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Alec Bryan Schaer

Illinois State University, abschaer95@gmail.com

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# INTERNATIONAL MARRIAGES: CULTURE, IDENTITY FORMATION, SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

ALEC BRYAN SCHAER

65 Pages

The objective of this research is to examine how changes in sociopolitical and cultural landscapes affect the cultural and personal identities of individuals engaged in mixed heritage relationships. I examine relationships between Japanese women and American men to illustrate that the wider socio-political contexts of these individuals play key roles in how they view and portray themselves in relation to others; as Japanese, American, both, or neither.

This research is divided into two distinct periods, one before WWII and a second after WWII. For each of these periods, I examined the relevant socio-political and cultural circumstances which affected Japanese and American mixed-heritage couples. These ranged from international relations to the treatment of both Japanese and American communities in the United States and Japan.

For the post-war period, I utilized a series of interviews with men and women who were engaged in mixed heritage relationships. In these 40-50-minute-long semi-structured ethnographic interviews, participants were asked about many aspects of their daily lives and relationships. These questions ranged from simple ones about the type of food each couple ate in the home to more complex questions dealing with religion, relationships, and community identity. From these interviews and previous research in the field, I was able to draw conclusions about identity formation and maintenance in these relationships.

**KEYWORDS:** Mixed-Heritage, Identity, Japanese, American, War Bride

INTERNATIONAL MARRIAGES: CULTURE, IDENTITY FORMATION,  
SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

ALEC BRYAN SCHAER

A Thesis Submitted in Partial  
Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

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INTERNATIONAL MARRIAGES: CULTURE, IDENTITY FORMATION,  
SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

ALEC BRAYN SCHAER

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Nobuko Adachi, Chair

James Stanlaw

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## PREFACE: INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

This research focuses on the identity negotiation of individuals involved in mixed-heritage relationships and their sociopolitical, cultural, and historical context. To illustrate the role that these contexts play in identity formation, I divide the history of these relationships into distinct periods. The dividing line between these periods that I chose for the sake of this research is WWII. I argue that WWII marks a drastic change in the experiences of Japanese women moving to the United States and marrying American men. Before WWII, the experiences of these women were molded by many of the attitudes which arose out of Japanese isolation from foreigners and the negative interactions which took place between the United States and Japan. To illustrate some of the nuances of how Japanese and Americans viewed each other and the personal relationships which arose between the two groups, I provide a history of contact between Japan and the United States and tie it together Japanese folklore, American-Japanese political relations, and American immigration and marriage laws.

As the Post-War War Bride Phenomenon was a drastic change in immigration and mixed-heritage relationships between Japanese and Americans following WWII, I spend some time examining this phenomenon and its significance in the identity formation and negotiation in these mixed-heritage relationships. During this period, the shifting geopolitical and social landscape drastically changed how these couples viewed themselves in relation to one another, their cultural heritage, and those around them. The topics which are most applicable to this research are generally agreed-upon facts and are therefore drawn from a fewer number of sources in this section.

More importantly, however, I supplement many of these observations primarily through interviews with women who arrived in the United States during the latter portion of the War Bride Phenomenon and therefore could provide more direct explanations through their own experiences.

These semi-structured ethnographic interviews offered a unique opportunity and lens with which to view these relationships. Whereas other methods such as historical research or limiting research exclusively to interviews would be simpler, this approach provides significantly more detailed data. These interviews were approximately 40-50 minutes in length and were conducted with interview participants who entered the United States after WWII beginning in the 1970s. With these sources of data combined, I will illustrate how the experiences and relevant context of these mixed-heritage couples have changed since the War Bride Phenomenon following WWII. It is these experiences and contexts which affect the formation and maintenance of these couples' cultural and social identities.

## CHAPTER I: IN SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

Current political relations between the United States and Japan can generally be considered to be stable. This has not always been the case and it is therefore necessary to draw distinctions between different periods and the state of Japanese and American relations in each. These periods' unique features, such as immigration legislation, laws relating to marriage, and international relations, affect the social climate in which these individuals find themselves. This, in turn, changes the context in which the identities of mixed-heritage couples are developed and modified. I have organized this research into two distinct periods, *Prior to WWII* and *After WWII*. I have chosen WWII as a dividing line because it provides the most distinct break in not only political relations, but also in cultural exchange, immigration, community membership, and shared experience.

### **Prior to WWII**

The First Period, *Prior to WWII*, begins with Japanese and American spheres of influence being nearly separate from one another. In the earliest times I examine, studies of marriages between Japanese women American men as a separate group had not yet begun and as a result it is necessary to examine the attitudes which Japanese and Americans typically held towards one another in both societal and international theaters. In this section, I hope to illustrate that individuals during this time often identified as either Japanese or as American, a contrast to later groups following WWII which began to identify more as both Japanese and American in some cases. I will include some of this period's key features and the subsequent dynamics which they produce. I argue that these affect the relationships between Japanese and Americans.

Further, the effects of these early dynamics are a key part of understanding the communities of Japanese and Japanese descendant Americans throughout the pre-WWII period and why they changed after WWII.

I will first provide a brief examination of political relations between Japan and America. This history will illustrate some of the underlying influences which affect both the treatment of mixed-heritage relationship and the views that Japanese and American societies adopted towards these relationships during this time. This history is one of the key features behind Japanese and American groups desiring to stay separate from one another. The treatment of these couples also strongly affected the desire and likelihood of Japanese and Americans participating in relationships with out-group members

Though I divide this research into two periods, the history of relationships between Japanese and Americans has gone through several phases, each of which represents a unique state of power dynamics and cordiality between the two nations and their people. At the bare minimum, a general overview of national relations between Japanese and Americans is necessary to fully comprehend the context which influenced the existing attitudes between these two groups.

Japanese and American diplomatic interaction began in 1854 after a series of failed attempts to initiate relations that date back as far as 1790. Though this may seem to be a period greatly disparate from the contemporary groups being studied, I argue that the attitudes which arise from this period form a direct lineage to the beliefs and context which existed before WWII. It also, however, illustrates a clear division along historical and social lines between those that entered the United States before WWII and those who entered the country after WWII.

Before 1854, The Tokugawa Government in Japan maintained a state of isolation from the outside world. Strict and even fatal penalties were enforced upon both westerners entering and Japanese leaving the country illegally. Due to this isolation and the penalties for violating it, a clear and hostile divide between Japanese and Western groups developed and later built upon these foundations to create a strong divide between Japanese and Americans which would remain intact until after WWII. The treatment of Japanese and Japanese-Americans during WWII would change this however, and new divide would be built upon different foundations.

The strict policy of Japanese isolation not only influenced how Japanese individuals viewed themselves concerning the outside world, but it also led to a change in the way that they viewed themselves in relation to westerners. During this period, westerners developed into something of a myth in Japan. This does not mean that westerners or foreigners were not believed to exist at all, but rather an average person living in Japan would be extremely unlikely to meet a westerner in their lifetime. One of the best illustrations of this is a mythical Japanese figure (*yōkai*) called a *Nurarihyon*. Shigeru Mizuki (2004) argues that these figures, which were known for coming into one's home at the busiest time of day, making themselves comfortable, and proceeding to smoke and drink tea, were based upon westerners due to their distinctive appearance and behavior. This depicted a clear division between Japanese and the rude and uncivilized *Nurarihyon*, an attitude that would persist for much of the pre-WWII period. There is a clear indication throughout this period, and in decreasing frequency after WWII, that women marrying westerners were demeaning themselves and their family by marrying someone rude and uncivilized. This view is visible in some of the earliest interviews I conducted in which family members were raised with pre-WWII attitudes. In these cases, family members would be cut off from the family for their decision to marry American men.

The sense of hostility between Japanese and Americans continued and was further inflamed following the arrival of Commodore Perry's American gunboats in Japan. Intending to end the Tokugawa Government's isolationist policies and open Japan to American trade, Perry's arrival began a chain of events that resulted in a bloody civil war, doing nothing to improve the view of westerners amongst Japanese. Perry's arrival in 1853 and his "gunboat diplomacy" paired with the failure of the Tokugawa government to effectively respond rapidly accelerated the decline of Japan's isolationist policies and even the government itself. During this period, as part of the Tokugawa's acquiescence to the demands of the United States to open the country, the Shogunate issued the first series of travel documents to mostly male Japanese workers to travel outside Japan to work. Even in these cases of Japanese workers abroad, they tended to remain in isolated communities which I will later describe. This acquiescence to demands made the Japanese government appear weak and their control of the country continued to decline until a series of rebellions broke out. These rebellions culminated in the Boshin War and, after the defeat of the Shogunate, resulted in the reinstatement of the emperor to power, an act which would define the era as the Meiji Restoration.

From this period of upheaval in Japan, a philosophy called *jōi*, or "expel the barbarian," arose. Commonly combined with a second philosophy of *sonnō*, or revere the emperor, *sonnō jōi* became a popular slogan used throughout Japan. This philosophy and other beliefs such as it created an atmosphere in which relationships between Japanese and foreigners, especially in Japan was considered completely unacceptable. These attitudes would affect many of the pre-WWII and even some of the post-WWII relationships between Japanese descendants and Americans.

Under the new Meiji government, as part of a desire to renegotiate the unequal treaties forced upon Japan, the number of travel documents issued to Japanese workers was drastically reduced. The Meiji government, in an effort to continue to westernize and modernize, also sought to begin building an empire in East Asia to match that of western powers (LaFeber 1997). Despite this, people from Japan began to emigrate to Canada, the United States, Brazil, and the Territory of Hawaii to find work. Often though, these individuals faced discrimination and prejudice, souring the relationship between many Japanese and Americans.

On the geopolitical stage, Japan continued its race towards empire, successfully defeating China in the Sino-Japanese War in 1894 and the Russian Empire in 1905, firmly cementing itself as a power capable of rivaling western nations in East Asia. Feeling stronger in this position, the number of emigrants and workers leaving Japan once again began to rise, allowing the Japanese government to alleviate some of the pressures of a workforce rapidly shifting from an agrarian to an industrial economy. So significant was this emigration to the United States and North America that an informal arrangement known as the Gentleman's Agreement was put into place in 1907. This agreement stated that Japan would stop sending emigrants to the United States and the United States would not ban Japanese immigrants from coming to the United States (Woodard, 2012).

