

# The typological hybrid identity formation of long-term western foreign residents in Japan

グレゴリー, ジェームズ, オキーフ

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The typological hybrid identity formation of long-term western foreign residents in Japan  
by  
GREGORY JAMES O'KEEFE  
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## Abstract

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This dissertation uses original empirical research on long term western foreign residents (LTW) in Japan to form a typological result showing various styles of integration and identity formation within the social and professional Japanese construct. These results show certain types have attained *hybrid identity* achievement within their community. Typological groups were devised from a combination of past literature, 25 interviews and the results of a nationwide survey conducted by the author. All respondents have lived in Japan for over 10 years at the time of this study and needed to be from a western culturally based country. (i.e. U.S.A, U.K., some European countries incl.). The study applies a hybrid model to observe the presence or lack of several factors such as life satisfaction, cultural fit, language ability, perceived discrimination and microaggressions from past studies (O'Keefe 2016). These factors help determine the level of an individual's incorporation into a community. The identification of both manifest and latent functionality of westerners in the Japanese community will also utilize the hybrid model factors. Intragroup activity, in the form of *intragroup othering*, is also explored. Immigration studies commonly focus on socioeconomically challenged groups, while westerners, due to a higher socioeconomic status, tend not to fall into this category, but they do have psychological and social cultural barriers to overcome. Perceived discrimination and/or microaggressions were also tested for a recorded at various levels. A complication experienced when performing this research was how few sociological studies on western foreign residents in Japan exist. To offset the shortage of literature, references from a wide variety of fields such as social psychological, intercultural and management studies have also been used to fulfill some of this study's needs.



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This dissertation is in memory of  
my beloved father, Donald C. O'Keefe  
and  
my good friend Mark Lambert.



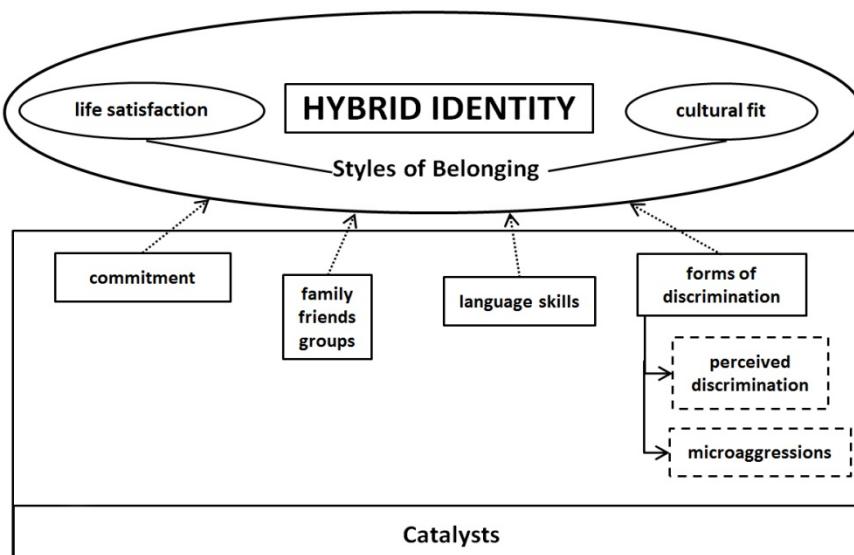
## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 The hybrid identity model

This study will focus on the social psychological welfare of long-term western foreign residents (LTW) in Japan. There is a common belief that westerners can never be fully accepted within the Japanese construct. This study challenges this common belief. This research hypothesizes while an identity can be formed within a community; it is formed through a highly customized system of interwoven choices of acceptance and rejection of traditional Japanese cultural norms to form a hybrid identity. For some respondents, this establishes a sense of belonging resulting in a mutual *self-sameness* (Erikson 1980) within either the Japanese community or a foreign based one within the borders of Japan.

It should also be noted the term hybrid identity, which has been used in previous studies on minorities or immigrants takes on a distinct definition in this dissertation and will unfold through its pages. The hybrid identity model proposed in this study is comprised of several components. The model components (Figure 1-1) will act as multi-angled building blocks for the typological framework of how LTW evolve and adapt in various ways to the Japanese host culture.

**Figure 1-1: Hybrid model**



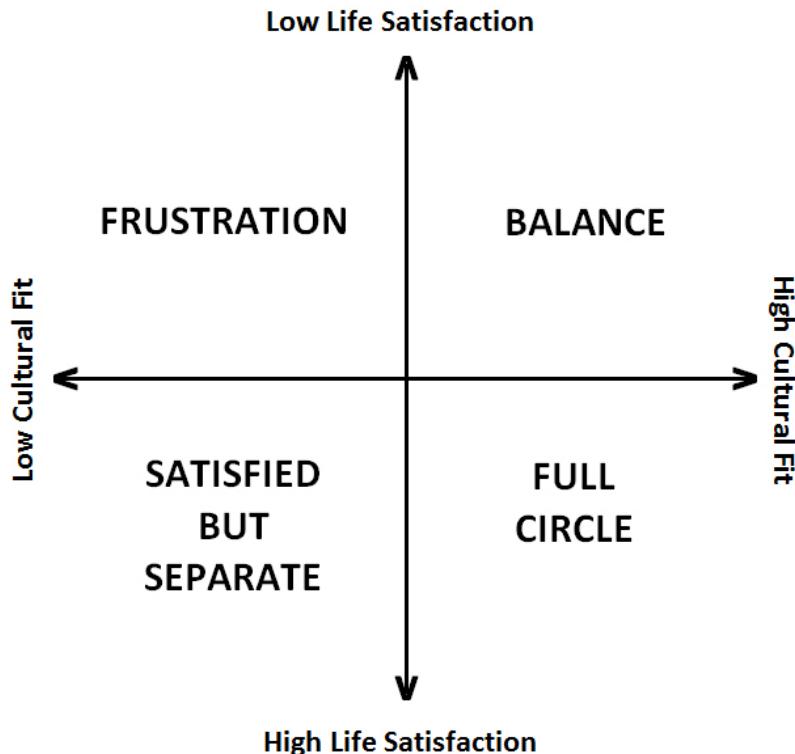
The social psychological components of the model incorporate how actual, imagined, and the implied presence of others influence the thoughts, feelings and behaviors (Allport 1985) of LTW living in Japan. The components labeled in the catalysts' group may or may not be present in some individuals. The term *catalyst* was specifically chosen to represent emotional and social evolution whether it is positive or negative. The catalysts such as family, friends (peer connections), language as well as perceived discrimination are taken from past research (Berry et al, 2006; O'Keefe, 2013). Further research has also expanded on relationship connections by adding groups together with family and friends. Furthermore, people who consciously commit to living in Japan tend to experience positive benefits from their mindful actions (O'Keefe 2015) rather than those who are unsure about their future in the country. Microaggressions were revealed in my study to be characteristically different compared to discrimination. This was especially true over the long-term. This study shows how certain LTW are more susceptible to recurring disturbances of environmentally inevitable microaggressions than others particularly between the sexes.

