law are old, I wanted to be nice to them, and take good care of them. But their culture is different from mine in everything. Sometimes I couldn't help wondering: was I too enthusiastic? Showing too much filial piety? It is very hard to keep the right distance.

21. 也只有我才感觉到那时候他害怕，他是学生，他周围的人没有结婚，而且他不是像其他人那样有爸爸妈妈可以给他经济支持，他从高中开始零花钱都是自己打工他做家庭老师，因为他妈妈跟他爸爸很早就离婚了，他妈妈一个人带他，他也没有兄弟姐妹。那个时候他也一直打工，所以他的生活费肯定他自己赚的，对他来讲没有工作如果一下有小孩完全不知道该怎么办。他爸爸从来没有给他补助，他在大学的学费到现在都在还，他们日本人奖学金申请了但是要还的。我就说那你可以先还掉到，但对他来说也是一个很好的经验。所以觉得他那时就是害怕。也许对于日本男人来讲比如说结婚之后妻子在家做家庭主妇男人在外养家，那时候他正好是开始要找工作，所有的都是在变化的，他当然会害怕，但又说不出口所以才没有理由。但他不说我是想象不到的，因为我没有那种生活经历。我跟其他人不愿说，但是因为你是调查那我就告诉你。其实我从来没有担心过钱，有可能就是我们俩之间的这种差距。可是他没有给我看到那一面，在我看来就是理所当然的。我完全没有那概念，所以我完全不知道他会害怕。(Interview No. 1, p. 11)

I think he was scared. He was a student [in graduate school], no one around him was married, besides his parents could not provide financial support like others do. He started working part-timely since high school days because his parents were divorced and his mom

brought him up by herself, and he has no siblings. So he didn't know what to do if he had a child while he had no job. His father never helped him. So he felt very scared. Maybe Japanese men feel they need to support the family after marriage, and it is a norm in Japan that men work outside and women stay as housewives at home. At that time, he just started looking for a job, and everything was changing, so it was natural that he felt scared. Yet he felt embarrassed to tell me. If he didn't tell me I would never be able to guess, because I have never had that kind of life experience.

To be honest with you, I had never worried about money, so maybe this is the difference between us. But he never showed the difference to me, so I took it for granted. I have no concepts toward money, and I had never thought about it, so I didn't know that he would be scared at all.

22. 你想我也是城市长大的孩子，我在这方面没有什么束缚的，自己也很早就开始大学本科时代就开始挣钱，我没有再经济上这种很拮据的感觉。其实他也很明白我，我觉得我也受过很高等的教育，自尊心不比你差，自尊自爱这方面谁也不要跟谁说，你说你在发达国家长大我好像在一个发展中国家长大，但是就我们成长水平，我结婚的时候我教育水平在他之上，我各方面。其实这个很重要，我是一个很清高的人，但是我觉得经济确实是婚姻的基础，必须把这个基础解决好。（Interview No. 7, p.10-11）

When I was in China I earned my own living since college. I think I am very independent. I also received higher education, my self-esteem is not worse than yours. Even though you grew up in a developed country [Japan] and I in a developing country [China], my education level is higher than yours. I am a person with much pride, but I felt that finance is really the base of marriage, and I had to solve the problem.

23. 我会通过自己的方式我是挣钱。做一个自我实现，做一些自己喜欢的事情，既然学了日语肯定要发挥自己的这个特长，去找一些与日语相关的工作，哪怕只是一个アルバイト，但是我用到跟生活语言之外的日语。（Interview No. 5, p.10）

I will make my own money by working. I like to keep myself busy, and I don't want to live life like a housewife doing nothing. I want to be a career woman, have self-realization, do something I like, use my Japanese language, and make my life full and meaningful.

24. 所以我在想什么是独立？经济上的独立是个表象，内心的独立才是最主要的，我现在就一直在追求内心的独立，我说了我现在跟你在一起，好像你在养着我，但是我告诉我如果离开你我马上可以找个工作，我可以养活我自己，但是你的孩子能不能过现在这样的生活不好说，这是事实对不对？我有多大能力我给他们什么物质，没那能耐怎么办？但是活着是没有问题的。（Interview No. 7, p.16）

What is being independent? Financial independency is very superficial, mental independency is the most important. I have been pursuing mental independency. I told my husband that now being with you, seems you are raising me, but, let me tell you, I can live without you, and I can find a job and support myself. This is the fact. Even if I cannot guarantee your child has the same life, I can raise him.