This history of early expansion and Japanese communities leaving en-masse resulted in unique diasporic communities that simply did not exist in the same form after the end of WWII. For the most part, Japanese communities already existing in North America from this time to WWII were largely self-sufficient and generally did not interact as much with outgroup individuals. This was further encouraged by the strength of the community itself. These

Japanese communities had quasi-banking systems which were able to issue loans to immigrants who may have been denied outside of the community. For example, many Japanese banking institutions such as the Yokohama Specie Bank, Pacific Bank, and Sumitomo bank opened branches in Hawaii and had \$3 million, \$2.8 million, and \$2 million in saving accounts respectively. During WWII however, these institutions and their assets were seized and their owners imprisoned by the United States government. Even after the war, these institutions remained closed, further highlighting the clear division between Japanese communities and experiences before and following WWII (Kimura, 1988, 176).

Many of the Japanese and Japanese-descendant shops and businesses before WWII were also preferred out of loyalty from the *ken* (prefecture) system extant in Japan (Levine & Rhodes, 1981). These shops and the loyalty which the local community had to them were a key aspect of building a community in Japanese-descendant communities in the United States. Namely, they illustrate that the Japanese and Japanese descendants living in the United States still viewed themselves in relation to their homeland. Individuals shopped at businesses owned by people from the same *ken*, still viewing themselves as a part of a semi-local community in Japan. After WWII, like the banking institutions of Hawaii, many of these business owners were unable to reclaim their property as it had been seized during the war and sold to the Americans near those areas. In combination with the loss of Japanese banking institutions, the post-war Japanese and Japanese descendant individuals had less opportunity to maintain their identity as members of a region in Japan, causing a major shift throughout the post-war period.

During the pre-war period, the self-sufficiency within Japanese descendant communities was also illustrated by the rate of out-marriage to people who were not Japanese or Japanese American. Amongst *nisei*, or the children of Japanese parents born in the United States, few

married outside of the Japanese or Japanese-American community. According to research conducted by Gene Levine and Colbert Rhodes, as little as 6%-5% of Nisei married non-Japanese or non-Japanese-Americans from 1910-1920 (Levine & Rhodes, 1981). This number would gradually increase and by the 1960s, almost one-fifth of nisei living in the United States would be married to members of out-groups. The lack of out-marriage amongst Japanese diasporic communities during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, was not wholly by choice. From 1922 to 1931, the Cable Act significantly hampered the willingness of American women to marry non-American citizens as it stripped them of their American citizenship (Hing, 1999). Through both social and legislative isolation, Japanese and Japanese descendants in the United States were encouraged to view themselves as separate from other Americans, especially white Americans. Subsequently, many Japanese and Japanese descendants viewed themselves in relation to Japan and other Japanese rather than immigrants from other regions.

Returning once more to the geopolitical theatre, Japan had continued to develop and expand its navy, military, and industrial capacity in the time between the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) and WWI (1914). In addition, foreign advisors from Britain, the United States, and other powers were utilized to continue the changes being implemented throughout the Japanese military. To begin making territorial gains and test the efforts undergone in the country, Japan began its efforts to attain colonial dominance in Asia with the Russo-Japanese War. This war was later followed by Japan's participation in WWI on the side of the allies. Although Japan did not participate in the European front of the war, it played an important role in cutting off the German Empire from its colonies in Asia. These colonies seized during WWI were granted to Japan as part of the nation's participation in the Treaty of Versailles and marked this period as the

continued development of Japanese colonialization in East Asia. They also marked a continued shift in Japan towards parity with the powerful western empires at that time. This marks the end of an arc that saw Japanese identity as being more powerful and civilized than westerners being shaken by the arrival of Perry and a subsequent buildup of military and industrial base to rise again to the privileged position which they had previously perceived. With the participation of Japan in the war amongst western powers and securing a seat at the negotiation table, Japanese individuals were once again able to consider themselves as an equal power to the other great powers involved in the war, a belief which would spread throughout Japanese society.

This belief held by many Japanese was not mirrored in the United States. By 1924, the Gentleman's Agreement of 1907 was no longer sufficient for the American people. This was largely the result of Japanese immigrants and workers continuing to enter the country through loopholes in the system such as "picture brides" or women who legally entered the United States by marrying men who they had never met and who had only ever seen a photo shown to them during the matchmaking process. This practice was seen by many as a violation of the Gentlemen's Agreement and the Immigration Act of 1924 was enacted in reaction. This law resulted in a massive downturn in Japanese emigration to the United States as it banned Japanese and all groups who were ineligible to gain naturalized citizenship from entering the country as an immigrant (Ichioka, 1990). The further expansion of the Japanese empire and the resource base from conquered territories led to increased control of the government by the military and by the beginning of World War II, the military had near-complete control over the country. Similarly, the governments in Germany and Italy too had seen rampant militarization of their nations through the rise of fascism and dictators, and these three nations allied due to their shared goals.

## **Japanese and Japanese Descendants During WWII**

The shifting of the identity of Japanese and Japanese-descendant communities in the United States highlights a strong division between those which existed before and after WWII. This division is also clearly reflected in the mixed-heritage couples during these times. The experiences of Japanese and Japanese-descendant individuals in the United States during WWII later played an enormous role in the schism which developed between these individuals and those who entered the United States following the war. This schism continued to widen as more time passed since the conclusion of WWII. This research suggests that as the time since WWII increases, the cultural identity of individuals, especially those following the War Bride Movement, shifted from being strictly Japanese and instead towards one of membership in both Japanese and American cultural identities. Due in part to the more isolated Japanese and Japanese-descendant communities before WWII and their absence after the war, how individuals find group membership and sense of belonging changed. Further, the perceived shared experience of these individuals was quite different after the war. Japanese communities in the United States during the war possessed very different memories of Japan than those who had lived there during the turmoil of the war. This schism was only furthered by the different treatment of these individuals by the receiving American culture during and after WWII. While some incoming Japanese immigrants such as the post-war War Brides may have felt some degree of comradery or shared cultural identity with those Japanese and Japanese descendants living in the United States, the experiences that these communities underwent during the war created a divide in cultural identities.

One such example of this is Kana, an interview participant who entered the United States in the 1990s. In an interview with Kana and her husband Dave, both participants commented that

they didn't feel wholly American or wholly Japanese, instead of feeling that they were somewhere between the two. By examining the events which caused the initial schism in Japanese communities during and after WWII, I can conclude how these changes affected the identity modification of these individuals and what led to this drastically different viewpoint.

The effects of the shifting experiences of Japanese communities before, and following, World War II can be found among those who endured the internment camps during the War. Following the December attacks on Pearl Harbor in 1942, the United States was thrown into a state of panic due to being suddenly thrust into a war. This panic resulted in a deep-seated distrust and even hatred towards Japanese and Japanese descendant Americans who were, at that time, viewed as one homogenous and disloyal group. This viewpoint is best illustrated by the passing of executive order 9066 by Franklin Roosevelt on February 19, 1942. This order decreed that it was legal and necessary for the United States to imprison its citizens without trial and prescribed military-controlled areas in which these individuals could be imprisoned:

Whereas the successful prosecution of the war requires every possible protection against espionage and against sabotage to national-defense material, national-defense premises, and national-defense utilities as defined in Section 4, Act of April 20, 1918, 40 Stat. 533, as amended by the Act of November 30, 1940, 54 Stat. 1220, and the Act of August 21, 1941, 55 Stat. 655" (U.S.C., Title 50, Sec. 104)

... The Secretary of War is hereby authorized to provide for residents of any such area who are excluded therefrom, such transportation, food, shelter, and other accommodations as may be necessary, in the judgment of the Secretary of War or the said Military Commander, and until other arrangements are made, to accomplish the purpose of this order. The designation of military areas in any region or locality shall supersede designations of prohibited and restricted areas by the Attorney General under the Proclamations of December 7 and 8, 1941...

(Executive Order # 9066)

This resulted in one of the largest mass imprisonments in United States history with some 120,000 Japanese and Japanese-descendant Americans being imprisoned without due process throughout WWII. This executive order also illustrates the strong prejudices which existed towards Japanese and Japanese-descendant Americans before WWII as FBI report that found that the imprisonment was unnecessary and even ineffective at preventing sabotage in the United States (Ringle, 1942). This meant that these individuals who could have been utilized for the ongoing war effort were not imprisoned for the defense of the United States. Instead, this report indicates that these groups were imprisoned due to existing prejudices against Japanese individuals in the United States. Even in the case that an interned individual was a spy or a saboteur, the removal of 120,000 individuals from the American economy may have caused more damage despite the cheap labor they provided while interned. This is further confirmed by the treatment of Japanese and Japanese-descendants in Hawaii. There, the population of Japanese and Japanese-descendants was such a large percentage of the population that the region would have ground to a halt by their removal. Rather than imprisoning the entire population of Japanese and Japanese- Americans, only around 1,330 individuals from primarily community and religious leadership positions were selected for imprisonment (Hayashi, 2015). As claimed by the 1980 Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, three guiding influences resulted in the imprisonment of so many innocents. Waves of both racial hysteria and war hysteria left many Americans searing for a scapegoat that they could immediately punish for the war that the United States was now engaged in with Japan.

These hysterias were further compounded by the failure of political leadership to acknowledge the issues at hand and put an end to them. Rather, as illustrated by executive order 9066, the political leaderships of 1942 embraced the hysteria to fuel war fervor.

Throughout WWII, the individuals and families imprisoned throughout both North and South America remained in isolation from the rest of the “non-Japanese” Americans excluding cases in which they were allowed to interact with towns near their internment camps, work on farms or other war industries outside the camps, and join the military as parts of units such as the 442<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment (a regiment comprised almost exclusively of Japanese- Americans and Japanese Americans). This, in conjunction with the desire by Japanese descendant Americans to avoid discrimination and put their time in the camps behind them resulted in a rift that would develop between themselves and the Japanese immigrants who arrived in the United States following WWII. The new immigrants, who had none of the experiences of imprisonment based upon their race, had different perspectives which made integrating into the shattered Japanese communities after the war far more difficult.

