

TEACHER'S STUDY GUIDE FOR

**QUIET PASSAGES:
THE JAPANESE-AMERICAN WAR BRIDE EXPERIENCE**



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INTRODUCTION

As this century draws to a close, the United States is confronted with the vision of a future indisputably multiethnic and multicultural. Demographic projections reveal that, in the country as a whole, by 2080 (and much earlier in particular regions—most notably, California), non-Hispanic Whites could shrink to 49.8 percent of the population. More quickly and irrevocably than ever, this society will be forced to reexamine its views of minority and ethnic groups and, consequently, to redefine itself.

Recent developments in Kansas suggest the need for a similar reexamination at the local level. The state of Kansas, following a recent review of its educational system and reevaluation of curriculum guidelines, has determined that Kansas history be made a statewide school requirement. It is also recognized that different cultural and ethnic groups have participated in the shaping of that history.

After consultation with a University of Kansas specialist, high school teachers, and officials at the Kansas Department of Education we concluded that a series of documentaries on Asian diversity in Kansas would meet the needs of public schools and higher educational institutions. *Quiet Passages* is the first of a planned four-part series on Asian Americans in Kansas. *Quiet Passages* focuses on the experience of Japanese American “war brides” in Kansas; the other groups to be “documented” are Chinese, Korean and Southeast Asian Americans.

For purposes of this documentary and study guide, a Japanese American war bride is defined as any Japanese women who married an American citizen, usually a member of the armed forces, who was in Japan as a result of U.S. military activity during World War II or as a result of the subsequent military occupation. Although some people find the term war bride objectionable, we as well as other writers on this subject have yet to find a more acceptable term. We certainly intend no offense by its use.

There would be no war brides, however, if not for the military occupation, which led to millions of young GIs, usually ages 18-23 years, entering Japan. These young GI's were as interested in the opposite gender as people of that age group are today. It was inevitable, and it should surprise no one that these types of relationships with Japanese would develop. Both Japan and America tried to prevent their occurrence, yet thousands of Americans and Japanese married. From these marriages came a small, but unique group of Japanese Americans.

Japanese Americans, in 1990, form a rather dispersed group throughout Kansas, but we chose to document a close-knit community of Japanese American war brides residing in the Junction City-Fort Riley area. From the outset we found these women reticent to be interviewed, let alone be videotaped. Their reticence was greater than we had expected and was, as we were to discover, the result of a recent documentary produced and broadcast in Japan by a Tokyo television station. That documentary

(part of it was taped in Kanas) portrayed these women and the United States in a negative manner. As a result, we were forced to find participants outside of Junction City, but found that they, too, were reluctant to help. We have respected the desire for anonymity by not identifying, in the documentary, those women who agreed to help us. In addition, we have made more extensive use of interviews with the women's children. The result is the version of *Quiet Passages* that you currently are viewing.

We hope that this documentary will acquaint you with this unique group of Kansans. This study guide is divided into several sections which will provide information that elaborates on statements made by people in the documentary. These statements necessarily were limited in detail and length in order to keep the program under 30 minutes and meet our artistic requirements. There are many other sources of information on this subject and we have included a bibliography of books and articles that more advanced students or those more interested in the subject may choose to read. We have also included a script and chronology of Japanese American related events that may prove a valuable tool in aiding classroom discussion after viewing the video. The final section is a “how to” section. Designed for teachers in various disciplines including history, anthropology, sociology, psychology and ethnic studies, it provides questions designed to stimulate discussion of a variety of topics.

FROM JAPAN TO AMERICA

The world has never seen as devastating a war as World War II. The dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki caused destruction never before seen. Most of those who endured this devastation were women, children and the aged. Many men were sent out of Japan to fight in the war and a large percentage did not return. While the men were fighting in the Pacific islands or in Asia the women worked in factories, and fields, and raised their families.

The dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 forced Japan to capitulate. On August 15, the people of Japan and the world heard the voice of the Emperor as he announced that Japan had surrendered. Within two weeks, the American Occupational Force arrived in Japan. Within one month after American troops landed in Yokohama, in August 1945, half a million troops were stationed in Japan and, by 1947, 1.5 million were there. These forces were stationed throughout Japan from Hokkaido in the north to Kyushu in the south.

The knowledge the Japanese public had about the Americans was primarily from wartime propaganda. They feared that many would be brutally killed, women raped, and their cities looted by the murdering foreign devils. Women were ready to commit suicide, girls' schools were closed, daughters were hidden and some girls even tried to disguise themselves as boys. On the other hand the

Americans were told that the Japanese held life in low regard and would fight to the last death. GIs thought they would have to protect their backs and would face stiff resistance.

Luckily none of these were true. The Japanese were well-mannered and law-abiding, while the GIs were generally polite, generous, disciplined and respectful. Early on, General Douglas MacArthur had decided to try to win the Japanese over with friendliness and good-will. He promoted a peaceful occupation and ordered severe punishments for GIs who abused the Japanese.

The goal of the occupation was the prevention of another military takeover of the Japanese government. The objective was to break down many of the traditional Japanese social institutions and democratize the society. Landholdings were broken up and aristocratic titles were made unlawful. The extreme male-dominated social structure was also broken up. Equality for women as well as men was written into the constitution. Women were allowed to vote and a co-educational system was set up. Arranged marriages could not be forced on women and equal divorce conditions were imposed. Equal inheritance rights were established and women could be legal guardians of not only their property, but also their children. Equal pay for equal work became a principle of law. The American forces occupying Japan also included women, which presented alternatives to the traditional way of life in Japan for young women. These changes had an impact on the way some of the Japanese women viewed their role in Japanese society.

The close contact between the Japanese and Americans during the occupation inevitably and quite naturally led to the development of personal relationships between Americans and Japanese. Many young American men made decisions to marry. In order to understand how and why these marriages took place and the difficulties that had to be surmounted we have used direct quotes from *Quiet Passages* and developed the historical, social and psychological context that further elaborates each of them.

1. And 15th of August we were told to listen to radio and we listened to radio. We could hardly hear, but we heard that the emperor was saying that we surrender.

The surrender of Japan by the Emperor changed the perception that Japanese had about themselves and their country. The emperor had been worshiped as a god, a direct descendent of Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess. The Japanese were taught that they would one day rule the world and were a superior race. Later, on January 1, 1946, Emperor Hirohito denounced his divinity and the Japanese superiority was shattered.

For the Japanese all political power emanated from the Emperor. Especially important was the reign of one family line "unbroken for ages eternal." When the Emperor

issued the surrender proclamation and then renounced his divinity that continuous line was broken. The Japanese people were left without a source of authority. The Americans filled that void. After suffering through the war the Japanese people were relieved that it was over and that the Emperor was able to surrender in a dignified manner, but the people were ready to accept the American move toward democratization.

2. When you know then, when I went to Hiroshima I could see from station to the end of the town. Nothing left there. Tokyo was almost same way.

In Tokyo one fire bombing raid left 88,000 civilians dead. In all it is estimated that 200,000 died in the Tokyo firebombings and most were women, children and the aged. Kobe was about 60 percent destroyed, primarily by incendiary bombs. Actually, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki did not kill any more than the Tokyo raids did, but the effects were longer lasting. People are still dying from the effects of radiation to this day. In these cities a family was lucky if it had lost only two of its members.