The two components labeled as *styles of belonging*, life satisfaction and cultural fit, are separated from the catalysts because they are applied to all respondents on either a high or low ranking as displayed in the typological image of LTW represented below. Life satisfaction is defined in this study as a representation of an individual's satisfaction without a connection to the community. This includes situations that are not subject to daily interactions with Japanese or Japanese culture. There are various reasons contributing to their satisfaction, but it is generated from the self, relationships with non-host culture bound members and somewhat supported by their higher socioeconomic status which allows for such a separation. Cultural fit on the other hand is the result of either an individual's personality fitting into the Japanese context or the successful application of learned cultural knowledge to effectively interact with the host culture. This study reveals while a successful *fit* may enhance life satisfaction in Japan,

life satisfaction does not necessarily affect cultural fit due to its innate and possible complete disconnect from the host culture.

The four types of LTW (Figure 1-2) depicted in this study are defined as: *frustration*, *balance*, *satisfied but separate* and the *full circle*. Each type's foundation is formed through the combination of the two *styles of belonging*. High or low life satisfaction along with high or low cultural fit provides the foundation for each type. The catalysts act as determiners of where a respondent is placed within the grid of a certain type. Results from a previous study's nationwide survey of LTW are also utilized in this research to define the importance of the relationship between cultural fit and life satisfaction. Factor analysis followed by a Pearson correlation coefficient test performed by O'Keefe (2016) is used in this study to add to the typological framework. Chapter 2 of this paper will also explain the conceptual framework and the respondent criteria in more detail.

**Figure 1-2: Typological image of western foreigners in Japan.**



### **1.1.1 Defining the term “long-term westerner”**

While the full explanation of the criteria will be given in the next chapter, the defining of certain terms pertaining to the criteria need to be addressed to understand the direction of this research. The term “westerner” is rather broad and needs to be defined clearly before moving onto even the basic frame work of this study. Previous studies use “westerner” rather than the terms “immigrant” or “migrant” (Komisarof 2012). Neither “immigrant” nor “migrant” arose in the interviews except when respondents mentioned they didn’t fit the terms. The term “immigration” was only mentioned when they were talking about the immigration office for visa registration purposes.

In the case of this study, criteria also include long-term residents. This study separates itself from past immigration theory mostly because of the socioeconomic status of the focus group. Much of past immigration theory does not apply to this group, which will be explained in the literature review on immigration theory in Chapter 2. “Long-term” is defined as living consistently in Japan for more than ten years at the time of this study. I excluded westerners who were born in Japan and had gone through the primary and secondary Japanese school system. The members of this group have been referred to as the fourth pattern of “newcomers” (Komai 2001). The LTW label incorporates many racial backgrounds from western countries. For example, Americans could range from African American, Asian or Latino ethnic groups as well as Caucasian groups who may come from different economic or ethnic backgrounds. All of these sub-groups will have different experiences, but few will suffer the same economic difficulties as immigrants from Asia and other Latin American countries. When directly asked, many respondents referred to themselves as expats, sojourners or just westerner (Moorehead 2010). The slang word “lifer” often arose in interviews and in online social networking service (SNS) chat sessions. There are both public and secret groups on Facebook and other SNS sites, which connect only foreigners in Japan together. The secret groups are set up for the sake of privacy from host culture members and more likely Japanese employers. Many of the members

of these groups are highly functioning members of society, but choose to keep some of their opinions within a western foreign context.

The self-definition of separating westerners from the word “immigrant” is one example of *othering* used to differentiate themselves from other foreign groups, but by definition they would also be migrants. One interesting answer given by Roberto from Canada gave some insight into how a westerner sees the term “immigrant” connected to assimilation.

...even though they (Japanese) treat me with respect and they treat me nicely, if you use the word assimilate ... but it depends on the definition of your word assimilate. I mean, that's because of my history as an Asian Canadian Filipino immigrant, naturalized Canadian in Canadian Vancouver, incredibly multicultural, incredibly international city, I know what assimilation is from that point of view, which is that I'm accepted as a Canadian. In some instances, I know more about and I am more Canadian than people who are born in Canada. That to me is assimilation. What I'm experiencing here, it's just positive discrimination. I get called sensei, and people still say, "Oh, your Japanese is so good. I can't believe it's so good." I can't tell if that's condescension or if that's absolute respect. I think it's a mix of both, depends on person to person. That just shows, I'm not seen as a thoroughly assimilated peer. (Roberto: 3)

After he gave this statement, I explained this study is using Berry's definition of assimilation, which is similar to how he explained his experience in Canada. This experience is a transformation that can only take place over the long-term. The emphasis on long-term status in both the survey and the interviews focused on in this study is to reflect the results of the long-term personal and professional investment needed by the focus group to enter the host culture on some level. Firstly, LTW have learned through experience how to define the subtle situations of cultural variances within the high context culture of Japan. This is an important trait which separates LTW from new arrivals. It will be explained later how these definitions affect which type individuals are placed in. Both identity achievement and conflict from misinterpreted definitions of certain situations are a crucial but yet sometimes an elusive step towards some level of integration.