## CHAPTER II: WAR BRIDES

Following WWII, many in Japan faced starvation and the country was in a state of near-complete economic collapse. The people of Japan had suffered greatly during the war as a result of extensively committing resources such as food to the war effort and years of both conventional and firebombing campaigns by the United States which devastated the cities of Japan. Although some large-scale industry survived or was rebuilt, many businesses were lost. These businesses were the source of income for many Japanese and due to their destruction, the economic situation in Japan was disastrous for many. Furthermore, although food production remained intact, the infrastructure for distribution of food products was, by the end of the war, severely damaged. The devastation which permeated this time in Japan was not solely from the war, however, as a series of earthquakes struck the major industrial areas of the country which had remained intact or functional (NOAA, n.d.). During this time, the Japanese economy was in shambles and starvation was a significant concern for many during the later years of WWII and the time immediately following. Although not the case in all marriages during this time, there was significant pressure on Japanese women, especially those of lower socioeconomic status and who had access to less desirable jobs during this period, to find ways to escape the devastation in Japan. This also resulted in many marriages arising between economically and socially disparate individuals (Zeiger, 20). During the years immediately following WWII, there were also a huge number of American soldiers and servicemen in Japan as an occupying force. Due to these circumstances, there was an explosion of Japanese women who married American soldiers and servicemen. These women became collectively referred to as “War Brides” both informally and

in legislation such as the War Bride Act which I will address. Many of the earliest War Brides to come to America often did so to find a better future for themselves through marriage. As a result, negative and often untrue stigmas such as these women being prostitutes developed in Japan and the United States. These early groups especially had a large concentration of somewhat hasty marriages as some women were much more willing to marry and relocate with American Servicemen husbands to escape the devastation of Japan (Bruce- Johnston, 1954). These groups and the increased public attention which they received sparked the interest scholars and researchers who would develop an extensive field of early research into the War Bride phenomenon of the post-WWII period.

Following the post-war period, the nature of relationships between Japanese and Americans began to shift alongside the national and cultural landscapes of the United States and Japan. Though initially hostile, this post-war period is characterized by a steady decline in hostilities between the United States and Japan, a shift that is mirrored in the relationships during this time. During this time, there is a shift in rhetoric and attitudes in the United States and Japan. This shift can be seen in the frequency of interactions between the two nations, the change in Japanese communities in the United States, and the social attitudes between Japanese and Americans. This, therefore, marks a distinct break from the communities which exist before the war and the surrounding social context for individuals engaged in these mixed-heritage relations. These shifts in turn caused a divide between the Japanese War Brides entering the United States after the war and the individuals who had been in the United States before the war. Due to the damage inflicted on these communities and existing prejudices from before WWII, these communities oftentimes rejected War Brides. In essence, the groups in the United States rejected a shared cultural identity with these women.

The question which remains is why these women were rejected by the group with whom they might otherwise have shared a cultural identity in a different period. To answer this question, one must consider the social context in which these relationships took place. This proved to be difficult for the relationships in the 1950s and 1960 however due to the time which has passed and due to how the research was conducted at that time.

Due to the practices in the field at this time and the early nature of the research from this period, there are often cases of controversy in the findings of these studies. For example, the claim that the marriages were hasty due to the need to escape Japan has become somewhat controversial in later studies. According to research conducted by Schnepf and Yui (1955), the motivation behind the rapid courtship of these periods is debatable. Whereas many were likely eager to escape the post-WWII turmoil in Japan, later researchers also began to find that the courtship periods of American servicemen were quite short in general due to the frequent nature of their relocation due to their service. One such study claimed to have found no evidence of the marriages being hasty, no difficulty for the brides in adjusting to their new host cultures beyond the learning of a new language, and no evidence of severe cultural conflict within either in-groups or out-groups. This study sought to illustrate that the high failure rate of Japanese-American marriages in the 1950s was not a result of cultural conflict. In conducting this study, however, several mistakes were made (Schnepf and Yui, 1955).

This study itself may have also failed to account for the position of power between the husband who was a member of the occupying force in Japan at that time. Although some of the data used in it are somewhat useful, it did not account for the difference in social and economic power which was present in many of these relationships, which would have influenced the information given when conducting these interviews.

The study also fails to account for the power dynamic in the interviews conducted. During these interviews, the wives would be under more pressure to note that they faced fewer difficulties than they may have experienced due to the underlying power dynamics between the interviewer, interview participants, and their spouses. Later studies that yield significantly different results counteract this by the interview participant's children or children of women in similar circumstances conducting the interview, thereby reducing the difference in power between interviewer and interview participant.

The controversy surrounding the research of these first waves of War Brides to the United States from Japan is therefore somewhat controversial. Sources do not always agree upon the specific issues which caused individuals to have brief courtship periods in Japan before moving to the United States and the motivations behind individuals' marriages to Japanese servicemen are complex and multifaceted. This is only further complicated by a rapidly dwindling pool of surviving first wave Japanese War Brides pushing the research of this period further into the field of history.

The circumstances which led to such as a large number of American servicemen in Japan after the war also played into the power differential between Americans and Japanese at this time. After WWII, the United States drafted and implemented a new constitution for Japan, forbidding them from creating an army for offensive purposes. Though the Japanese Self Defense Force would be later bolstered by American equipment, the United States appointed itself as the new military protectors of Japan. This was not the only reason that the United States stationed soldiers in Japan. As was the case with Europe, the United States funneled resources towards rebuilding the devastated country.

During the approximately 4-year deployment of these first soldiers stationed in Japan that Japanese women and American servicemen began to marry and return to the United States in large numbers. (Schnepp and Yui 1955).

Though there were an enormous number of marriages which arose between Japanese women and American men during this time, the exact number is somewhat unclear. The number of War Brides varies drastically based on the period being considered and whether an individual was truly considered a war bride, something which I will illustrate was contentious and often denied. The number of Japanese War Brides varies greatly pending the date in which the study was conducted. For the case of this study, however, it is not the precise number of War Brides entering the country which is significant, so much as they were enough in number to affect public perception and cause the introduction of legislation. According to a 1954 study conducted by Anselm L. Strauss however, "Between June 22, 1947, and December 31, 1952, 10,517 American citizens, principally Armed Service Personnel, married Japanese women" (Strauss 1954, 99). This was a significant issue at the time due to the Immigration act of 1924, also known as the Asian Exclusion Act. This law was enacted as a reaction to increased Asian immigration and fear of these new immigrants. It set in place a series of quotas that limited the number of individuals able to enter the United States from a variety of countries including, most pertinently, Japan.

For Japanese War Brides, the Immigration Exclusion Act of 1924 was waived for couples who could prove that the husband could, in the terms used at the time, support his foreign bride. This was another important turning point for the societal acceptance of mixed-heritage relationship and the subsequent effect that this acceptance had on identity modification in the United States. Whereas legislation against these individuals' immigration existed and prejudice

was still commonplace, certain legal concessions were begrudgingly passed in their favor. As WWII became more distant and these relationships continued to increase in number, so too did social trends shift from tolerance to acceptance and later pride, each of which will become evident in the couples interviewed.

The exceptions granted by the government to these mixed-heritage couples were designed to address the sudden number of War Brides who were attempting to enter the United States during the occupation and rebuilding efforts in Japan. Legislation from this short period immediately following the war was not meant to be permanent. Another example of this is an act that the United States Congress passed called the War Brides Act of 1945. This act created an exception to the previously established quota system. This new system allowed alien spouses, children, and adopted children of U.S. soldiers to enter the United States despite the requirements of the quota system. The War Brides act continued to allow alien spouses to enter the United States in this manner until it was replaced in 1952 by the McCarran-Walter Act which officially ended the racial determination of the quota system. This did not, however, repeal the quota system. Rather, it simply modified the quota system which revolved upon nationality rather than race.

Despite these changes in legislation, the experiences of War Brides entering into the United States from Japan was far from totally positive as they often found that the reception they faced from Americans was far from warm. Notably, many but not all individuals faced struggles such as language comprehension, negative American attitudes towards race further enflamed by WWII, and marital issues stemming from personal conflicts and the stress from the aforementioned struggles. In fact, these struggles continued to be common themes in the series of interviews that I conducted with Japanese women who entered the United States during the 1960s

and 1970s. As result, these new immigrants entered the United States would be confronted with language barriers, a populace which oftentimes still viewed them as the enemy, racial prejudice, and discrimination as a result of their mixed-heritage marriages before even stepping foot in their new homes.

These women also struggled with the issue of citizenship. After WWII, the United States attempted “deport” as many Japanese-Americans and Japanese living in the United States to Japan. This meant that even while the government was attempting to send anyone of Japanese ancestry away from the United States, there was a wave of new Japanese immigrants attempting to enter the country. Though the legislation previously discussed allowed these individuals to immigrate, they were not granted automatic citizenship when marrying an American. Furthermore, many would be unable to become naturalized citizens in the United States until the passing of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, meaning that their ability to remain in the United States was tied to their husband to some degree. Even after the implementation of this act, they received no support from the government on cultural issues or language training in their daily life (Duncan, 2015). This put these women at a disadvantage to other immigrants who had either been living in the United States for some time, but also meant that they faced constant risk of being deported. Based upon Duncan’s (2015) description of this situation, it is entirely likely that Japanese War Brides, especially those with children, faced an unspoken fear.

Being in a position of reduced power in the United States, a country in which many did not feel confident in speaking the language and whose culture was mostly new to them, they had to rely much more upon their spouses. Even in situations in which Japanese War Brides would normally have divorced their husbands, they were far more likely to remain while still in the United States. Many of those that remained with their husbands simply lacked better options as

they lacked the resources to make their way in the United States alone and would face a similar set of struggles in returning to Japan and reintegrating there. Perhaps the greatest discouragement to returning to Japan is the children that they brought to the United States or had whilst there.

Similar to one of the fears expressed by Kana, there was a serious fear that their children would have become too American. This is one of the concerns which appears to be a shared experience between both modern and pre-WWII Japanese returnees. In a 1992 report, L.H. Kidder noted that many returnees expressed a feeling of separation from their peers when in Japan resulting from things that marked them as different such as their clothing, hairstyle, makeup, and how they spoke (Kidder, 1992).

