

## **ABSTRACT**

Title of Dissertation: Experiences of Japanese Women Who Married American  
Military Personnel and Emigrated to the United States Between  
1945 and 1965

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This study focused on the cultural transition and adjustment of Japanese women, commonly known as war brides, who married American military personnel after World War II and moved to the United States. Qualitative investigation by face-to-face semi-formal interviews was used to collect the data. This is an investigation of how these women made the transition from Japanese to American life, experiencing adaptation, acculturation and assimilation processes in a relatively short time. It is also an investigation of how they tell the stories of their lives. They were encouraged to talk about their lives and experiences freely. Thus, the major text consists of the participants' stories in their own words. Six participants from the Washington DC/Baltimore, MD areas were chosen who met four criteria: Japanese citizens at the time of marriage who moved to the United States between 1945 and 1965; the reason for emigration was their marriage to US military personnel connected to the Allied Occupation Forces or to

subsequent military involvement in Japan during the same period; husbands' past and present occupations were not restricted to the military after the completion of their initial military duty; and neither age, religion, nor social and economic status would determine eligibility. Interviews were conducted either in English or Japanese, audio taped, and transcribed verbatim or translated into English for analysis. The participants talked about their lives in Japan before and after the war as well as in the US. The conclusion was the result of comparisons of all data for emerging themes or topics.

Analysis revealed the five most frequently discussed topics to be intercultural relations, cultural clash or conflict, Japanese language and culture, independence, and race relations in the United States. In spite of differences in education, backgrounds or social positions, all participants adjusted remarkably well because of their independent streaks and mental strength. Their common sense intelligence, flexibility, endurance or a "never giving up" attitude, and their patience allowed them to survive in many difficult situations. Thus, the participants demonstrated an outstanding adaptability to make their newly adopted country their new homeland.