Many past studies on cultural adaptation and integration often rely on exchange students (Pedersen, 1994; Ward et al, 2004; Chirkov et al, 2005; Nekby, Rödin and Özcan 2007; Burke et

al, 2009; Mahmud and Masuchi 2013). Exchange students do not have the life commitment LTWs have and tend to view their stay as temporary. 70.1% of westerners<sup>1</sup> surveyed had planned to come to Japan for a year and then return to their home country. As found in the interviews for this study, a large portion of those who have settled for the long-term did not decide to stay until their 3rd to 7th year. There are some who admittedly never decided, but just followed what life had to offer them. Research done on early arrivals within their first five years may not cover the changes necessary to observe community based identity formation. LTWs that are married to a Japanese national and have children together have forged a lifelong connection to Japan. LTW who remain single or are married to non-Japanese will still have professional or career investments which can be difficult to transfer to their home country and therefore decided to stay. There were also cases of divorce from a Japanese national where children are involved. Non-Japanese spouses risk separation from their children if they leave Japan. This is compounded by other social and cultural forces which makes divorce in Japan very different from a westerner's expectations (Arudo and Higuchi 2012). In the end, it is such life experiences over the long-term that reveal more efficient data than the inclusion of those with less time spent in the country.

The ten year mark used to define LTW as "long-term" should also be clarified. An informal survey of colleagues and associates, both Japanese and westerners, was performed. While 10 years was not necessarily unanimous, it has never been contested by those who fit the criteria. There was some objection from those who had resided in Japan for shorter stays, but this is an inevitable response. I also received emails requesting whether someone who had lived in Japan for more than ten years, but had moved to another country would fit the criteria. While the reasons they moved may be interesting to research, the fact they had moved removes them from the goal of the study. Long-term satisfaction is an important part of staying power (Sirgy et al

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix pg. A-13: Q64

1985) when entering a new culture. Some long-term residents have done exceedingly well while others can become decultured (Berry 1980) or rootless (Takeuchi et al 2005), meaning they have not adjusted well to life in Japan. This study hopes to act as a window to the expected development of new arrivals that may be planning to stay long-term.

### **1.1.2 Motivational origin of this research**

Some of the earliest seeds of motivation for this research began with my past experiences growing up in Boston as a third generation Italian/Irish in a multicultural community<sup>2</sup>. Westerners entering the Japanese context intrigued me early in my stay. The position westerners were experiencing was completely the reverse of my grandfather's situation when he and his family first immigrated to the United States. As I discovered in my interviews, even with an economic advantage, westerners have varying styles of integration into a community in Japan. This is especially observable as years pass by and a growing number of hurdles arise among western group members. Divorces, business failures, lack of professional advancement and overall frustration with Japanese culture had grown within the minds of some westerners interviewed, while all along other LTWs seem to thrive. These complications are of course similar to problems they may experience in their home countries. Some choose to blame the culture in a sort of *pseudospeciation*<sup>3</sup> or create an “us” and “them” paradigm, while others have utilized the difference to their own advantage with variations in between.

Respondents who struggle with the contextual differences of Japanese culture have become marginalized from the host culture and frustration has grown out of this. Some LTW observed were experiencing cultural friction derived from a self-perception that did not match how they were perceived by host culture members. Erikson describes this as an identity crisis

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix pg.A-23

<sup>3</sup> *Pseudospeciation* refers to the tendency of members of in-groups to consider members of out-groups to have evolved genetically into different, separate, and inferior species to their own. The term was first used by Erik Erikson in 1966, according to his biographer, Lawrence J. Friedman. Dehumanization is one possible outcome of pseudospeciation, as is ethnic discrimination.

(1980). The early years of living in Japan were described by some respondents as a second adolescent-like period eliciting both positive and negative outcomes. One of the respondents for this study, Dan<sup>4</sup>, put it very simply: “I’d say it was like being a baby, but one who is fully self-aware (Dan: 1).” David, another respondent, also suggested it is one of the keys to being happy as an expat:

There's a thing that I refer to...., the resetting of the odometer when you come here. Chronologically, if I were in America, I would be 55, but here I'm 30.... (Interviewer: do you feel younger?) Oh, totally because I had to learn everything from zero.....It's an elixir of life to come to another country, with that attitude. (David: 7)

This type of thinking was used by many of the respondents who were well-grounded in their lives in Japan. Meanwhile, some westerners were being identified as something they did not believe was an accurate representation of how they see themselves belonging to their surroundings. Some of those interviewed mentioned how they feel they are singled out because they are non-Japanese. This can cause LTWs to see things in the “us” and “them” paradigm making the act of an individual as a representation of the culture as a whole. Steve gave this example:

...if I'm talking on the cell phone on the train for example, people will tell me that that's not okay, but if you see another Japanese person talking on the phone on the train...., then they don't say anything to the Japanese person. For some reason there's that kind of it's okay to tell him because maybe he doesn't know, but for Japanese people it is okay because they know, and are just ignoring the rule, and being overly corrective in certain situations. (Steve: 4)

Steve makes some assumptions that all Japanese think the same way as the “people” he has been confronted by on the train. His experiences prove there are Japanese who may do this, but the question is whether or not the majority would do the same thing. Different types of LTW would have various reactions to this very situation.

Economically, westerners often do better than other foreign groups in Japan, but can still become detached from the mainstream sectors of society and commonly mislabeled by certain

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<sup>4</sup> For the sake of anonymity, all respondents’ names have been replaced by pseudonyms.

Japanese. Over a long-term stay, many respondents stated they wish to be classified as accomplished and knowledgeable about Japan. Unfortunately, in a first meeting, certain Japanese make little distinction or attempt to distinguish the LTW they are speaking to from their own culturally imbedded stereotypical images of westerners.