3. You see the long line, so you don't know what it is, but you get on the line to see what you can buy.

Economic conditions were so bad in Japan after the surrender that no matter how the Japanese felt about the Americans, they had little choice but to develop friendly relations. Starvation was a serious problem during the first years after the war. Standing in line for hours only to obtain

a small ration of food was a fact of life for the Japanese. During the war every item was rationed and distributed through government centers. Sugar, for example, was 1/2 pound per person once every six months during the last two years of the war. Often goods ran out.

Not only were there shortages during the war, but long after the war ended food had to be rationed. The number of starvation deaths kept rising. In Tokyo there were 1,291 reported deaths from malnutrition between November 1945 and April 1946; 267 bodies were found in the streets during April 1946 alone. The occupation army came with supplies of foods and other goods—they were first “aliens” occupying Japan, but they were also reformers with material wealth.

4. She had gotten a job working at the base exchange and so there was some sort of party, a dance, and they saw each other.

Hundreds of thousands of Japanese women, had lost their fathers, mothers, husbands or brothers during and after the war. The war left 1.9 million widows who would also have to support their families without husbands. With these losses they became the heads of their households. Their responsibility for the financial support of the remaining family members forced them to seek employment wherever they could find it. The American presence provided them that opportunity.

Many women, when seeking employment, lived away from home. The destruction of the country, the weakening of the traditional family system, and democratization changed the constraints on young women seeking employment and women exhibited a new aggressiveness.

After finding work, many women would send money to their families. Even so, many of their parents were against the learning of English or contact with the Americans in any manner. Women not only looked for work with the Americans, but they looked in male-dominated areas as well. Women could be found working even within traditional male Japanese occupations such as police work.

5. First I went to English conversation school, you know, because my English was not American.... She said all you have to do is get in with the American people.

The need to find employment was very great. The traditions that had dominated women before the war were demolished. Within a few short months, women were changing the style of their dress from traditional kimonos and sandals to western style dresses.

Women could readily find employment with the Americans as housekeepers, nannies or domestics. If they wanted better positions with military bases as interpreters, secretaries or telephone operators, they had to learn to speak English. Often this involved going to a school run

by American Nisei (second-generation Japanese Americans), American Red Cross bride schools (in these schools American women taught Japanese brides basic skills to use in America) or by associating with Americans in other arenas. By 1952, 8,000 Japanese women had graduated from bride schools.



6. You can't socialize with American soldier too much. See, it was restricted in Japan. You couldn't do that too much.

Even though many people tried to gain employment with the Americans, social contacts between the Japanese and Americans were limited. Contacts between servicemen and Japanese women, though not officially banned, were frowned upon. General MacArthur felt that such a ban was unenforceable. He did, however, respond to pressure from American families in the U.S. when GIs began bringing home Japanese wives by having chaplains try to end unseemly relationships. The military staff often worked on the false assumption that these marriages were doomed because of the great cultural differences between the partners.

Contacts between GIs and Japanese women were limited due to a variety of restrictions, not the least of which was the cost of a night out. The typical pay for a GI was about \$15 per month and an evening out would easily cost \$20. Other restrictions were:

1. GIs could not use army vehicles to transport dates.
2. GIs could only ride on train cars for GIs only.
3. GIs could not share army food, nor PX food.
4. GIs could not eat Japanese food, drink Japanese water, nor have food cooked in a Japanese kitchen.
5. No swimming or fishing near Tokyo.
6. Barracks were off-limits to Japanese females.
7. Japanese bathhouses, banks, and private homes were off-limits.

8. Japanese were not allowed outside their Prefecture without Counter Intelligence Corps approval.

These restrictions did not stop Americans from seeking friendship and companionship with the Japanese, however. Many servicemen and many Japanese women were willing to break the rules to be together. When even the military staff designated to control the activities of soldiers were fraternizing, it is not hard to understand why the rules were so easily broken by the couples.

Also banned were public displays of affection. This reflected both a racial bias and the perception that these women were "stained" in some way. Many feared that the women most interested in GIs were prostitutes, but women who were registered as prostitutes (which was a legal occupation) were not permitted to marry servicemen. Still, there was the attitude among many that Japanese women were good enough to date, but not worthy to marry. Sometimes even being seen together with a GI meant the military police would question the women.

7. I think like my husband was really kind to me, because way he treat woman he was so different than Japanese men.

Those Japanese women working for Americans were somewhat more independent than the average Japanese women. They had often been dislocated from traditional forms of constraint either because of economic devastation, loss of family, or other factors. For example, some of these women had lived overseas before the war and had the chance to experience different cultures, while others had simply lost most of their family.

These women were Japanese, nonetheless. They were, for example, trained to live with their mothers-in-law. For the Japanese women, American men were very forward, but treated them with more respect and were kinder than Japanese men. The GIs held doors open for them or stood up on buses so they could have a seat, presenting an alternative gender relations model.

In Japanese society women were held with much less esteem than in America and Japanese husbands reigned over their wives in most aspects of family life. Japanese wives served their husbands with greater diligence than American wives. In many ways these were ideal matches. When the environment changed, however, some of these marriages broke, just as did other marriages. One estimate was that nearly 2,000 war brides were abandoned by their husbands in Los Angeles County alone.

Japanese families and society, in general, did not approve of interracial marriages. Even though the number of available Japanese males had been seriously reduced by the war, family and community opposition and contempt were the biggest obstacles these women faced. Some families simply did not trust the U.S. military. Women suffered ostracism, beatings and general hostility from their families for choosing their American husbands. This

was due not only to the importance placed on the family in Japan, but was also due to unfamiliarity of racial diversity stemming from the Japanese claim of racial purity and homogeneity.

8. They did background checks on almost every member of her family.

There were many factors which contributed to the military's attempts to prevent these marriages between Americans and Japanese. Asian immigration to the United States had always been restricted. Japanese were specifically excluded from immigrating to America in the Oriental Exclusion Act of 1924. Much of the Asian exclusion rationale was based on the belief that Asians were of an inferior race.

The War Brides Act of 1945 changed that by allowing Chinese war brides to immigrate to the United States. Though these brides were marrying Chinese Americans who had fought in the war, some also married European American servicemen. The same became true for interracial marriages with Filipinas, yet Japanese women were still not allowed to apply for marriage because the new Act did not specifically include them.

Unfortunately, even if the Act was changed the couples would have returned to the United States where many states had laws against miscegenation--interracial marriage. Other problems existed, including that of settling in neighborhoods where there might be strong prejudice against the Japanese or mixed marriages.

Ultimately, the Act was changed, because as more and more GIs began marrying Japanese women they began demanding assistance in getting their new wives permanent visas to the United States. President Truman signed the Alien Wife Bill, which resulted in the Soldier Brides Act of 1947. Under this law, wives of American citizens could not be kept out of the United States because of race. Initially, the law provided for access to a permanent visa for these women only for a temporary period of 30 days after its enactment. It was not until 1950 that Public Law 717 was passed which allowed GIs to again apply for permission to marry Japanese women.