25. 因为你是一个事业女性, 有自己独立事业的女性, 因为当妈妈这个角色觉得有所亏就做得不够. 但是你想通过自己的创业, 是你自己的时光, 事情虽然有些不如意的地方, 但也是自己一点点做出来的, 也算是自己的一个孩子吧! (Interview No. 2, p.8)

I feel that I am a career woman with my own independent career, and being a mother may hinder my full engagement in my job. When I am working, it's my own time, although sometimes not everything is satisfying. When you work hard little by little, you'll feel one day that it [the accomplishment] is like another child [of yours].

26. 所以文化上的差异和个体的差异也没有办法剥, 我有时候在想你说这文化差异我觉得比如说中国人是不分餐的, 日本是分餐的, 而我刚开始学做饭的时候肯定是按照中国人的方法是不是? 我做了一大桌子菜然后这边再喂孩子, 我这么喂着孩子等我一回头, 我还在哺乳那个阶段, 他刚开始吃离乳食, 菜已经吃没了。我这边还没有吃饭, 他说对不起我吃多了, 因为日本就这样, 反正放到这的他就吃, 你要是给他分了他就只吃他盘子里的那一份。真的好多次, 当时真的非常崩溃, 又不好意思说, 很委屈, 我还要再喂孩子还要喂自己, 一回头饭就没有了, 那种感觉真的很崩溃. 所以后来我就把这件事情跟他当面谈清楚了, 我说我们中国人是想如果这个人还没有吃饭要么给他留下来, 要么给他拨出来, 反正一定要给留出来, 不可能一个人全吃了, 对不对? 即使你没有吃饱, 你也要先问一下, 这是你对别人的一个尊重, 这是中国文化, 我们家就是这样。(Interview No. 7, p.16)

When I first learned to cook, and I would first cook many dishes, and then started to feed my baby son. But by the time I finished feeding my son, all the dishes were gone! He finished all of them! I haven't eaten anything yet! He would say "sorry, I had too much". It happened so many times, and really drove me nuts and desperate. I felt shy to say it, but I felt very bad. I need to feed my son; I need to feed myself as well. But when I looked back, the food was gone! You know in China if a family member hasn't eaten, we would always leave some for him/her, we would never finish all the food by ourselves. Even if you are not full, at least you should ask. This is showing respect to others, this is Chinese culture, and this is what my family is like.

27. 然后他就回家了你知道吧, 那你回家了, 那我知道医院可能没家那么好, 那你回家也行我一个人也无所谓, 那你回去吧。你到家起码给我打个电话, 说哎呀你紧不紧张害不害怕呀怎么

样怎么样。我老公就回去了，连个电话都没给我打，我就一夜没睡，特别难受。他也不在也不给我发个信息过来，我就给的发个信息，我就喊他的全名，我说这次你真的有点过分了，我在这边拼死给你生孩子，你到家喝酒你睡觉，你连个信息都不给我发我太伤心了。我那个时候我就打电话给我闺蜜嘛，我说亲爱的我可能离离婚不远了，我说我生孩子他不这陪我就算了，他回家连个信息都不给我发，我闺蜜就说哈，怎么可能！你看我明天怎么收拾他，太过分了，怎么能这样呢！他现在也是个幼稚的儿子这样。(Interview No. 9, pp.22-23)

I felt so sad! I knew that the hospital is not as comfortable as home, so it is ok that you went home. But at least give a call, ask me if I feel nervous or not, scared or not. But nothing, not even a text message! So I became really sad. I am risking my life trying to give birth to your child, and you, went back home drinking and sleeping! Can't even text me a message! So I called my best friend, and told her that I am not far from divorce anymore. My best friend got really mad and scolded him. He is like that, even now he is still a naïve son to me.

28. 我们会在日本吧。中国的医疗方面还有人际关系，中国没有人际关系是寸步难行啊，我们已经太脱离这边人际关系了。我要到老了才开始去求别人的话，可能别人都不会给我大面子的，我还在日本吧。习惯是习惯了，但还是少亲友啊，所以就只能跟孩子跟自己老公大家**絆強くする**，大家抱团。因为真的没有亲戚朋友，但是反过来他们有亲戚朋友也在烦恼怎么相处啊。(Interview No. 6, p.7)

In the future we probably will go back to Japan. In China you need human relationships (*guanxi*) like when you go to hospital, etc. without *guanxi* there is no way to survive. However, we have been without it for so long, and if I have to beg for others' help when I get old maybe others won't even care to give me face. I'd better stay in Japan. I have got used to living in Japan, with few family members, relatives and friends. So I need to maintain the strong bond with my family. I really don't have relatives or friends in Japan, but on the other hand, those who have relatives and friends are also bothered by how to get along with them.