I think they (Japanese) don't understand that if you've been in a country for a decent length of time it's acceptable ... it's perfectly common for that foreigner to be able to speak Japanese, read Japanese, know stuff about the country. I think that there seems to be an assumption that if you're in Japan you never really quite understand "our" culture. The people explain things to me that I've known for twenty years. Even though they know how much I ... how well I speak and even though they know my background. They still will, you know, tell me something.  
(Ann: 5)

Someone who has lived in Japan for 20 years is often asked the same questions over and over again, and may be repeatedly misunderstood as other than a fully functional individual within the Japanese system. This is mostly because westerners are seen as temporary. They also tend to be favored by Japanese over other foreign groups (Maruyama 1999). Some respondents mentioned they are treated as visitors rather than productive members of society who, in some cases, can perform at a highly functioning level within the host culture. But this is not always applicable according to the interviews.

There is a sense of autonomy for some bilingual and bicultural LTW. On the other hand, there are respondents who have lived in Japan for a long period of time, but feel they have little autonomy and even feel boxed in. These respondents may have little freedom in some parts of society and are heavily reliant on Japanese to help them with specific linguistic or culturally based tasks. This does not mean they are not productive in their work, but they may perpetuate the stereotypical image of Japanese have of western foreigners. The lack of recognition received by LTW about their productivity creates stress for some within Japanese based cultural situations (O'Keefe 2013) leading to identity conflicts overtime. This has also been labeled "negative assimilation" (Chiswick and Miller 2012). But identity, rather than assimilation, is where this research started and aimed to finish.

## **1.2 Chapter preview**

Chapter 2 will explain the conceptual framework of this study. Literature reviews for hybrid identity, life satisfaction, cultural fit, acculturation as well as *othering* are all presented in this chapter to explain the basic foundation of this study. Quotes from respondents are also applied throughout this chapter to help visualize the connections to the past literature.

Chapter 3 will explain the basic methodology used to perform the empirical research for this study. The qualitative portion of this chapter will further explain methods used in collecting the data. The findings of the nationwide survey, which collected 307 useable forms, are split into two parts. The first part utilizes cross tables to explain observed differences in the sexes in the survey's raw data. The second part reveals the results of factor analysis of the survey items and a Pearson's correlation coefficient test, which is taken from a past study (O'Keefe 2016).

Chapter 4 enters into the explanation of components used to determine parts of the typological results in Chapter 5. The catalysts for change are all individually explained and detailed to help form a clear image of how they help determine the location of a respondent within the typological layout. Catalysts include the presence of a conscious commitment to connect to the community. The effects of language skills on in-group and community influence. Next, the effects of affiliations with family, friends, and groups have on a respondent's typological placement. The difference between discrimination and how it differs from microaggressions is elaborated on. Finally, a comprehensive layout is given of respondent's quotes on life satisfaction and cultural fit.

Chapter 5 utilizes all the combined results of the questionnaire and the interviews to explain the types of LTW. The purpose here is to have qualitative and quantitative data act in a reciprocal manner to reinforce one another when possible. The empirical research coupled with referenced literature along with the presence of combinations specific catalysts as well as the

scaled results of life satisfaction and cultural fit are all taken into account in the final typological discovery of this study.

Chapter 6 will discuss and conclude the results of this research as well as the challenges that await future LTW in Japan, pointing out specific pieces of empirical data that hopefully will contribute to possible future work.

Figures appearing in this dissertation are numbered in the order in which they appear in a chapter. Tables only appear in Chapter 3 and are only numbered chronologically and are not preceded by the chapter number.

A final note on how some language will be italicized or quoted in this paper. Japanese words as well as vocabulary that has been specifically used or redefined within this study will all be italicized when first mentioned within any specific chapter. Quotes are sometimes used to label a particular word entering the discussion (i.e. “migrants”). This paper has also adopted the commonly used Hepburn system of Romanization for Japanese vocabulary when written in English.

## **Chapter 2: Conceptual framework**

Before introducing the empirical data collected for this study, it needs to be preceded by explanations of certain theoretical and conceptual framework taken from past literature which are either used within the model or congruent to it. This chapter also introduces a more in depth look at the criteria as well as a closer look at immigration theory. Past literature for the two *styles of belonging* (cultural fit and life satisfaction) are presented along with the origins of the term hybrid identity. Acculturation theory is also included due to the relevance and close ties with the hybrid concept. Finally, an observation made in this study of *intragroup othering* and the effects it has on the formation of identity with the LTW group.

### **2.1 Why westerners?**

As recorded on Wa-pedia<sup>1</sup>, a web site that posts statistics on Japan, the western foreign population is very small compared to other immigrant groups, at only 0.01% of Japan's whole population. As of 2014, according to Japan's Ministry of Justice, the westerner population from the United States (51,256), England (15,262), Canada (9,286), Australia (9,350) and New Zealand (3,119) falls at 88,273<sup>2</sup>. According to Selmer and Lauring (2009) European and non-European westerners have similar cultural adjustment rates. For this reason some other European countries that do not fall under the definition of an English native speaker were also included. The combination of native and non-native English speaking western foreigners from Germany, France and Italy make it the fifth largest foreign group living in Japan. As large as it is, there is very little data on the integrative styles of LTWs living in Japan. There are questions which will inevitably arise when hearing the focus of this study: Why focus on such a small economically stable high status group? Is this a study of white people in post-war Japan?

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<sup>1</sup> Wa-pedia is a website offers various statistics for Japan. Various foreigner group statistics: [http://www.wa-pedia.com/gaijin/foreigners\\_in\\_japan.shtml](http://www.wa-pedia.com/gaijin/foreigners_in_japan.shtml). These statistics show Asian groups are predominant and also show the breakdown of western foreigners who only make up 0.01%. 37% of who are found in Tokyo.