Despite this change in the law, the difficult screening the women were required to go through was not relaxed. The women were screened through a variety of means, including an application that required 24 forms. Officials checked out not only her, but also her family. They checked for criminal background, prostitution and family and financial standing. Any one piece of the paperwork for application to marry could hold up approval (the form could be returned for minor typos or it could get "lost.") Often couples spent days simply filling out the required forms.

9. Not too long after they decided to definitely get married, he got orders, and he was shipped out.

The men, on the other hand, had to request approval from their commanding officer in order to gain approval. Early on, ultimate approval had to come from General MacArthur's staff in Tokyo. These men would be lectured by their superiors against their decision to pursue marriage and sometimes even on the perceived treachery involved with marrying the former enemy, but most couples continued with the process in spite of these deliberate difficulties.

Even after the start of the Korean War and the passage of laws allowing the marriage of GIs to Japanese women, many war brides were left behind. If a GI was killed in Korea, for example, the marriage application was revoked. Many women were left in Japan with Amerasian children and no way to get to the United States. They faced a particularly difficult time as they were probably ostracized from their families and ignored by the society at large. Racially mixed children in Japan could expect to experience as much racism as they might have in America.

Because of the legal problems and racism the commanding officers often transferred the GI back to the United States or to Korea. A request for marriage approval was often a request for a transfer. Clearly, this was one of the most effective methods of breaking up the relationship, although many couples tenaciously held on for years in order to consummate the relationship. Even if the GI was serious there were many factors working against him. It was estimated that over 100,000 of these relationships failed.

10. One afternoon Don say, "Paperwork through. If you want to, we can go marry in Tokyo Embassy."

Since the marriages were not condoned by the military, including the chaplains, and the GIs were in Japan, many of the marriages took place as a traditional Japanese ceremony. Legally, the United States did not recognize the Japanese ceremony as valid and, if the couple returned to America, the marriage would be invalid. Thus, if the couple were to return to the U.S., they had to be part of a marriage legally recognized by the military and the U.S. government. This was accomplished by applying for approval and, upon that approval, having the ceremony at the consulate or embassy.

11. But we had a little, nice Japanese house. And we lived in. So we had a wonderful time.

Some of the husbands learned Japanese fairly well. The couples often lived off base, especially during the 1950s when constraints were somewhat relaxed. The couples sometimes lived in Japanese neighborhoods and this arrangement seemed to work fairly well, especially for the women. For them, living in a familiar environment surrounded by other Japanese required minimal adaptation

and change. Even though they may have been ostracized by their families, at least they were among familiars. The language and cultural rules were the same. They knew how to shop for and cook their food. They were familiar with the urban environs. The GIs, during this period, were also on familiar ground as they continued to work on the military bases. Military benefits usually could be stretched further in Japan than they could be in the U.S., especially later during the occupation period, making their lives almost affluent. This may have been the most secure time of the couple's lives.

12. My father, he doesn't want me to come to United States. It's such a long way. I just didn't want to come to the United States.

Even among those Japanese families that had accepted the marriage they made every attempt to keep their daughters from leaving Japan. Clearly, this was the most painful decision the women had to make. The burden of preserving family honor usually falls to the women. For the Japanese the sense of family is the same as the sense of self. When these women left their families it meant an abandonment of not only their families, but of themselves.

13. They were on ship, I think, like my mom says, like a thirteen, fourteen day ship voyage from Japan, and they landed in San Francisco...and they immediately came to Kansas. They bought a car and traveled across country.... [I]t was just driving and driving. I mean it was like the distances in America were just incredible.

Japanese war brides, after a long and sometimes arduous trans-Pacific journey, reached the western shore of the United States and, with their husbands (and, in many cases, children), headed for various destinations throughout a country whose vast expanses, compared to those of Japan, must have overwhelmed them. There is insufficient data for us to determine exactly where and in what numbers the women and their husbands settled. However, we can assume that this Diaspora ended in a wide variety of locations, urban and rural, on military bases and in off-base areas. Most couples settled on the West Coast and in the South. Some only had to make a partial journey overseas and relocated to Hawaii.

After having overcome various legal obstacles while in Japan in order to marry and emigrate, many couples faced a new nightmare: the prospect of relocation to states which still upheld antimiscegenation laws. Fortunately, most of the couples that were transferred to military stations stateside found themselves on so-called "compassionate bases." Areas so designated were considered by the Department of the Army to be much safer social terrain—given the racial climate of the United States during the 1950s—for these interracial couples. It is no accident, for example, that one of these sites—the

Fort Riley-Junction City area of Kansas—contains a phenomenally large number of Japanese (as well as Filipino, Korean, German, and the most recently-arrived group, Vietnamese) war brides. It was not until 1967, as the result of the Supreme Court's *Loving v. Virginia*, decision, that all laws forbidding interracial marriage were struck down. Indeed, when the first war brides arrived in the United States, there were only a handful of safe havens for them.

Regardless of their eventual destination, war brides—like any other immigrants to “the land of opportunity”—arrived armed with a number of expectations, hopes and dreams. And, there were fears and anxieties. This was their first experience outside the Japanese homeland. This was to be their first encounter with in-laws. Most would be dependent, more than ever, on their husbands. They would no longer be surrounded by Japanese. This was a different world. The relationships that had already weathered so much adversity would be tested in new ways.

14. I asked my uncle back here how they took mom, how they took dad bringing mom back, first finding out about it—they didn't like it.... Actually, when it came to the point where our uncles and aunts were forced to take us over because of dad's death... I think they were almost forced into it and, and they were family, and they knew we were family. It worked out real good. They grew to love mom a lot.

She had a very warm reception, though, by my father's family. She felt very well received.... And after her reception there,...she didn't feel like America was going to be this fearful place.... Some fears came later.... [M]y dad's brother,...who had spent time in Japan, came to visit. ...[H]e had a negative experience about Japan...[and] was hard on my mother.... [T]here was one incident she recalls very distinctly, where he said, "...I would have never married a Jap like you."

Not unlike that of the war brides' relatives, the reactions by families of American servicemen to these marriages took a number of different forms. Some American families provided a warm welcome from the very outset. Other families, after an initial response that was less than positive, slowly accepted their new daughters-in-law. Often, acceptance was hastened by the presence of grandchildren. There were, however, instances of hostility from family members, subtle as well as outright, short-lived as well as prolonged. The vast distances transversed by these women, over the Pacific and across the country, were nothing compared to the attitudinal gulf which separated them from some Americans. For many, the Japanese were still the enemy. For xenophobics, no foreigners were to be trusted. For some mothers, it did not matter whether this woman was Japanese or American—she had “taken a son away.” Sometimes the anti-Japanese sentiment by American families was exacerbated by

strangers who treated the war brides rudely. Residents of many rural and southern areas had never seen Japanese people and the resulting encounter—ranging from stares to verbal abuse—was often a painful one for the war bride.

Regardless of the particular response toward them, most women felt an isolation quite unlike any they had ever experienced—and some had undergone such isolation prior to emigration from Japan. Here, there were few (or no) Japanese with whom they could converse. The English language which surrounded them—in newspapers, on signs, and in other forms in everyday life—was simply overwhelming. It was difficult to obtain the Japanese food that they desired. The span of thousands of miles which separated them from Japan seemed even more monumental.