According to Duncan (2015), many of these women stayed with their husbands in the United States specifically for the sake of their children. In some cases, this was purely for the economic capability that their husbands could afford for their children's futures, but in others, these women feared that their children had become too Americanized or had been born in the United States so knew little of the Japanese language or culture. Imholte (2015) also states that, due to this lack of linguistic ability and struggles with assimilating into American culture, many of the women felt like they were permanent outsiders no matter where they went. Therefore, Japanese War Brides of this time had to choose between passing on their Japanese cultural identity to their children or choosing to raise them as solely American and give up passing one key aspect of their identity. This conflict is one which exists throughout both periods examined in this study. As the decisions of these parents and the parents of the 1950s and 1960s will illustrate, the decision they made was often to give up passing on their cultural identity to ensure their children were better adapted to living in the United States. As time progresses from WWII and the contexts of international relations and cultural and racial attitudes change, so too

does this key feature of identity formation. The interviews that I have conducted indicate that in the region studied, individuals no longer feel the need to choose between their Japanese and American cultural identities. Rather, interviewees such as Haru and Kana feel that they are some of both.

The level of societal acceptance of Japanese culture in the United States also actively discouraged Japanese individuals from viewing their cultural heritage in a positive light. With pressure from mainstream American culture pushing for them to abandon their Japanese cultural heritage in favor of the surrounding American culture, many felt trapped between the two. This was only further exacerbated through the aforementioned historical precedent, actions, and societal views which discouraged the intermingling of Japanese and Americans.

Even amongst Japanese American communities, Japanese War Brides rarely found a sense of community. Just as “mainstream” American culture viewed these women as outsiders and often refused to accept them, so too did Japanese-American communities. Japanese-Americans and Japanese immigrants alike had been interned during WWII and were only just returning to life outside the camps when some of the first War Brides began arriving in the States. Many felt that the war had been the fault of these Japanese-born immigrants or that they hadn’t suffered in the camps as they had. Furthermore, many of the women faced stigma within the previously established Japanese American communities, who viewed them as being former prostitutes (Crawford *et al*, 2010). This left Japanese War Brides almost completely isolated no matter where they turned in the United States. Their husband’s families often treated them as domestic help rather than as full family members, seeing them as not being proper or real wives, the local community treated them with suspicion, viewing them as likely spies or cultural disruptors, and the Japanese-American community, still reeling from its suffering, rejected them

outright (Crawford et al., 2010). Again, this distinguishes the experiences of interviewees who lived at times later. Individuals at this time when there was far less acceptance in the United States were now unable to express their own cultural identity which they developed in their native country and if they tried to adopt the cultural identity of the Americans in the communities around them, they would rapidly find themselves to be rejected outright.

Due to these struggles, there were many Japanese War Brides who chose to divorce their husbands and, in some cases, return to Japan. Due to the obstacles, they faced in this process, as many as one in one-third of the total War Brides across all countries of origin would seek and attain divorce within the first year of their marriage (Duncan 2015). This, however, was not an escape for these women. In Japan, they often faced rejection from their families and former communities. Were they to return, they were viewed with suspicion and derision by their former Japanese communities, in many cases to the same or greater extent than they felt in the United States. In Japan they were initially often viewed as traitors, cavorting with the barbarian enemy (Zeiger 2010).

Due to struggles of isolation, cultural rejection, and lack of language mastery, the Japanese War Brides of the post-war era in the United States and Japan faced some of the most significant struggles of all Japanese-American mixed-heritage couples. This is not to say that the struggles faced by these women were unique across all Japanese-American relationships. Some of the same issues such as permanent categorization as an “other” and isolation because of language mastery are common themes that reoccur throughout the history of these types of marriage.

### CHAPTER III: POST-WAR RELATIONSHIPS

Following the Arrival of Japanese War Bride to the United States, Japanese and Americans began to perceive one another and the relationships between themselves differently. Post-war relations between Japan and the United States began to shift more cordially in part due to the reconstruction efforts in Japan. This time, concurrent with the Japanese War Brides who first began leaving Japan, was characterized by a distinct inequity between the United States and Japan due to the dominant political and economic position of the United States. This was also mirrored in the marriages of War Brides during this time. As the interviews conducted for this study will illustrate, women in these relationships felt the need to make concessions in situations such as raising their children and how they viewed themselves to better appease the Americans around them. This is not to say that they were without agency or simply accepted this inequity. Rather, each of these interviews illustrates that despite the pressures from the people and society around them, these women took actions to maintain their cultural identity and pass it on to their children.

As the political relationship between Japan and the United States continued to become more equal as time progressed from the end of WWII, so too did the power dynamics in the personal relationships between Japanese interviewees, their American husbands, and the society in which they lived at that time. By the 1970s, Japan had developed into one of the world's largest economies and was recognized as a new economic juggernaut. With this massive boon, Japan began exporting huge quantities of goods to the United States and began tailoring specific goods for international markets. In addition, Japanese students began visiting the United States to study English and attend American Universities. This expansion of English study was also present in Japan as new programs were instituted for foreign English-language speakers to begin

teaching English in Japan as well (LaFeber 1997). This exchange of information illustrates a clear shift from earlier pre-war periods in which there were far more Japanese traveling to the United States for their education than the relatively few Americans traveling to Japan to learn. By the 1980s, Japan entered into another period of exportation, but in this case, the goods exported were accompanied by Japanese culture in the form of animated media, movies, comics, and video games. This marked the beginning of Japan's association with "cool culture" and granted the Japanese a large degree of cultural power as a result, furthering the more equitable exchange of goods and culture between the two nations (Yano, 2013). Even after the widespread recessions worldwide and in Japan as a result of the 1990's housing bubble crash, Japan has remained a major cultural influencer and economic powerhouse despite its economic recession (LaFeber 1997).

This shift in economic prosperity and positioning in international relations also resulted in social attitudes shifting between Japanese and Americans. Americans began to view the Japanese in the United States far differently than they had before WWII. Perception of Japan and therefore Japanese and Japanese-Americans began to shift from defeated enemy to economic powerhouse, and finally to a more equal partner in which a person of Japanese ancestry would be benefited from their cultural heritage in some situations. These interviews indicate that as this level of social acceptance increased, there was a shift in an individual's identity from that of trying to appear American towards trying to appear both American and Japanese. Since the post-war period, the term "War Bride" has also begun to be utilized less frequently. Instead, these individuals are studied more as members of a mixed heritage marriage, another key shift in identity.

I had the opportunity to meet and interview individuals who were part of this movement of mixed-heritage marriages and, by utilizing the detailed snapshot of their experiences provide, I can study the role the socio-political context and attitudes towards both these couples and perceived foreigners as a whole affect how these individuals view themselves in relation to the people around them, their family, and their cultural heritage.

## CHAPTER IV: FROM THE 1970s TOWARDS THE PRESENT

The 1970s were the first decade in which I was able to gather data by conducting interviews. These interviews provided by far the most detailed perspective of the change in cultural identity in these individuals. In each of these interviews, the aforementioned socio-political contexts can be seen influencing each interview participant's shift in cultural identity. The recurring trends in the treatment of these relationships by family and society at large leads to clear changes in how participants view themselves in relation to their family in Japan and the United States, their children, and to both Japanese and American cultures. While these interviews also illustrate commonalities with pre-war Japanese immigrants in some areas such as religion, family, state, and societal opinions there is a clear separation between themselves and the individuals from Japan who entered the United States prior to WWII. As time progresses, the fading of the pre-war and wartime socio-political context and beliefs on the part of Japanese and Americans resulted in entirely different outcomes in the development of these individuals' personal and cultural identities. As these individuals adapted their lifestyle to better function in a place which could be over 6,000 miles away from their country of origin (the approximate distance between the Midwest and Japan), so too did their perspective of home, relations, and culture shift.

### **Midori Brown**

Chronologically, Midori Brown was the first interview participant to marry and enter the United States and is an excellent example to illustrate the prevailing attitudes which were present at the beginning of the post-war period. She was born on a small island near Okinawa in 1942 and as a result, her family like many Okinawans suffered greatly due to both the wartime scarcities of food and other key commodities in Japan and as a result of the American invasion of the islands.

When the United States invaded the islands of Okinawa, many families committed suicide rather than suffer the atrocities which the Americans were reported to commit. While certainly fueled by wartime propaganda, this terror towards the prospect of an American invasion built upon pre-war attitudes of westerners being uncivilized barbarians or even monsters. Midori Brown's family was amongst these families who planned to escape through suicide upon the American's landings in Okinawa but were saved by a malfunction in the grenade they planned to use. This dedication was strongly present in the community from which she originated in Okinawa. Because of this and the traumatic experiences that many Okinawans suffered during the invasion, there was a significant backlash towards Midori's decision to marry an American man after the war. Many criticized her for marrying someone from an "enemy country," feeling that she had betrayed her country and become a traitor, especially when so many had chosen to die rather than meet with American soldiers. While facing this backlash in the community however, Midori did not face a similar backlash from her own family.

Before her marriage, she had asked her parents for permission to marry the American man she had been seeing. She described that, while her parents had not been happy, they were more accepting of the marriage than most. Midori explained that since her parents were struggling to support their family financially, they saw it as one less mouth to feed and approved of the marriage as a result.

It is also important to note the economic context of this time. During WWII, Okinawa was one of the poorest regions of Japan. During this time Midori grew up very poor as the youngest of five daughters. As a result of this, she spent most of her young life on the same island on which she was born. There was also a general feeling in Japan at that time that Okinawans were not completely Japanese as they had been a fully independent and separate

culture until their forced vassalization in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, again highlighting the distaste for foreigners amongst Japanese during the pre-war period. Because of this, Okinawans were generally looked down upon and viewed in a negative light. Her husband's two brothers had married women from the Japanese Mainland and, while one of them got along well with her, the other generally disliked her and looked down upon her as a direct result of her being from a poor part of Okinawa. This confirms that the pressures forcing War Brides from Japanese communities and American communities were still strong during the 1970s but not monolithic. More importantly, this provides the opportunity to examine the experiences of some War Brides from the 1970s because, as Zeiger (2010) discussed previously, many War Brides were of lower socio-economic groups.