<sup>2</sup> Japanese Ministry of Justice. Retrieved February 2014. *Registered foreign residents*. [http://www.moj.go.jp/housei/toukei/toukei\\_ichiran\\_touroku.html](http://www.moj.go.jp/housei/toukei/toukei_ichiran_touroku.html)

Most sociological studies usually focus on immigrants of lower economic standing entering first world countries. This research is the reverse of that process separating itself from standard immigration theory and is rather from a social psychological perspective.

Rumbaut (1994) conducted a study showing the different paths towards “assimilation” and ethnic identity of various groups such as Asians, Latin Americans and Caribbean immigrants. Studies like Rumbaut show how criteria need to be isolated to represent a fair cultural representation and image of specific groups. This study hopes to contribute to recognizing the cultural challenges westerners face even with their higher socioeconomic status. It plans to show how they can become a functional part of Japanese society while incorporating their bicultural experience to form an identity unique to their group and in some cases beneficial to the Japanese community in their sphere of influence. Their contributions could help elevate Japan one step closer into a globally inclusive status. While Japan has undoubtedly gone global, the mixing of culture within companies has been a huge hurdle. Most westerners come as sojourners or adventurers first, not as immigrants (Komai 2001), so it would be a difficult jump for them to commit to a long-term employment relationship needed to join a Japanese company. Their lighthearted reasons for coming to Japan compared to the *nissei* South Americans, Koreans or Chinese immigrants are in stark contrast. Even though their decision to become long-term may not have come until later in their stay, many have developed “intercultural communicative competence.” This means they have the capability to interact with Japanese within cultural values, norms and behaviors (Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu 2011) while balancing their differences in the areas needed to maintain who they are. This study will also present that it makes more sense to hire proven long-term residents, rather than unadjusted new arrivals. But this concept challenges the current Japanese business culture, which tends to hire people with too much previous experience or advanced age under contracts only. While the experience of being a foreigner in Japan may have some similarities across the different foreign resident groups, the divergence between immigrants from South America,

Korea and China alike compared to that of westerners is one of stark historic, socio-economic and cultural contextual difference. Timberlake et al (2015) explores the role of stereotyping has on immigration and found that certain groups are given higher status within certain constructs. When placed on the hierarchy of foreign residents in Japan, westerners are often at the top (Kanno, 2008a; Kelsky, 2001; Yamanaka, 2008a).

The socioeconomic disadvantage experienced by non-western foreigners compounded by discrimination and hesitation in full acceptance by the Japanese host culture is derived from historical and political conflicts. Western foreigners have a different set of political and cultural history separating them from larger foreign born groups (Komai 2001). When first arriving in Japan, western foreigners tend to be more frequently greeted and given a higher status than other non-Japanese groups. This is where some disparity begins. While westerners are received with the pleasantries of being greeted as guests, this feeling continues throughout their stay and can create an ever-present gap between them and their Japanese counterparts. It may take years to realize the plateauing effect because of the lack of sanctioning from the host culture (O'Keefe 2015), who rarely correct their mistakes in social and professional relationships.

Although as seen in the previous quote by interviewee respondent Steve, strangers who are not part of their social or professional relationships may openly correct any inappropriate actions of foreigners. But it is in the social and professional spheres which people will form an identity. This growth within the culture must be a conscious attempt by the individual. If no such attempt is made, the individual's ability to prosper is left to the fate of the privilege of their western status and native contacts within the system. This may result in role confusion or feelings of inferiority.

Economic success can and has been observed in westerners who have relied on their western status to elevate them in the Japanese system (O'Keefe 2013), but this does not mean all westerners experience financial success and stability. Although, on average they have greater economic success compared to other foreign groups, this very success can distract from

the cultural distance they have from the host culture. In some cases, the inability to integrate into the host culture can cause economic stagnation and affect their ability to move up within the workplace when compared to their Japanese counterparts (Takenaka et al 2015). On the other hand, success can be experienced even without language creating a bubble which controls any invasion of influence from the host culture. This situation like other choices previously mentioned will show negative effects as their sphere of influence within the borders of the Japanese context shrinks over the long term. There are successful examples of integrative methods found in the interviews performed for this study showing how westerners can change the Japanese host culture into a sort of controlled co-culture even within the borders of Japan through the use of various Japanese complexes. This may be unique to the western foreigner group only. Other minorities in Japan create their own ethnic communities which create a unique culture of their own (Morehead 2010), but when they exit it they enter back into the host culture. Their community is stationary, but westerners can use their status wherever they go. They have the choice to use their status to control the culture around them if they choose to utilize the post-war complex many Japanese feel around westerners.

The transference from guest status to an in-group one is not always the route long-term residents take. The concept that a westerner cannot enter into the inner circles of Japanese society is in many ways true but not necessarily in the ways conventionally thought. There are no outbursts of exclusion. It is subtle. It is not in or out, it is more aptly described as sometimes in and sometimes out. Many westerners prefer to retain a portion of their outsider status rather than entering 100% into the inner workings of the Japanese system for fear of getting caught in a web of duties which would be considered tedious and unnecessary from the westerner's point of view. One respondent remarked: "I think being in the middle is a strength" (Tim: 8). The "middle" he is referring to is the hybrid structure they create rather than choosing to fully assimilate. This does not mean LTW do not bring value to the Japanese system, but rather

incorporate the needs of both cultures to seamlessly merge together without conflict while only making consciously acceptable sacrifices.

Some westerners become masters of the culture, but from a functionalist perspective their place in the social construct of Japan is slowly redefined, which is where the hybrid model can be applied to show how they speed up the process. Their high socioeconomic and cultural status allows them the freedom to be more creative with their ability to manifest development and control their depth of integration than other immigrant groups. But there are also latent functions, such as the permanent guest status, which can hold some westerners back from cultivating a place for themselves in society. Finding their place in the social order where they share similar values to the host culture and manifest this into their interactive habits while they remain within the acceptable parameters of their behavior defines their own hybrid identity.