Many of the couples, when the husband had separated from the military, found themselves in even more dire straits. Perhaps, it was a housing shortage, or substandard conditions even when housing was available. It may have been the reality of a postwar unemployment crisis coupled with the increased cost of goods and services. For some, reinforced by external forces, it was a variety of family crises, among them abuse and alcoholism. And, there were divorces. Although they encountered difficulties and many of their early fantasies of American life were ultimately shattered, most war brides combined personal strength with aid from individuals, groups and agencies (such as churches and the USO) to forge a stable life for themselves, their husbands and children. The vast majority of these marriages were, and remain, stable.

15. Well, one day my neighbor knocked door. Her name is Donna. She was such a sweet lady. And I said, "Come on in," you know, got to talking to her, and she's a real nice lady. We got really good friend.

Donna taught my mother about...how to shop, what measurements were in cooking,...really took my mother under her wing.

Yeah, I think that, being a small community and everything, that the people really came together to, sort of adopt her, 'cause she was...from a foreign country and going through the cultural changes, they really helped her to adapt...

A great number of war brides, quite naturally, experienced feelings of loneliness. This was especially true in rural areas and locations far from military bases. A number of the women were hundreds of miles from other Japanese. Within their households, varying degrees of language problems often made it difficult for wives to communicate with their husbands. And, sometimes hostility from Americans pushed feelings beyond loneliness to despair and depression. Children often helped their mothers sustain hope through difficult times and, for some, helped fight an, at times, overwhelming urge to return to Japan. It was for their sons and daughters—many of them reminded themselves—that they were making this sacrifice. Often, however, it was a single act of kindness

from an American stranger that radically changed the women's views and provided hope. A number of war brides relate experiences where a neighbor made an initial contact, offered assistance and, ultimately, became a life-long friend.



16. I become a Christian, too. And so it makes a lot of difference in my life, because every place I go to, I went to church, and I met a lot of church people and new friends....

Religion, too, represented a means whereby war brides could find comfort and hope. It also provided a social network. For many of the women, church became a social key and helped them develop friendships throughout the communities in which they lived. Although most war brides adopted their husbands' religions, they felt no pressure to totally relinquish their own Buddhist or Shinto beliefs. The Japanese attitude toward religion—a tolerant and eclectic one—allowed these women to combine different beliefs. Often, war bride households reflect such eclecticism: Christian bibles and crucifixes often coexist alongside Shinto or Buddhist paraphernalia.

Thus, in spite of hardships and occasional—for some, constant—setbacks, a combination of family, friends, and religion helped these women adjust to their new lives. And, this adjustment helped redirect them toward the ultimate goal for most war brides—American citizenship.

17. I was always awestruck by the amount of effort she placed on this [citizenship] test, how excited she was when she finally got her citizenship, and the kind of pain she went through to obtain it.

In June of 1952, the Immigration and Nationality Act (more popularly known as the McCarran-Walter Act) was passed and race—as established by the Asian Exclusion

Act of 1924—was finally removed as a barrier to naturalization. However, the intense desire by Japanese war brides to obtain citizenship would bring with it another set of barriers. War brides, almost all of whom still struggled with the English language, spent countless hours with the study guides designed to prepare them for what was certainly the most important examination of their lives. These women painstakingly waded through seemingly endless pages of names, places and dates written in an unfamiliar language. Furthermore, they were called upon to memorize those names, places, and dates, as well as sections of important historical documents such as the preamble to the Constitution of the United States. Ironically, this test of one's American-ness would probably have been failed by a significant number of those born and raised in the United States. Most war brides were fortunate enough to attend citizenship classes, which like English classes, helped give them an edge in their preparations. Many of the women were also aided by their grade-school- or junior-high-aged children.

Once again, as they had first done in Japan and then as they made initial contact with American culture, these women called upon reservoirs of personal strength and determination, this time to pass the citizenship examination. Eventually, the magic moment would arrive and they would stand in a courtroom with other immigrants to be sworn in as the nation's newest citizens.

The naturalization decision, for many of the war brides, brought with it considerable pain. U.S. citizenship meant an absolute separation from their former homeland. The recitation of the Oath of Allegiance severed legal and, in some cases, emotional ties to Japan. The totality of such an act weighed heavily on the minds of many war brides. Although many of these women had been ostracized by their families, abandonment of the land of their birth was an even more painful experience. However, for a significant number of them, their citizenship also meant citizenship for their children who had been born on Japanese soil. It was also the final stage in the process of Americanization which had begun in Japan when they first met their American husbands-to-be.

18. We grew up in a house that had a lot of oriental furnishings, and so when people came over that weren't used to it, they'd say, "Wow, what's that Japanese doll there?" Well, we'd seen it every day when we were growing up, and so that's kind of ingrained in us a little bit.

Interracial marriages, by their very nature, generally result in households which are rich and unique cultural blends. Like that of other immigrants, there are varying degrees of bilingualism to be found in the homes of Japanese war brides. Most of the husbands and children know at least a few words of Japanese. Some of the women, fortunate enough to live in communities where there are other war brides or other Japanese, use the

language more often, but among themselves. Some of the children of these women, in an effort to explore their cultural heritage, have taken Japanese language classes.

Meals, too, very often reflect the cross-cultural atmosphere in these homes. It is not unusual to find both American and Japanese dishes served at the same meal: "even though we grew up on fried chicken, roast beef, at the same time we grew up on sukiyaki."

In virtually every war bride household, one will find various touches of Japan, whether an exquisitely-crafted doll, a small Shinto or Buddhist shrine, a painting or wall hanging, or any number of delicate porcelain pieces. It is also common to encounter Japanese literature, from traditional literature to popular contemporary magazines. Audio tapes, long a favorite inclusion in parcels sent from Japan, have most recently been supplemented by video tapes. Since the production of the first VCR's (pioneered, of course, by the Japanese), war brides have been brought much closer to their former homeland. Whether in documentary form, "soap operas," musical shows, or "home movies," videos from Japan have added, for most of the women, a much-needed dimension to their Japanese ties. Letter-writing remains the most common link between the United States and Japan. Gifts are also exchanged on a regular basis. And, most war brides have made a return trip, or trips, to Japan. However, it has been the video explosion that has provided a kind of missing link in the lives of these women. Sometimes the tapes are sent by Japanese families directly to their American relatives. More often, however, especially in urban areas or near military bases, Asian food markets rent tapes which the war brides view, dub, and circulate among other members of the Japanese American community. For those women who have not been able to visit Japan, the video is a crucial tie to the land of their birth.

Some of these women, quite naturally and for a variety of reasons, feel a strong emotional attachment to Japan. For most, however, ties to the two countries can be summarized in the following fashion:

"I went back to see my family. I see everybody, and I feel like it's not my home anymore there. I feel like I want to come back to U.S. because my husband, my childrens there. This is my home."

19. I think she's overwhelmed by our good fortune as well as hers. We've received an education, and I think that that's probably at the center of what's important to her."

Like the offspring of any interracial union, the children of Japanese war brides have had both positive and negative experiences. Especially during the early years of war bride immigration—which corresponded to the early years of the civil rights movement—children of these marriages were as much the targets of racist attacks as their parents.