During the interviews I had with her, it became apparent that a major part of Midori's cultural identity is the fact that she sees herself as a War Bride. Although she suffered for her choice to marry an American and faced great hardships when coming to the United States with her husband, she remains proud of this part of her identity. Significantly, the first manner in which she expressed her feelings of cultural identity was not as Japanese or American, but rather as both. As War Brides were rejected by other groups with shared cultural heritages such as Japanese groups in the United States and even Japanese immigrants of higher socioeconomic status, Midori and a group of other War Brides built a cultural identity around the shared experience of being a War Bride. This support group of War Brides which covers much of Illinois and some of Indiana and is made up of approximately 80 War Brides and their families. Much like other interview participants, this illustrates a cultural identity defined not by nationality, but rather shared experiences.

The same socio-economic inequities and rejection by Japanese communities also resulted in an increased degree of assimilation amongst interview participants who were entering the United States closer to WWII. In Midori's case, this was best expressed through how she raised her children. When visiting Midori, much of her home was decorated with parts of her life in Okinawa which she was able to bring with her due to her husband's military service and the large-item shipping it provided. There was a Buddhist altar in her living room, a large Okinawan carving above the sofa, and many newspapers and documents in Japanese. Despite these physical cultural artifacts, however, Midori's children are thoroughly assimilated in American culture and view themselves as Americans alone. Midori has two children, one son, and one daughter. They are both adults and retain none of their Okinawan or Japanese heritage. Midori expressed that she felt that her children would thrive better in the United States if they were fully assimilated into American culture. To facilitate this, she intentionally sought to suppress both her and her children's heritage in favor of the more present American culture. This meant that they ate primarily American food in the home, spoke exclusively English, and even adopted her husband's western name (something which has become less common as of 2020). Her efforts were successful and her children know very little about their cultural heritage. Her daughter expressed some interest in learning about her mother's heritage and showed at least a passing desire to visit Japan. Her son on the other hand represents a much stronger attitude. When asked whether he would be interested in participating in an interview, his mother and sister both felt that he would not be likely to accept. This was because, as they explained, he had completely rejected being Japanese and wouldn't talk about it with anyone else. If nothing else, this illustrates that due to the existing social, political, and economic inequality present in these early relationships, there was significant pressure upon these women to assimilate into American culture rather than seek out other Japanese-American communities such as those before WWII.

This, however, was not always the result. Not only did Midori find group membership in a group of War Brides with shared experiences, but she also continued to practice her religion which she brought from Japan. When she came to the United States, she gave up many things such as her Japanese citizenship, proximity to her family in Okinawa, and even most Japanese traditions. One aspect of pre-marital life which she retained, however, is her religion. Although her husband wanted her to abandon her religion when they moved to the United States, Midori chose to continue following her faith. Midori is a member of a Buddhist sect known as Soka Gakkai. She not only follows its teaching but is also an active member of the Soka Gakkai community and support group. Because of this group, her sense of community and companionship was expanded when she came to the United States and has had support from a group of people who care about her ever since. Soka Gakkai, like her status as a War Bride, serves as both a part of her social, religious, and cultural identity.

### **Kiki Osborne**

Kiki Osborne was the second interview participant to enter the United States and is also a self-described War Bride. Whereas Midori was from a very rural region of Okinawa, Kiki was from an industrial prefecture between Tokyo and Osaka called Aichi. Kiki was a college-educated and had traveled abroad to Ireland and other parts of Europe before graduating with a degree in English. During the 1980's she worked for an agency that hired her as a translator and tour guide for other companies' English speaking workers that were collaborating with big Japanese companies such as Mitsubishi and Toyota. This is a clear departure from the situation of earlier War Brides.

By the 1980s War Brides do not necessarily come from devastated areas of Japan. Instead, the trend of newly-constructed or reconstructed Japanese industry serves to lessen the economic gap between some Japanese women marrying American men during this time. This change also becomes apparent in the experiences which Kiki described in her relationships.

Kiki married her first husband in 1979. He was an American man who spoke Japanese and worked in Japan. Kiki expressed that his desire to remain in Japan was a great relief in their relationship because she had no desire to live in the United States. Despite this, they moved to the United States after five years of marriage due to her husband's job. This meant giving up her well-paying job in Japan and moving to San Francisco. Unfortunately, she and her husband divorced one year later.

During the time after her first marriage, Kiki said that she felt she was more likely to marry a white man again because she preferred how Western men treated women. She developed this view during her trip abroad to Ireland in college, causing her to be less accepting of Japanese men. This opinion, however, is not one which has endured through the present as more recently interviewed individuals have not expressed or even agreed with it. Whereas this opinion did not continue, there does seem to be a trend of Japanese women marrying non-Japanese men more frequently than Japanese men marrying non-Japanese women. In the United States, a 1979 population survey conducted in Los Angeles County illustrates this rate of out-group marriage quite clearly. This survey examined the percentage of out-marriage from Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans. It found that 36.9% of Japanese-born women living in Los Angeles County married non-Japanese individuals while only 25.1% of Japanese men living in the same location married non-Japanese individuals, an 11.8% difference. Conversely, of the Japanese-descendant women born in the United States married outgroup men 61.5% of the time, and Japanese-descendant men born in the United States married outgroup individuals 73.1% of the time. This clear 11.6%

difference in conjunction with Kiki's explanation illustrates that the way War Brides viewed themselves in relation to Japanese and western men had begun to shift (Kitano, 1984).

This also became more easily achieved due to the wider political context in relation to the increased marital freedom and continued relaxing of anti-miscegenation laws during this time (Kitano 1984, 189). Similarly, marriages in Hawaii between Japanese and white Americans were also shown to increase between 1970 and 1980. In 1970, only 17% of Japanese living in Hawaii were found to marry euro-American individuals. By 1975, this had increased to 21% and by 1980, had again become 22%. While this may seem a statistically insignificant number, that is not the case. This 1% increase over 5 years was at a time when marriages between Chinese and Euro-Americans had decreased from 27% to 25% and Korean-euro-American marriages had decreased from 38% to 34% (Kitano 1984, 183). This seems to illustrate a shift in opinion amongst both Japanese born individuals living in the United States and Japanese-Americans living there, illustrating a wider trend in societal acceptance amongst groups such as Japanese-Americans marrying out-group members.

Kiki remarried in 1988 to another man who she met at her job. Unlike her first husband, he was not bilingual and they could communicate only in English. Kiki's second husband was an employee of an American company conducting business in Japan and had hired Kiki to be their translating guide for their business trip. Later that year, they became engaged in Japan and got married in America. Despite her previous view of not wanting to live in America, she and her husband moved to America after they got engaged. Since her husband couldn't fluently speak Japanese, he couldn't maintain a job in Japan.

On the other hand, Kiki felt it would be to get a job within America with her bachelor's degree in English allowing her to English semi-fluently. After marrying, they lived in a small city for a time before relocating to a sparsely populated farming town in 1989. During her time in America, Kiki and her husband took multiple trips to Japan so Kiki, her husband, and their son can visit her family.

Kiki struggled to adapt to living in a small town in the United States, having previously lived only in more urban areas. Despite being surrounded by people she described as a loving family, it took Kiki five years before she felt as if she were truly at home. This is because, due to the small population, there was a very little Japanese or Asian population. Kiki felt disconnected from her surroundings because her peers were predominantly white and didn't share the same attitude towards societal rules that she and other Asians felt within America. For instance, Kiki felt that she and many other Asians in America were very relaxed when it came to the religious choices of others, but found that Americans were sterner and more judgmental when others' religious views and choices don't match up with their own. She also found many American opinions towards religion interesting when compared to Japanese values. For example, she noted that in Japan there were few religious facilities that catered to teaching children unlike America, where religious Saturday schools are the norm in many communities. Despite this disconnection from other Euro-Americans, Kiki still had many close and welcoming relationships with friends that she cared for and that cared for her.

Kiki's occupational downgrade in moving from Japan to the United States also provided a source of pressure for her to assimilate into American culture. Whereas Kiki was making \$200 an hour as a translator in Japan, she only made \$5 an hour as a translator/tour guide in America. She felt that she had to start from scratch while other Americans on the same intellectual level as her were already working with a higher pay grade and social status. As a result, there was still a

degree of inequality in her relationship with the Americans surrounding her. Not only did she hold a position of less power economically, but she also needed to accept American education standards and linguistic norms to be on a more equal footing.

In 2015 Kiki became a naturalized American citizen and gave up her Japanese citizenship. Kiki, despite giving up a part of her connection to Japan, decided to keep her maiden name due to her pride in her heritage. Oftentimes though, Kiki introduced herself with her husband's surname, Osborne. When an informant initially met Kiki, it was at an American-style cookout and with an introduction using her husband's surname. It was not until the informant came to know her much closer that she became more comfortable with sharing her Japanese heritage. This indicates that even into the 1980s, there was still a clear pressure for these women to conceal their Japanese heritage and appear as "American" as possible. Perhaps one explanation for this can be found in the reaction of Kiki's family to her marriages. Kiki's parents were furious that she chose to marry foreigners. Kiki's mother was also upset that, since Kiki was marrying a foreigner, she would be leaving Japan eventually to live with her husband. That being said, her father held a neutral stance regarding her marriage, and her sister supported her choice.

For six years during her first marriage, she had no contact with her family despite living in Japan for much of that time. This however began to change during her second marriage when she started to get into contact with her family via her sister and email. Her outlook on family relations changed after she saw how caring and attached her second husband's family was to her husband, her, and other members of their family. This represents a weakening in the pre-war attitudes towards marrying in foreigners but not a complete relinquishment of it.

A similar theme of Japanese cultural identity becoming more acceptable amongst most Americans similarly began to grow during the 1980s. Although Kiki did not have any biological children with her first or second husband, she and her second husband adopted a Peruvian Baby. The baby was a boy whom they named Chuck. Kiki wanted a child that was neither Asian nor white because she didn't want herself or her child to feel even more ostracized for being a different ethnicity from the majority that was white. She also chose to adopt a baby specifically from Peru because one of her friends thought she looked Peruvian.

Kiki expressed that she and her husband had little difficulty raising Chuck within their community, despite the community being predominantly comprised of white individuals. She felt that because several other families in the area had adopted children who were not white, Chuck's experiences were somewhat normalized. This does indicate that Kiki did have some concerns about racial tensions living in such as small and predominantly white community.