This study hopes to clarify the hybrid styles of LTWs in the Japanese system by using original empirical research collected by the author. The melting pot concept often used in the past in the United States tries to show a mixture of cultures “harmonizing” within one society. This term can be interpreted in many different ways and can use contradictory labels which put the concept itself in question (Underwood 1994). Having grown up in a predominantly Irish and Italian neighborhood, I witnessed many people take pride in their ethnic background. But this could also be observed as a self-defined segregating pattern which actually is the opposite of a melting pot. The pride in one’s own heritage was observed as normal among the LTW interviewed, but when this self-defined difference finds reason to fault other groups, contradictions arise. For westerners to become a welcomed new part of the system, instead of melting, they should act as a strong new branch connected to the current system. In the first of 25 interviews performed for this research, one respondent, David summed up one of the goals of this study very well:

Well, what you have to do is find a way to be yourself, your own true self, and if being your true self happens to align with the basic culture here, you find a way to express your individuality through the confines of the Japanese system. Never, ever criticize the Japanese for being Japanese. If you find situations that are difficult, look at them as opportunities...

...Japan does not need one more imitation Japanese person. What they need is differences and diversity. That's what it's all about. It's finding how you can contribute by being yourself. (David: 2, 3)

David is saying if westerners wish to contribute to the diverse society Japan needs, individuals must find ways to utilize who they are, rather than trying to become Japanese. This can still be a complex task and can take many forms. It could focus on interpersonal, nonverbal, multicultural and subcultural differences which include language and migrant acculturation styles (Jandt 1995) to create the contribution that David is referring to.

## **2.2 Brief overview of immigration theory**

Immigration and a globalization of the workforce has been a widely discussed post-bubble topic in Japan. Studies have focused on globalizing Japan's workforce (Douglass and Roberts 2003), but as the years went by only slight changes have been made to the dismay of many. Japan has had mass immigration policies in the past, usually driven by massive social and political change. More than 800,000 Koreans were residing in Japan in 1938. This number rose to more than 2 million in 1945 (Weiner 2009). War often causes compromise of peacetime choices, but do such changes exist in the present time? Do they need to be connected to conflict? The pre-war immigration policies were due to necessity, not out of becoming international. Understanding the "necessity" for western foreign workers is one of the goals of this study. Japan has historically shown to keep contact with international bodies when it can benefit the country as well as be a controlled influx as displayed to the extreme during the period of *sakoku*<sup>3</sup> and the utilization of the port of *Dejima*<sup>4</sup> during that period. The argument or the myth

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<sup>3</sup> Sakoku is translated literally as "closed country." A preferred translation is "the period of isolation". This is a period when relations were strictly controlled against foreign nationals. Trade with only the Dutch East India Company (VOC) was allowed. After the VOC's bankruptcy, the Netherlands took over the trade route. This lasted for over 200 years and ended with the signing of the Convention of Kanagawa with Commodore Matthew Perry in 1854.

that Japan does not allow immigration is false and this is shown both historically up to the present day (McCormack 1996), but the system itself needs to open up more than past policies have allowed. Japan currently plans to allow more foreign students<sup>5</sup> into Japan<sup>6</sup>, but even with these policies put in place, the discussion of integration will begin.

The classic or straight-line assimilation theory was first applied to the second wave of white European immigrants in the early 1900's in the United States. Studies like William Foote Whyte's ethnography of Italian immigrants entitled, *Street Corner Society* could not be applied to the experiences of non-white immigrants who migrated to the United States in the later 20th century from Latin America and Asian countries (Alba and Nee 1997). While both groups had economic and social problems, the difficulties they encountered were in respective forms due to culture, class and socioeconomic level. While westerners are culturally distant from Japan's high context culture, they are still on the high end of the socioeconomic spectrum among the foreign groups. This makes their complications mostly cultural. In some cases, complications in the assimilation process extend into the second and third generation (Sassler, 2006; Haller et al 2011). This could be true with children who have been born half Japanese and half westerner, but this study only concerns itself with first generation sojourners.

Segmented assimilation theory, which was developed as a combination of straight-line and the ethnic disadvantage model (Portes and Zhou 1993), allows for more flexibility of cultures to mix rather than just merge with the dominant culture. Gans (1992) described the road to assimilation as "bumpy" rather than straight (Vasquez 2011). Segmented theory also assumes that adaptation of immigrants is reliant on the resources brought with them from their

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<sup>4</sup> Dejima was a man-made island located in Present day Nagasaki Prefecture used during the Edo Period as a strictly controlled port for trade with the East India Trading Company (VOC) later taken over by the Dutch government.

<sup>5</sup> *Can Japan Turn to Foreign workers?*, 2013, May 6. Taken from the East Asian Forum. Retrieved on January 2014. <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2013/05/06/can-japan-turn-to-foreign-workers/>

<sup>6</sup> *Japan unveils new program to increase foreign student*. Dec 2, 2013. Taken from Jiji Press. Retrieved in January 2014. <http://newsongjapan.com/html/newsdesk/article/105940.php>

native countries (Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Takenoshita, 2015). These resources are often in the form of support groups linked through immigrants with similar ethnic backgrounds (Portes et al, 2005; Aquilera, 2005). In the case of westerners, they also tend to bring economic stability with them, which many other immigrant groups in Japan do not have when they first arrive (Kanno 2008; Yamanaka 2008b). Of course, the bumpiness that Gans spoke of could easily be applied to the western group. Smooth entry or assimilation at first can become problematic over the long-term, unless they originally entered Japan in a prominent position. The North American and European groups in Japan have been classified in the past as two groups: organizational expatriates (OE) and self-initiated expatriates (SIE) (Edstrom and Galbraith 1992). OEs are often those who enter Japan as transferees or have some connection to a company or organization before arriving in Japan. SIEs, on which this study focuses, came to start a new job or were in search of work or adventure. Even those who enter without a position of prominence can utilize ethnocentric styles grounded in their high western status to elevate them to positions which they may not have had access to in their own countries. This is also not an option of non-western foreign groups. This was observed in the interviews performed for this research, which will be reported on in later chapters.