The children have responded to questions of identity in a variety of ways. Most were prepared for that inevitable identity crisis by parents who anticipated the kinds of struggles their children would endure. And, most inherited the kind of perseverance which helped enable their parents to fight the odds against the survival of their marriages. Furthermore, as often happens in interracial households, expectations by parents are set even higher than in non-mixed families. Often, those expectations begin and end with education, something which is held in high esteem in Japan, as well as Asia in general.

The "American Dream" for Japanese war brides is, in so many ways, the same dream held by all immigrants: peace, justice, freedom to do as well as freedom not to be done unto, economic and educational opportunity, and "a better life for one's children." And, it is in witnessing that "better life for their children" that most of these Japanese women have found so much fulfillment in their own lives, lives that changed so radically when they first met U.S. servicemen in postwar Japan:

"Well, I had a peaceful life. I have a good family. There are many things I wanted to do. I wanted to be a writer, so I never did that. Somehow I picked a different world."



JAPANESE AMERICANS:

A Brief Chronology

The Japanese have been in the United States since 1843 when a whaling captain, William Whitfield, rescued Manjiro Nakahama at sea and brought him to New Bedford, Massachusetts. A quarter-century later, the first Japanese immigrants reached Hawaii and the western shore of the United States. The history of Japanese America is long, rich with tradition, and—like that of any immigrants—replete with triumphs and setbacks.

1990, like the year of the United States' entry into World War II, marks another watershed in Japanese American history. On October 9, 1990, the first \$20,000 reparations check was received by a Japanese American survivor of a World War II concentration camp. Two years earlier, President Reagan signed into law an act which provided for, in addition to monetary compensation, a public and formal apology to Japanese Americans for wrongs committed during World War II. One of the darkest chapters in American history saw the forced incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans in ten concentration camps which stretched from California to Arkansas. So often, and validly so, the history of Japanese Americans focuses on the internment experience. However, it is an injustice to define a people's history solely in terms of a single event, however traumatic.

The experience of Japanese wives of American servicemen is another fascinating and critical, albeit less well-known, chapter in the story of Japanese America. The following chronology is intended to provide students with a brief overview of Japanese American history. You will discover that it is only at certain points in this chronology that events *directly* impacted on, or continue to influence, the lives of Japanese-American war brides. However, it is critical to place those events within the larger context of Japanese, American, and Japanese-American history. A number of selections listed in this study guide's bibliography will shed further light on that larger context and students are urged to explore some of those works.

1868

The first reported Japanese immigration to the United States (148 contract laborers to Hawaii) occurred.

1869

The first reported Japanese immigration to the continental United State began. The Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony was established in California.

1886

Japan legalized emigration of its citizens.

1898

Hawaiian Japanese, with the annexation of the islands by the United States, found passage to the mainland simplified.

1900

The governments of Japan and the United States entered into the first of their so-called "Gentleman's Agreements." The Japanese government halted the issuance of any further passports to the mainland U.S.

1907

The second Gentleman's Agreement resulted in Japan's voluntary restriction of emigration in return for equal treatment of Japanese already in the United States.

1910

The first Japanese "Picture Brides" arrived in the United States. These women, whose prospective husbands knew them only through photographs, were married by proxy in Japan. U.S. anti-miscegenation laws were partly responsible for this phenomenon. "Picture Bride" passports were halted (by the so-called "Ladies' Agreement") in 1921.

1913

The California Alien Land Law Act (preventing aliens ineligible for citizenship from owning land or leasing it for more than three years) was passed.

1922

The Cable Act (revoking the citizenship of any females who married aliens ineligible for citizenship) was passed.

1924

The Immigration Exclusion Act (also known as the Asian Exclusion Act or Oriental Exclusion Act) was passed. All immigration from Japan was denied.

1925

The Kansas Alien Land Law Act was passed.

1929

The Japanese American Citizens League was founded and held its first convention the following year.

1933

Japan withdrew from the League of Nations.

1937

Japan invaded China. Some historians date the beginning of World War II with this invasion.

1941

The United States entered World War II with the December 7th Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Later in the month, thousands of first-generation Japanese were taken from their homes and businesses by the FBI.

1942

On February 19, Executive Order 9066, providing for the

relocation of approximately 120,000 Japanese (of whom three-fourths were American citizens) to concentration camps throughout the nation, was issued.

1943

Secretary of War Henry Stimson announced plans to form an all-Japanese American combat team. What was to become the 442nd Regimental Combat Team is acknowledged by military observers to be the most highly-decorated unit of its size in United States history.

1945

On August 6 and 9, the United States dropped atomic bombs, respectively, on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Victory over Japan was declared on August 15. The formal surrender took place aboard the U.S.S. *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay on September 2.

The (December) War Brides Act temporarily allowed wives and children of Chinese-American armed forces personnel to enter the United States.

1946

On March 20, the last of the wartime relocation centers (Tule Lake) was closed.

The Act of August 9, 1946, amended the War Brides Act to waive quotas for immigration of Chinese wives of U.S. citizens.

1947

The July 22 Soldier Brides Act allowed (for thirty days) the first Japanese war brides to immigrate to the United States.

1950

The Korean War began on June 25, when North Korean forces launched an offensive across the 38th parallel.

In August, the passage of Public Law 717 allowed (until February 1951) Japanese war brides to once again immigrate to the United States. This allowance was later extended to March 1952.

The McCarran Emergency Detention Act (also known as the McCarran Internal Security Act) was passed. This authorized the detention in camps of those believed to be threats to U.S. security. It was not until 1970 that this act was repealed.

1952

On June 27, the Immigration and Nationality Act (also known as the McCarran-Walter Act) repealed the Asian Exclusion Act of 1924 and eliminated race as a barrier to naturalization.

1953

An armistice—signed by United Nations, North Korean, and Chinese delegates at Panmunjom on July 27—brought an end to the Korean War.

1965

President Johnson signed a bill which was to become the Immigration Act of 1965. This act formally eliminated race, creed, and nationality as bases for immigration.

1975

In response to the report, the “National Inquiry on Needs and Problems of Asian Wives of U.S. Servicemen,” the National Committee Concerned with Asian Wives of U.S. Servicemen was organized.

1976

Executive Order 9066 was formally rescinded.

1978

The Japanese American Citizens League called on the United States government to provide reparations (\$20,000) to each survivor of the wartime camps.

1979

The National Council for Japanese American Redress was established.

1980

The National Coalition for Redress and Reparation was established.

President Carter established the seven-member Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians to determine the nature and extent of World War II wrongs directed against Japanese Americans.

Census figures showed that Japanese Americans had slipped to the third largest Asian American group (behind Chinese Americans and Filipino Americans).

1988

On August 10, President Reagan signed into law the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 which provided for a formal governmental apology for Japanese American internment and a (tax-free) \$20,000 reparations check to each survivor of the camps.

1989

Congress, in October, finally allocated funds (\$1.25 billion) for the reparations program.

1990

On October 9, the first reparations payments were received by the oldest of the wartime internment survivors.

SCRIPT
*Quiet Passages: The Japanese-American War
Bride Experience*

Between 1947 and 1962, over 40,000 Japanese wives of American citizens immigrated to the United States.

SC: I wanted to be a writer. When I was younger, my mother thought I going to be a novelist. You know, I was always writing. But somehow I picked a different world.