This was also expressed in Chuck's own racial identity at a young age. With the majority of Chuck's peer being white, Chuck thought he too was white despite being told at a very young age that he was adopted. This would also seem to indicate that this community was far more accepting of non-white people than is indicated by earlier generations. More than that though, Chuck's racial identity and unique sense of cultural identity also indicates clear trends towards communities being more accepting and even supporting multicultural identities.

Despite believing himself to be white at a young age, Chuck also adopted a multicultural identity. Being multicultural was something that Chuck was very proud of and was often spoke enthusiastically about his mother, Kiki, being Japanese. He seemed to identify more as Japanese than he did as Peruvian and showed little interest in knowing about his Peruvian descent. Kiki often spoke to him in Japanese when he was a small child. And although he didn't want to attend Japanese Saturday school as a child, he was very interested in learning about Japan and wanted

to visit Japan with Kiki as much as he could. Kiki and her husband integrated both Japanese and American cultural aspects into Chuck's life by the food that he ate. But other than food, most of Chuck's environment was heavily based on American culture. Because of this, the 1980s in this region seem to illustrate acceptability or even pride in Japanese heritage. Because there is less rejection on the part of the surrounding American communities, Japanese women and their descendants became safer in sharing their Japanese heritage. While individuals still assimilate into the culture of the Americans around them, they are also able to retain parts of their cultural identity in more public circumstances.

### **Haru and William Johnson**

William is a professor of Japanese language and Literature and Haru is a Japanese language instructor at the same university. Haru came to the United States in 1984 after marrying William. They originally met through a mutual friend in Japan when William was completing his degree in Japanese Literature. When they decided to marry one another, Haru did not at first explain to her parents who she was marrying. During the interview, Haru explained that at the time, it was still very uncommon for Japanese women to marry American men. This, like earlier interviews, illustrates that there was still a stigma surrounding the decision to marry a foreigner. Their experience in the mid-1980s however, is not identical to those previously examined. Whereas Kiki's family wholly rejected her choice of partner, this was not the case for Haru. When she did decide to introduce her parents to William, her family was instead supportive of her decision. This is an enormous departure from the attitudes of parents in earlier times such as Midori's family who accepted it out of economic necessity and Kiki's family who ousted her for her choice in partner. This trend towards greater acceptance from family in Japan and communities in the United States continues to progress as these interview participants enter the United States further and further after WWII.

Further, the individuals most likely to express negative attitudes towards these relationships are frequently from older generations who were more exposed to pre-war racial and cultural attitudes.

William's parents, like Haru's, were not displeased when they were informed that he was planning to marry a Japanese woman. His parents were quite happy for him as they had wanted him to get married for some time. The only exception to this general feeling of acceptance and happiness was William's great aunt. Before leaving for Japan, his aunt had encouraged him not to marry a Japanese woman because he should marry someone "of his own kind". Again, this is a departure from previous instances. Whereas William's aunt expressed displeasure in this marriage, it seems that it was less influenced by anti-Japanese sentiment originating during WWII, but rather out of continued racial prejudices present in the United States. These progressions forward from WWII and the changing socio-political climate during the 1980s can be seen to affect the way these couples view themselves in relation to Americans and Japanese.

In 1984, William and Haru married in the United States. They lived with William's parents for a brief time before moving to Indiana for six years while he finished graduate school. After he graduated from graduate school that they moved for a final time to their permanent residence in Illinois. Haru felt that the decision to leave her home in Japan was an obvious one as William had a job in the United States, making it more advantageous to live there than in Japan. This reflects a trend that was developed in the first three interviews and which begins to change in the next with Kana and Dave. In each of these earlier couples, the women in the relationship gave up her career in Japan to follow their husband. In Midori's case, like many other War Brides, she gave up her job in Okinawa to follow her husband as he was stationed

throughout the United States as part of his military career. Similarly, Kiki also gave up her very well-paying job as a guide and translator in Japan to restart a career from scratch in the United States. Finally, Haru gave up her businesswoman career in Japan to come to the United States and begin a new career as a language instructor and college professor. In each of these cases, there is a trend for the woman in each relationship to give up their career and follow their husband or future husband to the United States.

Life was quite different for Haru after moving to the United States. Throughout this interview, she explained how Japanese and American cultures mixed during her time married to William. She also explained that since moving to the United States, she had observed American culture gradually adopting aspects of Japanese culture. When she first came to the United States, American adoption of Japanese culture and ideas was largely limited to martial arts and the study of Japanese business. Since then, she felt that this had expanded to Japanese food, popular culture, and other aspects of life. This is a theme reflected across all interviews conducted. With early interviews, the flow of goods and ideas seem to be very much one-directional towards Japan. Since the end of WWII however, there is a clear shift where Japanese items and culture become more and more acceptable and the trade becomes far more equitable (though not completely so).

For Haru and William, this intermixing can also be found within their home, most notably within the food they eat and how they interact with one another. At home, they eat both American and Japanese food. More common, however, they will eat a mixture of both American and Japanese food using whatever ingredients are available to them, often visiting Japanese grocers whenever the opportunity arises. Outside the area of food, the mixing of Japanese and American cultures can be found in how they communicate and interact. Since their child was

born, Haru and William have always had the rule that only Japanese can be spoken within the home. The result of this is a strong proficiency in both Japanese and English in their daughter. Finally, the mixing of Japanese and American can also be seen in how Haru views William. At one point in the interview, Haru claims that William has a Japanese mind. This illustrates that William has adopted many aspects of Japanese culture into how he behaves and thinks.

While living in the United States, Haru and William found their community with graduate students and other individuals who were a part of international and mixed-heritage marriages, many of whom were Japanese exchange students or from Japan. Even at the time of our interview, when graduate school seems like a distant memory to them, they still keep up with a few of these friends via email. This shows again a major shift in which Japanese culture and Japanese and American mixed-heritage marriages were becoming more acceptable in the United States and Japan. I argue that it was far easier in the past for individuals to completely reject their families who moved abroad after marrying a foreign spouse.

Whereas in the past, communication with these individuals was slow and oftentimes difficult, new technologies have allowed for instantaneous communications. It was far easier to ignore an individual when they would only be able to contact you via letter and the feeling of distance between one another is more apparent. With a trend towards accepting mixed-heritage marriages and improvements in communication time, there is a clear trend in the sense of abandonment becoming mitigated. In the past, individuals felt a family member choosing to move far away with their new spouse was out of reach. As technology has progressed from email to instant messaging to video calls and the price of these technologies has drastically decreased, the individuals I interviewed show a clear trend of having greater success in keeping in contact with their family and friends in Japan and have therefore been better able to maintain their

Japanese cultural identity by continuing to view themselves in relation to these individuals rather than solely those around them in the United States. After moving to the United States, Haru attempted to stay in contact with her family in Japan via letters. Over time, it became more common to use communication means such as email to keep up with her family who still lives in Japan. She and William also try to visit Japan during the summers when they can to maintain connections with relatives still living there.

In addition to their family in Japan, William and Haru also have a daughter with whom they have attempted to share both their Japanese and American heritages. A significant aspect of this is raising their daughter in a bilingual household. Even today both parents and daughter continue to speak to one another in Japanese. This combination of languages and cultures resulted in their daughter has inherited both American and Japanese heritage. This cultural heritage was also strong enough to survive even the rebellious teenage years of their daughter. One example of this rebellion occurs when William and Haru's daughter was angry about not being allowed to go to an after-prom because it was not done in Japan. Her response to this prohibition came in the form of *ここは日本じゃないのよ* (*koko wa Nihon ja-nai no yo*) or, "This is not Japan" in that context. This would seem to indicate that raising a child in the United States with significant Japanese influence still may cause some friction in and of itself. This is somewhat difficult to claim wholeheartedly though, as this example case may also have been an example of the difficulties of raising a child in any situation.

Although Haru and William's daughter can speak Japanese almost natively, she struggles with kanji and is not as proficient as native Japanese speakers or famous Bilingual figures such as Angela Aki. This imperfect transferal is further compounded in Haru and William's grandchildren who, although they are given summer lessons by their grandmother,

know only some kana and do not speak the language particularly well. Although the language has begun to fade, some parts of Japanese culture are passed down even to their grandchildren in the form of their love for *makizushi* (sushi rolls) and Japanese food.

Not all Americans were entirely supportive of William and Haru's decision to raise their child with both Japanese and American cultures in the home. One of the largest sources of prejudices that they have come across is from "monoglot anglophones", as William describes them. The people which William described claimed that everyone in the United States should speak only English and that by teaching their child to be bilingual, they were preventing them from succeeding academically. Both William and Haru disagreed with this idea strongly, pointing out that understanding two languages helps people to understand both better and further explained that the combining of language and cultures is greatly beneficial. Despite the decisions between Haru and William to raise their daughter with Japanese language and culture in the home, there is still a pressure by a significant minority of individuals in the United States who advocate for the total cultural assimilation of these individuals. Haru, William, and their daughter, therefore, represent a shift in the United States. Whereas there is still significant pressure to give up one's cultural identity when moving to the United States, there seem to be trends of acceptance for Japanese culture from spouses and society at large. As a result, there are fewer influences that push for individuals to hide their Japanese heritage, and women from this period begin to share more of their cultural heritage with their families, communities, and children.

## **Kana and Dave Smith**

Kana and Dave are a couple who represent Japanese and American mixed-heritage marriages in the 1990s. Kana is from Gunma prefecture near Tokyo and Dave is from a small city in the American Midwest. They met each other while Dave was in Japan with the JET program to teach English. At that time, he had been allowed to either take up a job with an insurance agency or travel to Japan to teach English. He decided that of these two options, he would rather spend time abroad than working for an insurance agency. At the same time, Kana was teaching Japanese and assisting the international program at Morioka University in Iwate Prefecture in the Tōhoku area. They first met each other in 1998 when Kana was teaching Japanese to JET program volunteers in Iwate Prefecture. Over time, they developed a friendship which in turn became a romantic relationship. After dating for approximately 8 months, Dave had to return to the United States for family reasons. Although Kana accompanied him, she returned to Japan to continue working on and finish her master's degree. This separation did not end their relationship and Dave and Kana stated that they dated via the internet during this time, being able to keep in touch via new communication technologies. Shortly after Kana finished her master's degree in Japan, a mutual friend had a wedding in Japan to which both Dave and Kana were invited. Dave returned to Japan for this wedding, and it was during this trip that he proposed to Kana and they decided to get married. This relatively short (in person) courtship period before marriage in many ways reflects that of some of the earlier War Brides. In both instances, however, there is a clear indication that this is more influenced by the frequent movement by their work or military service.