This said many westerners who stay long-term can experience a transition from their once dominant social position to a more subordinate one. As this shift occurs, the rules of assimilation that were once not applicable slowly become more relevant. While their western status allows them professional options not experienced by other non-Japanese groups, the importance of language becomes more noticeable on a social level as time passes. Learning the host culture's language is a key to gaining employment and/or furthering education to gain better employment (Takenoshita, 2015; Harker, 2001). While the later part of this paper will show there is less of a connection between language ability and economic success, from the social aspect, LTWs who did not learn the language have stated that it is one of their deepest regrets (O'Keefe 2013) and has been a factor which keeps them out of mainstream activity.

According to other immigration studies, another key element in the immigration progress is connections to ethnic communities as a support base to promote psychological well-being (Portes et al 2005) which commonly leads to discussions on social capital (Takenoshita 2015). Religion is often used by immigrants to create social relationships (Krause and Bastida 2011). These are innate differences when comparing westerners to other foreign groups. Westerners tend to use language rather than ethnic background to form groups. Language has also been labeled as a social connector in ethnic groups as well (Giles et al 2009), but English fluency rather than ethnicity seems to be the determining aspect in relationship building. Social or professional influence is also a factor. If a LTW has a high level of influence within a network, fluency level will be overlooked in exchange for their potential economic contribution. This creates a higher rate of return of success generated from social capital compared to Asian and South American migrants. High economic success is also connected to high levels of psychological well-being or life satisfaction rather than only ethnic group affiliations.

Acculturation has also been used to explain the mixing and intertwining of cultures by long-term residents and in some cases, when applied successfully, can add to life satisfaction. Acculturation is often used in socio-psychological and intercultural research (Berry et al 2006) and draws on various factors when integrating into a society. Berry et al uses language proficiency, family relationship values, ethnic/peer connections and perceived discrimination as components to measure varying degrees of cultural adaptation. This has also been applied to LTWs in Japan (Komisarof 2012). As the discussion turns to acculturation from a social psychological angle, it is time to inject the topic of identity. Erikson (1980) also stated that attempting to determine the depths of the individual within the community would result in a need to use psychological as well as social science research to complete the task. This study will take the approach Erikson suggested by referencing other disciplines to obtain the clearest possible results.

## **2.3 Life satisfaction vs. identity**

As the discussion in the earlier sections on respondent criteria and immigration turn towards life satisfaction and identity, the goal of this research starts to reveal and define itself. While life satisfaction is the focus on an individual's feelings of satisfaction, identity is a connection or self-sameness felt within a community. The former can be attained without the other while the latter needs the other to exist. Whether the community is Japanese, western expats or a hybrid community in Japan does not matter. The learned or innate ability to "fit" into the society and progress either professionally, socially or both is also covered in Chapter 4.

The research for this study has reached into various fields to collect valuable data and information from various angles to help determine the most accurate outcome.<sup>7</sup> 177 out 307<sup>7</sup> respondents answered life satisfaction or quality of life as a reason for remaining in Japan for the long-term. Life satisfaction has been used as a factor to give an in-depth look at how individuals evaluate their life and future opportunities. Life satisfaction can be used to measure professional or economic advancement ability as well as how they view their daily life. Also known as satisfaction with life (Mahmud and Masuchi 2013) on a personal-level, an individual could define high level life satisfaction in Japan by successes in their professional or private life meanwhile having very little connection with the Japanese in their community or the workplace. Life satisfaction is a reflection of personal well-being, which is different from the multi-dimensional approach taken by subjective well-being studies. The term "satisfaction" also may be translated or defined slightly different across cultures (Levine 1991), but this can be difficult to take into account due to the wide variance in cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Life satisfaction also has a history of being connected to studies on identity (Lim and Putnam 2010) and has been used with research on social capital as well (Suh, 2002; Kroll, 2008).

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<sup>7</sup> Appendix pg. A-7: Q14. 177 out 307 was the third most common reason chosen for this item. Respondents were allowed to choose several reasons in this item. Work and family ranked higher at first and second respectively.

One example of life satisfaction as a reflection of personal well-being could be a high ranking executive in a Japanese company that operates internationally but within the borders of Japan. Such executives are at the top of their collective hierarchy creating a fairly large cultural cushion for them to utilize (Peltokorpi and Froese 2009) even if they do not have language skills. However, in general, executives of such caliber are often organizational expats (OE). They are given a special guest status even if they have lived in Japan for many years. Although in recent years this seems to be fading with more universities and companies stressing the importance of bilingual non-Japanese applicants. On the other hand, many Japanese companies are requesting high levels of English ability from Japanese applicants. University teachers who have been hired into departments dealing with language or acting as visiting professors do not need Japanese language skills and as educators they are put into a special category that allows them to navigate around any language requirements that may arise by utilizing bilingual staff or colleagues. This could create an easier transference into a Japanese work environment and promote high life satisfaction especially for those still in the first few years of their stay. This style of satisfaction is more of a result of utilizing the Japanese around them rather than creating real relationships of mutual understanding.

This research has discovered many of the respondents were satisfied with their lives in Japan. There were observations taken from the interviews that show examples of individuals with only a slight connection to the Japanese community. To them, Japan is only the backdrop of where they live rather than having feelings of being a part of a different society. This is covered more in Chapter 4 and 5 as the catalysts shown in the hybrid model come into play within the various types of identity. The contrasting statements of respondents (Dorothy, Dan and Ann) shown in the later chapters are used to explain different views on satisfaction. They offer an interesting view into language-based and non-language-based connectivity to the communities they live in and offer some caveats of bilingualism.