DJ: They met in, I guess, a party where there were some American servicemen. She had gotten a job working at the base exchange, and so there was some sort of party, a dance, and they saw each other. And how this all happened, I mean, to me it's amazing knowing my dad, I mean, he is probably one of the most, the quietest guys in the entire world, and he grew up in a very rural spot in Kansas. And he was, I think, maybe, for most of his life, the greatest radius he had traveled was fifty miles outside of his little town of Enterprise. And, here he's in another country and he's eighteen, nineteen now, first meeting my mother and, you know, he sees her across the room, and they started talking, and somebody from a completely different culture.... And I look at my mom's pictures, and she was a knockout! I mean she was really pretty! And I think that's what my dad, when he first saw her, he says, "Wow," you know. So, he maybe got over a little of his Kansas farm boy inhibitions, because she was very pretty.

LH: Well, she had said that, I think it was her aunt. And her aunt was working at this PX. I'm not sure where the PX was. And the aunt was pregnant and she told my mom that she could come and take her job, you know, when she'd had her baby. But when she got there, the aunt didn't want to give up the job I, guess, so she was kind of stuck there in that city. And she had talked about how, one night, she went to the movie house, and that's how she met him. He was, somewhere, he was there. And he had asked her if he could take her, if he could take her to the movies. And she said that she was very scared 'cause she didn't know, you know, who this was, and so I think they went to the movies together.

LH: Well, she had talked about how he had taken a taxi to where she was staying, and she was very shocked and surprised. There was a little boy in the neighborhood that my dad had given him flowers to give to her.

CM: Dad happened to be in the hospital there, in Fukuoka where mom was a nurse. And that is where she met dad, who happened to be, I think he was wounded and was put in the hospital for a while. And that's where they met. You got to realize, she was eighteen or seventeen when she got involved with the U.S., let's put it that way. She was pretty young.

SC: Because I was telephone operator and he called me up. You know, everybody did that. Everybody called up and tried to have a date. Somehow even then I knew when the American sailors said, "I love you," mean just "good morning." I knew, I told all the girls, I told them, "Don't take it seriously!"

MJ: I think, like my husband was really kind to me, because

way he treat woman, he was so much different than Japanese men.

LH: She talked quite a bit about the war experience and how there were days when she did not have food to eat, or the family did not have food to eat.

SC: You see the long line, so you don't know what it is, but you get on the line to see what you can buy. And 15th of August we were told to listen to radio, and we listened to radio. We could hardly hear, but we heard that the emperor was saying that we surrender. And so I thought, we never heard emperor's voice before, so I said, "It can't be, that's not him. It's just another propaganda from the Chinese." I called up the regiment, they said, "No, it was true." We surrendered, Japan lost the war. So I said, "Oh! Then we're going to die right now." I changed, quickly changed to the formal gown and all ready to kill myself. What happens? We didn't die.

CH: It's always been difficult for me to ask my mother questions about the war. On the one hand, I've been curious about that experience; on the other hand, I know its kind of an intrusion on that experience. I know it's been, it was a very painful experience for her. She's mentioned very few things about the war experience. She has mentioned the fact that there was economic deprivation, that she had to drop out of school in order to help support her family. She's talked about the bombings, the firebombings that were occurring in Osaka, along with Tokyo and all the other major cities during the war.

MJ: What did they tell us not to go Nagasaki. Any kind of bomb like that, you know, too many people kill one time.

SC: Everything was destroyed. Then, scarcely anything to eat, and ... well, I think Japan is remarkable to build Japan back forty-five years. When you know, then when I went to Hiroshima I could see from station to the end of the town. Nothing left there, Tokyo was almost same way.

MJ: Then I lost my mother when I was sixteen. So, it's a really hard. Then I lost my sister, let's see, I was about twenty. That was my old sister, she was really close to me after my mother die. My father was about forty-nine years old then, and then we had seven children in our family. You see, he never work anybody else before. He always work himself. It's just hard to get back on your feet, you know. And so all those things happen in my life, oh, just not a, like I said, a happy childhood.

SC: First I went to English conversation school, you know, because my English was not American. I went to a Japanese Nisei who was brought up in Chicago, she had a little school open. I went over there. I caught on very quickly, you know. She said all you have to do is get in with the American people.

You can't socialize with American soldier too much. See, it was restricted in Japan. You couldn't do that too much. If we ever go to movie, we go to movie inside of post. But if we were downtown, and with a soldier, then sometime MP just pick them up and take the girl to the jail or someplace.

LH: They had to kind of check her background, 'cause we have a lot of the papers. They had to check, you know, I guess, if she was a communist or whatever. They did background

checks on almost every member of her family. And she has documents that show, you know, what they did for a living, how much money they earned, who they were, and their children, and just a history of her family before they were even...

LH: So, it was a pretty extensive background check on her.

MJ: I know I can marry Japanese guy I was dating for a while. I had seen him and my husband. I tried to compare. It was no comparison. So, I choose my husband.

DJ: Not too long after they decided to definitely get married, he got orders, and he was shipped out. And I think she said she didn't see him for a year and a half. And, you know, he had trouble getting back to Japan. There were just lots of problems. And they corresponded, but there was, you know, there was a lot of apprehension, because, I mean, she had committed herself to him, and then he was gone, you know, and so, I mean, and I'm sure that there were stories of that she could readily hear of other Japanese girls who had fallen in love with these American guys and these guys were gone. But he kept in touch with her and, after that year and a half or so, came back to Japan. And, I think, when she tells the story almost comical because they decided to get married, and then he gets another set of orders, and he's gone for another six or seven months. So, it was probably, from the time they first met to the time that they were married, almost four years.

MJ: One afternoon Don say, "Paper go through. If you want to, we can go marry in Tokyo Embassy." I said, "OK." I was, you know, waiting for that. We had a little nice house. It's not a big house. But we had a little, nice Japanese house. And we lived in. So we had a wonderful time. My father, he doesn't want me to come to United States. It's such a long way. I just didn't want to come to the United States. Because, I want to visit, yes—but I didn't want to live here.

DJ: She looked with fear, as she's talked about it, in coming to America, but it wasn't like this big obstacle that would keep her from coming here. When she got here, you know, she learned to deal with it. I mean, probably a lot of it was the stuff she heard in, you know, how big the country was. You know, Western ways were, you know, even then I think America was considered to be fast-paced. And people had cars. And people had lots of stuff. And so, I think those were some of her, you know, early conceptions. I think, and I talked with her, and she, in a lot of ways, just didn't know what to think.

MJ: When I leave Yokohama by ship, and I can...just, just, I can remember my sisters and everybody. It's but... You know to see that the far way from ship to, you know, harbor, and everything else, and I just cannot, I cries eyes out. Because I thought, "Oh, I never see them again," you know, "what I have done to myself, what have I done to my family?" and everything else. All those emotions. I just didn't want to leave Japan, you know.

DJ: They were on ship, I think, like my mom says, like a thirteen, fourteen day ship voyage from Japan, and they landed in San Francisco. And that was her first experience, you know, coming to the States via San Francisco, and they immediately came to Kansas. They bought a car and traveled across country, and I think my mom—as she recounts the story—it was, it was

a terrible... I mean, it was just driving and driving, I mean it was like the distances in America were just incredible.