Informing Kana's parents of their engagement went quite well. They had previously met Dave on their trip to visit them and were familiar with him as a result. It took her father about five or ten minutes to warm up to both the idea of them getting married and Dave himself. Her mother was rather quiet after hearing the news and thought about it for about twenty minutes. In the end, they were both surprised but supportive of their daughter's engagement.

After getting married and honeymooning in 2000 in Hawaii due to its equidistance between family in the United States and Japan, Dave and Kana decided to move to the United States. There were several reasons for this decision to move to the United States. Dave had a job and wanted to be nearer to his family there and Kana also wanted to move to the United States as she could teach Japanese anywhere and wanted to do something outside of Japan.

In the United States, Kana and her husband faced several obstacles. Kana had been to North America three times previously. The first time had been to Canada with a friend in college to improve her English. The second time she came to the U.S. to again learn English in Tacoma, Washington for a month when she was twenty-three years old. Finally, she had been to Oklahoma for four weeks with a rotary club in 1995. On this last trip, she had stayed with 15 host families and spent her time visiting schools throughout the trip. Despite these previous trips, Kana was not fully prepared for the reality of living in the United States. She struggled with feeling helpless while Dave was at work because she felt her English wasn't very good. In addition, she faced feelings of loneliness and separation from her friends and family in Japan. Specifically, she felt a great deal of worry when the March 11<sup>th</sup> earthquake and tsunami struck Japan in 2011 and she was unable to communicate with her friends who lived in the Tōhoku area. The second bout of this loneliness occurred when her father died and she was unable to be with him during his last moments.

The 9/11 attacks sparked a new wave of struggles for Kana and Dave. They expressed that following 9/11 there was a huge spike in anti-immigrant status. They mentioned that there was a massive spike in the already complicated immigration process in which they were already engaged. They noted that the struggles that they faced in entering the country permanently were thrown into a state which draws clear lines to the earlier difficulties of the post-War-Bride period.

Kana, however, overcame all of these struggles. To combat her feelings of isolation and helplessness, she took English classes and started driving lessons. As time progressed, she began to reach out to other “transplants” living in Illinois and strove to help the children of these transplants. This usually involved utilizing her teaching experience for language lessons and even included things such as accompanying children to their high school classes in which they were struggling.

Kana also found membership in the community surrounding her through participation in the church. Following the March 11 earthquake and tsunami, Kana worked together with members of her church and community to gather money and purchase board games to children who were victims of the destruction in Japan. During this time, she and her husband began to use social media to contact their friends and family in Japan who may have been victims of the tragedy.

The church community and her husband also came to her aid after the death of her father. Although she felt a great deal of guilt because she had not been with him when he passed away, she was able to deal with this loss through a combination of following the Japanese Shinto religion which she practiced in Japan, and support from the local Christian church community.

The final difficulty relevant to this research which Kana dealt with since marrying Dave and moving to the U.S. is a conflict of identity. She explained that she felt that she is no longer fully Japanese nor fully American. In the words of her husband, they have both become a sort of third culture which is a combination of both American and Japanese cultures. Although she maintains part of her Japanese cultural identity, she often worries that when returning to Japan, she may forget some manners or other important behavior.

Kana and Dave's children exemplify the combination of Japanese and American culture. Dave and Kana have two boys, one fourteen years old and the other twelve at the time of my interview with them. Multicultural heritage is not as strong in Kana and Dave's children as it may be in the children of other multicultural couples like Haru and William. They are more Americanized and, although they enjoy Japanese foods such as *natto* (fermented soybeans), *onigiri* (rice balls), and *mochi* (rice cake), they do not possess Japanese language skills. Part of this drift away from Japanese culture may have been a result of Kana's desire to integrate into American society and join social groups. Kana stated that this may have sent a subconscious message to her children that they should do the same. Because of this, their Japanese language is weaker and used only to speak about things which they would not otherwise discuss in public such as needing to go to the bathroom.

Their ties to their mother's culture however, are not severed. They have begun to show an increased interest in Japanese culture and language. When interviewed, their fourteen-year-old son was enrolled in Spanish and had begun to develop an appreciation for knowing a second and even third language. At the same time, the younger son has begun to show an interest in Japanese language and food. He often tries to engage other Japanese people in conversation to learn more Japanese and has begun to share Japanese candy and lunch at school.

## CHAPTER V: OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

Throughout this research, I have explained the attitudes which are present in Japan towards these mixed-heritage relationships. As I have described, the attitudes between parents in these mixed-heritage couples have ranged from happy and supporting as was the case with Kana and Dave Smith, to complete rejection as was the case with Midori Brown. To better understand these attitudes, I conducted interviews in Japan with mixed-heritage Japanese and American couples living there. As this research primarily focuses upon mixed-heritage couples living in the United States, I chose to focus primarily upon one particular interview which drew some interesting parallels between Japanese and American mixed- heritage relationships in the United States.

### **Tony Johnson and Mai Ueda**

Tony and Mai are a couple who are currently living in Japan and are also the youngest couple interviewed. At the time of the interview, they were not yet married. Since then, however, they have begun to go through the process of getting married in the United States and Japan.

Tony is from the same part of central Illinois as the other couples interviewed and Mai Ueda is from Shizuoka, Japan, where they currently live together. Tony and Mai both have higher educations, and they do not feel many of the stigmas that were attached to earlier couples, where the woman was seen in Japan as coming from the lower economic classes. Mai went to a vocational school and completed the necessary certification process to work as a dental hygienist, the profession in which she is currently working, and Tony is an English teacher working for the school board in the Shizuoka area.

Tony first came to Japan for graduate school. This differs greatly from earlier pre-WWII relations in which the flow of students went from Japan to the United States. Dave was initially in the country for around a year to finish his master's degree in Japan, but he quickly realized that one year was not going to be enough to experience everything he wanted to in Japan. He, therefore, sought out and found a more long-term job as an English teacher.

As was the case with nearly all interview participants, the relationship partner who was from outside the country struggled greatly with a new language. Despite Tony's completion of all Japanese language courses at his university in the United States and participation in an independent study wherein he translated books to and from Japanese and English, he still described that he struggles to communicate at times and it took a great deal of time to adjust to more subtle communication strategies employed in Japan. Before our meeting, Tony had thought he had described their plans on getting to the restaurant in which it was being held, but there was a communication breakdown on whether they would come to the interview together or if they would both find their way. This resulted in Tony needing to backtrack to meet again to travel together. Tony, perhaps somewhat modestly, explained that situations like this and daily communication are not so much a case of him speaking fluent Japanese, but according to Tony rather Mai began to understand his "bad (*warui*) Japanese" This is not the extent of language struggles however, as Mai also struggled somewhat communicating with other English speakers. In their daily lives, this causes some degree of confusion as illustrated by their meeting for an interview. In this particular instance, Tony explained again that while the words he may have used were correct to some degree, he failed to understand and apply the correct nuances to indicate that they would both be arriving together rather than separately.

This communication barrier is more significantly a concern for both Mai and Tony in relation to family and friends. Mai expressed that one of her greatest difficulties was when she speaks with Tony's English-speaking family from central Illinois. She had a strong desire to speak with her partner's family but was often unable to do so due to her language proficiency. Seeing this difficulty has also stoked a fear with Tony over communication between the family which he hopes to have someday. He not only feared that he may be unable to communicate as effectively with his children, but also worries that someday his children will not be able to communicate with their grandparents and family in the United States. This fear was also shared by Kana and Doug and may be one of the factors in Haru and Williams decision to raise their daughter in a bilingual household. It also illustrates that the growth of instant messaging, emailing, and other technologies allow for near-instant communication around the globe, which has led to increased importance on being able to communicate with families abroad. With earlier couples like William and Haru, the concern with raising their children to speak the Japanese language and understand Japanese culture revolved around their connection with their mother. Whereas this is still the case with Tony wanting his children to speak English, couples such as Tony and Mai or Kana and Doug also have an added concern of family abroad. As communication becomes more instantaneous and connections with family abroad become easier to maintain, these couples feel a stronger desire to maintain their own linguistic and cultural heritage through their children so that they can better connect with their families who otherwise would have been far more distant in previous generations.

As with all couples, there was also a desire to seek out a community in which the member from outside of the country could participate. Rather than finding a community of Americans though, Tony instead found a community that existed in a similar form in the United States. One of Tony's hobbies is participating in Kendo and upon arriving in Japan, he sought out and joined a kendo group in the Shizuoka area. This community membership was slow at first. Initially, he began simply wanting to attend kendo. As he continued to participate through and move up the hierarchy of kendo levels, he found that was asked to take on more responsibility. He described that he was surprised that he eventually found himself to be teaching Kendo to Japanese students in Japan using the Japanese language skills he had developed. Despite this though, there seems to be some lingering doubts as he described himself as always apologizing and that he didn't mean to step on anyone's toes as he is still learning how to behave in some ways. What he viewed as mistakes though are somewhat mitigated by his acceptance into the community as more often than not, he received responses such as "ok, just do it right the next time."

As is illustrated throughout these interviews, there was initially some concern and resistance from older generations in Japan with Tony and Mai's relationship. As was the case with William and Haru's aunt and Kiki's parents, there was some resistance from Mai's grandparents whose perspectives were still strongly influenced by the wartime historical context in relation to Americans. Mai even noted that the reason for this was not a case of concern about her moving away to the United States, but rather their preconceptions about Americans. This was not a permanent fixture in their relationship though as Tony was eventually able to change their opinion, explaining that Mai was their precious granddaughter and after seeing that Tony treats her right, became more accepting.

Mai and Tony's respective parents were also more accepting of the relationship. Tony's parents were more accepting of it as they had already come to terms with their son living in another country. Mai's parents, while being initially concerned with the possibility of her moving to the United States, were accepting and relieved when they discovered that Tony and Mai were unwilling to move to the United States due to the hard work which Mai had put into her vocational school and job and Tony's desire to remain in Japan.

Finally, unlike earlier periods in which couples were viewed by researchers as members of specific cultures, Tony and Mai seem to not share a similar perception. When asked if any difficulties arise from Tony being American and Mai being Japanese, they replied that they don't have any more different expectations for the other partner than they would have for any non-Japanese or non-American. This indicates that they minimize the differences being cultural and view them more as being personal ones which, so long as they communicate about them, can be overcome.

## CHAPTER VI: ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

### Context and Acceptance

Through this research, I was able to confirm that historical context has a significant role in not only the experiences of each couple but also that it in part governs the societal acceptance of these individuals and their relationships. One of the principles dividing lines in history for these couples was that of WWII. Prior to WWII, there was a great deal of animosity between people living in the United States and those living in Japan. In Japan, the examples such as the *Nurarihyon*, a mythical creature which was a stylized portrayal of a westerner which came into the homes of Japanese and used their position as a guest to consume and destroy, illustrate these attitudes. This was further compounded by the interactions between Japanese and foreigners after contact was made. Even the forced opening of Japan to the west by the United States sparked a civil war which resulted in the toppling of the Tokugawa government. In the United States, there were anti-miscegenation and immigration laws that illustrated a clear desire to on the part of the American public to expel individuals from Japan or keep them from attaining an equal legal status. These forms of discrimination and animosity illustrate a distinct phase of Japanese and American relations and, as a result, produced Japanese communities that relied upon one another and created communities of Japanese immigrants and Japanese descendants separated from “mainstream” Americans at this time.

The shattering of these Japanese communities as a result of their imprisonment during WWII resulted in a clear divide between people of Japanese descent who lived in the United States during the war and those who entered the United States after the war as War Brides and mixed-heritage marriages. This division based upon the drastically different circumstances before and after the war caused many War Brides to be rejected by what communities previously existed and created entire new criteria for community and identity creation.

In the case of each interview participant, community membership is not found in being Japanese or American, but rather a member of a group who has similar shared experiences. Unlike the Japanese immigrant and descendant communities that existed before WWII, these couples each found completely different communities in which to participate. Midori found her community in followers of her faith of Soka Gakkia. Haru and William expressed their experiences in finding community with other graduate students and international students and likewise, Dave and Kana found community in their Christian church whereas their children made connections with other international students, feeling that they shared a similar experience in their mixed-heritage identity. Even Tony built his membership in a community around his previous experience in kendo in the United States. In all of these cases, individuals sought out others with shared experiences and shared identities and chose to form a community with them rather than searching out other Japanese or Americans as was the case before WWII.

The context of WWII also resulted in a greater desire to avoid passing on of Japanese heritage to interview participants' children. Interview participants who entered the United States in the 1960s and 1970s such as Midori Brown and Kiki Osborn both felt pressure to mitigate their Japanese heritage and instead focus upon adapting to American culture. Midori attempted to raise her children to be purely American despite her continued practice of Buddhism which she brought from her home in Okinawa. This illustrates that while Midori wanted to continue to find membership in groups with shared experiences, she did not want her children to make this same decision, instead of keeping them separate and safe from the criticism she faced for her religion. So effective was her application of this strategy that neither of her children speaks Japanese or participate in any Japanese practices. Her son even seems to be embarrassed by his mother's Japanese heritage and will not speak about it, hiding it from others.

This trend of opinions molded by WWII continued with Kiki's experiences. Kiki, coming to the United States later than Midori took a strategy not of actively hiding, but rather allowing her adopted child's interest in Japan guides how much to teach him. Although she expressed some confusion initially as he was not adopted from Japan, she was quite willing to share her experiences with him and pass on her heritage.

The proximity to WWII also caused turmoil for both Kiki and Midori as their families either wholly rejected them for their decision to marry "the enemy." These early relationships illustrate that due to the prevailing prejudice extant before WWII and the animosity sparked by WWII these mixed-heritage marriages faced enormous isolation and rejection by both Japanese and American communities, forcing individuals to find community membership elsewhere.

Couples who entered the United States further from WWII still seemed to face somewhat less discrimination in this region of Central Illinois. Prejudice seems to be focused, in the United States at least, more upon racial constraints as was the case with William Hulet's Aunt who felt that he should marry "his kind." This does not seem to be the case in all circumstances though. Kana, who married in the 1990s expressed a degree of tension that she and her family feel around the anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor which began the conflict between the United States and Japan during WWII. This, however, seems to be more a result of older generations regardless of location as only Mai's grandparents had an issue with her "marrying the enemy" with her parents expressing more concern with her leaving for another country.

### **Community Membership**

The initial rejection by Japanese communities in the United States has resulted in individuals not finding community along cultural lines, but rather along lines of shared experience. In the case of Midori, these shared experiences were that of her religion and as a

result, she became an extremely active member of the Soka Gakkai. In this manner, Midori was able to transfer a part of her identity from her point of origin to her new home in the United States.

Even Kiki Osborne seems to have adapted into the United States by maintaining the surname she adopted from her American husband, even after he departed from her life. This would seem to indicate that she has either adopted the identity as being an American or, at the very least, found that having an English surname would provide some degree of advantage to herself and her children.

Progressing into the 1980s with Haru and William, individuals marrying were no longer a part of the post-war “War Bride” movement. Instead, the communities which they chose to include themselves in were those of international marriages and graduate students. This is significant as it indicates that the attitudes which existed before WWII have faded somewhat. Despite a large number of Japanese individuals living near Haru and William due to a local Mitsubishi plant, they did not seek out and establish a community with them, instead seeking out others with similar experiences to themselves. It is evident then, that some Japanese immigrants and Japanese heritage communities in this region of the United States construct themselves not along lines of Japanese-heritage, but rather along membership in communities based upon shared experiences and international relocation.

Kana and Dave Smith however show that this is not always the case. Kana and Dave illustrate that these individuals still retain Japanese identity. Though they are both active members of the church community, they also maintain ties to Japanese communities. Kana in particular assists in teaching English to recent Japanese immigrants, illustrating again a trend in this community towards accepting individuals engaged in mixed-heritage relationships. More

significant, however, is the reaction of the community in the church of which they are members, most notably following the Fukushima Nuclear Disaster. During this crisis in Japan that church members arrayed themselves around Kana to find out what they could best do to help the communities of this disaster. This rallying around a Japanese immigrant also highlights that the attitude towards Japan and the United States has drastically changed towards acceptance and international cooperation.

Finally, even in Japan, there is a clear trend of joining groups that have shared experiences rather than a shared national heritage. Tony, an American immigrant did not seek out to integrate into American groups in Japan. Rather the community in which he chose membership was the kendo community. His membership and continued advancement in the kendo community resulted in his adopting of more and more responsibilities until he found himself in an instructor role, becoming one of the public representations of that kendo community to the public.

By comparing each of these cases, a pattern of community membership through shared experiences becomes apparent. Each individual chooses a community in which they have a prior experience rather than one of national heritage.

### **Adaptation and Children**

While the pressure to adapt to American cultural practices remains constantly present in the case of all interview participants in the United States, the acceptance of Japanese heritage has gradually been increasing. Early interview participants such as Midori did not share her Japanese heritage with her children as an attempt to protect them. As time has progressed however, this has changed and multinational heritage has become a strength in the community, especially for the children of these individuals. Haru and William both feel passionate about their continued

tradition of speaking Japanese with their daughter and giving their grandchildren lessons in the Japanese language. William notes that this is not always an advantage, however, as there are individuals in the United States who feel that the only language that their children should learn is English. Those individuals are also noted by William as being fools for believing that by learning two languages a person's skill in either will decrease. Instead, he argues that by learning two languages, you are better able to understand your language and able to better utilize each. Even his wife expresses that by people from around the world marrying, a stronger more unified world is being created.

As the world has become increasingly globalized, so too has the perception of these individuals towards the group that they are a part of. Kana and Dave feel that their marriage has not stripped either of them of their heritage. They note that they see themselves and their children as being a bridge not just between Japanese and Americans, but also people of all nationalities. Their children frequently attempt to make connections with other international students and find some common ground to communicate and interact. Furthermore, their children have accepted their Japanese heritage, wanting to share the Japanese food that they grew up with in the home with others at school. This presents evidence that while some discrimination remains, especially around significant historical events, there is a greater trend of acceptance towards these individuals, their relationships, and cultural heritage progressing from the rejection by Midori's children, interest from Kiki's child, active language maintenance with Haru and William's children, and active sharing from Kana and Dave's children.

## **Personal and Cultural Conflict**

In all of these relationships, interpersonal conflict between partners appears to be less focused upon the culture of the individuals involved and more upon differences in personal beliefs. The presence of these similarities on both a micro-scale with individual interview participants and on a macro scale with experiences given across a wide range of individuals in an online support group tend to indicate that there is a trend of conflict arising from personal rather than cultural differences. This is a stark contrast to the conflicts which arose when these mixed-heritage couples were still referred to as “War Brides.” During this period, while there were a distinct number of personal conflicts between these War Brides and other American citizens, there was an undeniable culture of discrimination stemming from racial and post-war opinions towards both Japanese and those perceived to be foreigners in general. The results of this research, however, indicate that there has been a shift in the culture since this time. Of the interviewees, none stated that they believed they ran into and specific cultural conflicts between themselves and their partner. Perhaps most explicitly, Tony and Mai stated that they don’t have any more different expectations for the other partner than they would have for any non-Japanese or non-American. This indicates that they minimize the differences being cultural and view them more as being personal ones which, so long as they communicate about them, can be overcome. This may have been a result of Japan becoming more and more westernized as time has progressed into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is further supported by Kiki’s experiences in the late 1970s and early 1980s which led her to the belief that she would rather seek out a white partner rather than a Japanese man.

This indicates that the expectations and behaviors of individuals living in Japan have changed perhaps due in part to the increased westernization which has progressed in Japan since WWII. With expectations in a partner changing to align more closely between Japanese and Americans, it appears that issues which may have been deemed cultural in the past as was the case with Kiki are now reframed as personal in the present as in the case of Tony and Mai

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