CM: I asked my uncle back here how they took mom, how they took dad bringing mom back, first finding out about it—they didn't like it. I think they were pretty sheltered in North Central Kansas. Actually, when it came to the point where our uncles and aunts were forced to take us over because of dad's death... I think they were almost forced into it and, and they were family, and they knew we were family. It worked out real good. They grew to love mom a lot.

SC: When I came to this country, I was so lucky and so fortunate that no hardship whatsoever.

DJ: She had a very warm reception, though, by my father's family. She felt very well received. They taught—my Grandmother, my fathers mother, you know, they lived on a little farm, and you know—taught her how to do some basic cooking, American style, and so it was a very good experience. She felt very welcomed and, particularly by my dad's father. And after her reception there, she—she's told me this—she didn't feel like America was going to be like this fearful place. Some fears came later, and my dad's brother, who had spent time in Japan, came to visit. And he had a negative experience about Japan, he, and my mother—prior to this time—felt real good about her being in America, and this guy was hard on my mother. And she felt kind of, I think, maybe blindsided. You know, it was like, "I don't know. Is this how my father's family really feels about me?" And there was, there was one incident she recalls very distinctly, where he said, "I, I would have never married a Jap like you."

My mom recounts that experience as being very fearful. She would...I would play in the yard. As soon as a neighbor, any of the neighbor ladies want to come over and talk, and she would, act like they were going to come across the street, my mom would scoop me up and run into the house. She said she was very fearful of interacting with Americans because of that bad experience she had with my dad's brother. And she just kind of this, I guess, feeling real alone.

MJ: I just didn't know what to do with people, you know, so I stay home. And I make sure, before I go outside, make sure no one there. So that's why I think probably I stay in the house. Well, one day my neighbor knocked door. Her name is Donna. She was such a sweet lady. And I said, "Come on in," you know, got to talking to her, and she's real nice lady. We got really good friend.

DJ: When my mother ran into the house one time, Donna actually went up to the door and knocked on the door and said, "Can I come in and talk with you?" My mother, she said she stood at the door and finally, I mean, just let her in, and that began a really a wonderful friendship. Donna was one who, also married to a serviceman, Donna taught my mother about, you know, how to shop, what measurements were in cooking, really took my mother under her wing.

RM: Yeah, I think that, being a small community and everything, that the people really came together to sort of adopt her, 'cause she was, being from a foreign country and going through the cultural changes, they really helped her to adapt and to show her around.

JM: She's always been a real happy-go-lucky type person rather than a real serious, so she was able to make friends real easily.

CM: She wanted to be liked. She wanted to be accepted, I think, most of all, and she got...everybody loved her.

LH: I think our mom was so into getting Americanized and learning the language and all, that we weren't really exposed to the Japanese culture in our early childhood. The same thing with the cooking, she did a lot of American cooking.

CM: Even though we grew up on fried chicken, roast beef, at the same time we grew up on sukiyaki.

RM: We probably had rice three times a week.

CM: Yeah. And I still eat a lot of rice. I like rice.

DJ: My mom said I spoke Japanese a lot until the time I went to kindergarten. I guess part of my own desire to adapt. She said I came home from school one day and told my mom, "I don't want to speak anymore Japanese." I kick myself, I wish I speak Japanese now, but I don't.

RM: It's not like she completely shut us out from the Japanese lifestyles, traditions, 'cause she did try to teach us how to speak Japanese and, as kids, we wasn't really interested in learning. It's like piano lessons. You're not interested in taking piano lessons when you'd rather be out playing baseball or something like that.

MJ: I become a Christian, too. And so it makes a lot of difference in my life, because every place I go to, I went to church, and I met a lot of church people and new friends, and that's where I met a lot of friends.

CH: As I recall, I was in the 5th grade or so. My mother's command of English was not very good. I helped her, on a daily basis, prepare for the citizenship test. She went to classes, but we studied at home together. I was always awestruck by how much effort she placed on this particular test, how excited she was when she finally got her citizenship, and the kind of pain she went through to obtain it. But then I realized pretty quickly that she was doing this, not only for herself, but for me. Since I born in Japan, her obtaining her citizenship was also my obtaining my citizenship. So when she was sworn in, in effect, I became a citizen, too.

DJ: And there's was a couple of stories my mom tells of that time, of the process of becoming an American that I always think are funny. One was when she was learning to drive, she called up and got herself all registered for the driving class, and appeared, you know, faithfully into the class. And it was like, you know, her English wasn't that good yet, and she was into, like the fourth class, and she very timidly rose her, raised her hand and said "Um, you know, it sounds like everybody in this class knows how to drive, and I'm a first time driver. This class is going too fast for me." As it turned out she was enrolled in a class for drunk drivers, who had lost their license, and who, and she was involved in this class. And then, when she actually tried to become a citizen, the story there was, was a similar kind of

situation, where she was enrolled in the class and the teacher was going off on American History, Western History, as if everybody in the class knew what was going on and my mom after about 3 or 4 class periods said, you know, "this is going too fast. I mean, does everybody here know all about this stuff?" And what this group was, a bunch of Canadians who were becoming citizens.

JM: We grew up in a house that had a lot of oriental furnishings, and so when people came over that weren't used to it, they'd say, "Wow, what's that Japanese doll there?" Well, we'd seen it every day when we were growing up, and so that's kind of ingrained in us a little bit.

RM: She was always seeking Japanese friends back in the Beloit area and she had some from Salina, Cawker City, from some area towns, and they would get together as often as they could and socialize, you know, eat a lot, eat a lot of rice and Japanese foods and stuff. That was really her way to escape.

CM: I think one nice thing about mom meeting these ladies from Salina and Wichita, bigger cities, is that when they came up, they brought, they actually brought Japanese magazines, which mom really was homesick for and everything, and that was nice. And plus, also the larger towns had oriental food stores.... Junction City, you know, a place where there's air bases and the larger towns had oriental food stores and that was always a big thing—to get some real food.

CH: ...after the Korean War, when a lot of these mixed families were sent state-side, that there were only a couple of places in the U.S. that lent themselves to relatively amiable race relations...that there was one base in California and the other was Fort Riley, Kansas. I know that some of her friends, who lived elsewhere in Kansas and elsewhere in the United States, were very much isolated, and they had to travel for days to see another Japanese person, to see another family like their's. Whereas in Junction City you have all these women living in the same community, communicating with each other on a daily basis.

MJ: I went back to see my family. I see everybody, and I feel like it's not my home anymore there. I want to come back to U.S. because my husband, my childrens there. This is my home.

CH: So, I think feelings of having done good, feelings of having her children succeed in whatever they've attempted, I think she's overwhelmed by our good fortune as well as hers. We've received an education, and I think that that's probably at the center of what's important to her.

SC: I had a very peaceful life. I have a good family. There are many things I wanted to do, I wanted to be a writer, you know, and so I never did that. Somehow I picked a different world.

(Poem in Japanese and then in English)

Sometimes it was just lust
Sometimes it was tease
But sometimes my heart torn to million pieces
in my true love.

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The Japanese-American War Bride Experience

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TABLE 1

Japanese immigrants admitted to U.S.
as wives of American citizens by year and
number of Japanese (male and female) in Kansas by decade

| Year | Number of Japanese wives in U.S. | Number of Japanese in Kansas |
|------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1975 | 1,376 | |
| 1970 | 2,104 | 1,584 |
| 1965 | 2,305 | |
| 1964 | 2,653 | |
| 1963 | 2,745 | |
| 1962 | 2,677 | |
| 1961 | 3,176 | |
| 1960 | 3,887 | 519 |
| 1959 | 4,412 | |
| 1958 | 4,841 | |
| 1957 | 5,003 | |
| 1956 | 3,661 | |
| 1955 | 2,847 | |
| 1954 | 2,802 | |
| 1953 | 2,042 | |
| 1952 | 4,220 | |
| 1951 | 125 | |
| 1950 | 9 | 127 |
| 1949 | 445 | |
| 1948 | 298 | |
| 1947 | 14 | 25* |

*estimate

Source: U.S. Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization, Annual Reports, 1947-75, Table 6, Washington, D.C.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

Quiet Passages is intended to provide a portrait of Japanese war brides and their children's views of their mothers. We want the viewer to become aware that Kansas has diverse groups of people with universal qualities—love of family, living for one's children, risk-taking to improve one's life, and basic survival instincts. As such it raises a number of interesting issues that can be discussed utilizing the perspectives of various disciplines.

The story of Japanese American war brides is a fascinating chapter in United States history. But it also, by definition, finds a place in Japanese history, Japanese American history, Asian American history, and women's history, among others. Furthermore, because it is a human saga and there is tremendous variety in the human experience, this story can be explored using any of a

number of approaches and disciplines beyond history.

The viewer is most likely to ask questions that relate specifically to the video and what is happening in it. We have provided contextual information relating to specific statements made in the video. American Studies, Anthropology, Ethnic Studies, Literature, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology represent only a few of the areas which provide us with materials we can use. We would like to offer just a few illustrations of how different disciplines can contribute to a broader understanding of the war bride experience.

Materials related to the war bride experience are listed in the bibliography contained in this study guide. Speakers are another valuable resource available to teachers and lists of appropriate speakers can be obtained from the Kansas Committee for the Humanities Speaker's Bureau or the Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Kansas.

LITERATURE

Quiet Passages introduces viewers to a number of Japanese American women, one of whom writes poetry. It is in that poetry that we begin to understand a little about this particular woman's past, her dreams and aspirations, and what she considers important about her experience with U.S. servicemen. We also discover, as *Quiet Passages* unfolds, a great deal about other war brides and Japanese American women in general. Poetry and other forms of literature can provide us with personal views that cannot be found using a strict historical approach. Students, in an effort to paint a complete portrait of Japanese American war brides, should consider an examination of literary works related to the Japanese American immigrant experience, in general, and the war bride story, in particular.

This can be accomplished, for example, by exploring autobiographies such as Monica Sone's *Nisei Daughter* or Michiko Tanaka's *Through Harsh Winters* which, although not based on the war bride experience, relate the unique experiences of Japanese American women. Autobiographies—like diaries and journals—are, in many ways, the most intimate and powerful expressions of an individual's experience. It is here that we listen to the voices of the women themselves and not to those of historians or narrators. Similarly, there are poems in any number of anthologies, such as *Ayumi*, which are poignant, first-hand expressions of what it means to be Japanese, American, and a woman.

SOCIOLOGY

Sociologists explore human social behavior: the forms of social organization, the patterns of social interaction, and group influences on individual behavior. As such, their discipline can provide a wealth of clues to understanding interethnic relations, in general, and the Japanese war bride experience, in particular. Paul Spickard's *Mixed Blood*, for example, is a study of intermarriage and ethnic identity in 20th-century America. This author examines marriages between U.S. servicemen and Japanese women, as well as those between Blacks and Whites, and Jews and Gentiles. He attempts to reach conclusions about these mixed marriages: how the couples met and why they married; why the marriages survived or failed; how the offspring of these unions dealt with their mixed parentage; how society (Japanese and American) reacted toward the marriages. Michael Thornton's *A Social History of a Multiethnic Identity* is a similar study, but one which focuses specifically on marriages between Black U.S. servicemen and Japanese women, and their children. Sociologists such as Harry Kitano and Ronald Takaki approach the Japanese American experience as part of the larger question of the relationship between race and class, or as a part of the American immigrant experience, or as an example of acculturation and adjustment (or lack thereof) to societal norms.

ANTHROPOLOGY

One of the major themes in *Quiet Passages* is the transition for the war brides from Japan to America. The story focuses on the psychological experience of their leaving their homeland, traveling to an isolated part of America and experiencing the discomfort associated with adapting to a completely alien style of life. As illustrated by one of the war brides in *Quiet Passages*, the experience in America was at first fairly exhilarating. America did not seem like such a "fearful" place. But after a few negative experiences the women began to find themselves isolated and "feeling very alone." Generally it took another person, usually an American who became their friend, to show them the ropes, allowing them to become more comfortable living here.

This is a perfect example of the struggle for adaptation, a key anthropological concept. The general pattern that occurs when an individual enters a new culture is similar to that just described by the war brides. The individual at first experiences a certain excitement in their new surroundings. But after a short period of time the person learns that the rules that governed their behavior in their native culture do not apply in their new home. Also, they have few people who are able to teach them what the rules are. At that point the person experiences depression and loneliness. It usually takes another native-born person to help in learning even the basic rules about shopping, cooking, using money and other (what to us may seem obvious) mundane activities.

To understand Japanese culture one can simply turn to the classic anthropological works *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* by Ruth Benedict or Takie and William Lebra's *Japanese Culture and Behavior: Selected Readings*. Other authors, such as Sylvia Yanagisako in *Transforming the Past: Tradition and Kinship Among Japanese Americans*, focus on the experience of the Japanese immigrant and their descendants, helping us to understand how they change the meanings of traditional culture and custom to meet the ecological requirements of their new environment.

PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELING

Past research has looked at the social and psychological adjustments of individuals in interracial marriages. The stability of these marriages has been deemed problematic. It has been suggested that these marriages are less stable because the couples are not accepted by either culture and the cultural differences between the partners is too great to bridge. More recent research has showed that this perspective has been biased.

The interesting questions that arise concern the personality of those who enter into these relationships and why they occur in the first place. Are the men marginal? Are the warbrides different than other Japanese women? Are these marriages marginal (reflecting cultural clashes) or are they examples of true multicultural relationships

(harmony between cultures)? The strain of adapting to a foreign culture produces serious stress on the immigrant. What are the psychological consequences of this stress? What might be ways to alleviate stress? These are important questions that reflect as yet unmet needs among many groups of immigrants. How did these women adapt and develop a stable and happy family life for their husbands and their children?

There are many authors who have written about these aspects of immigrant life and intermarriage. For Asian Americans in general, *Asian Americans: Psychological Perspectives* by Stanley Sue and Nathaniel Wagner, provides the most comprehensive discussion of Asian American psychology. Other authors, such as Bok-Lim Kim, C. G. Schnepp and A. M. Yui, and Anselm Strauss, have looked at the problems associated with the war brides' stress in adapting to a new country and the conflict arising in interracial marriages. Many of their problems are unique to their connection with the military and are often unmet. Kim, for example, has argued that counselors need to be especially aware of the cultural and social background from which these women come.

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