There have been recent studies on how bilingualism reduces some cognitive advantages. Folke et al (2016) states that bilinguals subjected to a cognitive test scored lower confidence levels than monolinguals. Although confidence has been shown not to be correlated with competence (Kruger and Dunning 1999; Ehrlinger et al 2008; Dunning 2011), in many cases it is often the opposite. Cognitive tests are based on a system which does not draw from the individual's experience. They are only used to record the reaction of the subject. Therefore, creating an environment of doubt, which bilinguals will access with caution, may result in the perceived lack of confidence. Cognitive testing also does not counter the strong complex “frontal lobe” or “executive functions” bilinguals have (Miyake et al 2000), which allows English/Japanese bilinguals in Japan to feel more connected to the non-English speaking Japanese. While this disconnect from the host culture is often verbally recognized by monolinguals who have been interviewed for this study, the depth of the cultural disconnection monolinguals have can be challenging for bilinguals to explain (O’Keefe 2013). Language ability could be considered a major divide when trying to explain the different experiences of westerners, however the effects on life satisfaction showed to be minimal as displayed in the empirical results in Chapter 3.

Life satisfaction theory, like identity, has taken on many forms and can involve both group connections as well as solely an individual’s satisfaction as a stand-alone concept. To be clear, this study uses Erickson’s (1980) definition of identity, which states an identity is found within the simultaneous self-sameness experienced between the community and the individual. When creating the survey, a life satisfaction scale plus several items focusing on personal satisfaction were included. Mahmud and Masuchi’s (2013) concept of satisfaction with life was also implemented into the survey as well as focus group specific information from past research interviews. One of the goals for this study is to see if life satisfaction within the Japanese construct had any correlations to an individual’s personality rather than knowledge gained after arriving in Japan, including Japanese language ability. The term “cultural fit” (CF) has been

used in management studies to observe whether or not an individual will fit into a company's culture. Peltokorpi used this concept to research how expats fit into the certain Japanese host culture. He wrote: "The cultural fit hypothesis maintains that it is not only the expatriates personality traits per se, but the fit between personality traits and host country cultural values, norms and prototypical personality traits that predicts their adjustment to the host country's culture" (Peltokorpi 2014: p295). The original concept finds basis in several past studies (Searle and Ward 1990; Ward and Chang 1997; Ward et al. 2004). I also explored the possibility that it could be an attainable skill which could be linked to successfully applied knowledge rather than being only an inborn trait of the individual before even arriving in the host country.

As previously stated, for the sake of this study personal life satisfaction differs from identity because it can be observed completely separate from the community and exists independently. A western foreigner, who is economically independent, is free to make or break contact with the host culture when they wish due to their socioeconomic status. This returns to the earlier discussion on OEs and SIEs (Edstrom and Galbraith 1977). OEs tend to enter the country with a fairly higher status than most SIEs. OEs tend to focus on work necessities rather than gaining cultural knowledge and language learning (Peltokorpi 2008). Due to their status, they may not need to conform to the host culture, especially in the top down social system of Japan. Examples of such jobs could be high level managers, professional athletes or researchers hired directly from overseas. Professional separation can occur when a specific position allows minimum contact or is a position that has the option to control contact with host culture members due to status. The example of a university teacher who performs their workplace duties in English only was given earlier in this chapter. They have the option to do so while leaving the burden of translation and communication on bilingual Japanese staff members. This may be a functional relationship, but only foreigners with western status could have such options available to them over the long-term. Asians or South Americans would be expected to speak Japanese to even be considered for such a position. These types of positions can also offer

high levels of life satisfaction but low levels of host culture contact. Quality of life studies (QOL) have researched the satisfying disconnect from the host culture, stating it is not true life satisfaction because the quality of life is affected by the limited interaction. Sirgy et al (1985: 223) stated “QOL can be measured by minimal amount of conflict, but this does not include avoidance.” Conscious avoidance of the responsibility or connections to the host culture by some members of the LTW group has been documented in this study. This avoidance can create a disconnection to the community which is one way to approach how life satisfaction can be rolled into discussions of the types of hybrid identity given in Chapter 5.

While the multi-dimensional approach taken by Lim and Putnam (2010) on satisfaction differs from this study, it still offers an example of how identity and life satisfaction can be connected. Their research gives evidence of the participatory and social effects of religion’s impact on life satisfaction. Religion acts as a culture within itself with various rules and deep connections through membership. The rules applied within a religion set the stage for identity easily being formed, which in this situation goes hand and hand with satisfaction. The focus on religion is due to the congregational networks which many church members access on a weekly basis and offers an interesting observable microcosm of identity (Campbell, Converse and Rodgers 1976). The common identity shared with the congregation creates an environment of like-minded thinking (Krause 2008), which promotes a strong control group with a predetermined rule based context. In this sense, the microcosm of a church’s congregational networks is seen as a model for cultural context as well. This study utilizes the basic concept of life satisfaction affecting types of identity in different ways, but with a modified approach which could be applied to the focus group specifically in this study.

Religion has been known to be a barrier some immigrants face when entering a new host culture (Amit and Bar-Lev 2015). LTW feel little to no religious conflict or pressure in Japan,<sup>8</sup> but unless they are connected to an institution which promotes their faith, those interviewed

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<sup>8</sup> Appendix pg. A-11: Q34.

show no serious religious conflicts. The concept used for this study is based on the cultural based contextual backgrounds of westerners existing within the construct of the Japanese host culture. While westerners arriving in Japan are most likely coming from a low context western culture (LCC), there seems to be some cases of personal history acting as a cushion, creating a better fit into the host culture than others (Hall 1976). The pre-exposed knowledge of similar philosophic and educational history creates a reliable environment to inhibit group cooperation with the individual. This cooperation is a building block of identity for the individual and simultaneously promotes successful group membership. Unlike churchgoers who have a religious doctrine forming their basis of interaction within church groups, westerners do not have many rules to guide them through the depths of the highly contextualized Japanese culture beyond the basic cultural no-nos everyone learns when first arriving in the country. Nonetheless, even without knowing the extent of all the rules, having a culturally agreeable disposition espouses to the creation of a community connected identity.

While this research does not approach the topic of religion, it does try to show correlation with life satisfaction and organized and/or unorganized group membership. Affiliations with groups of similar interests and goals will most likely promote satisfaction and possibly extend into developing an identity, but these groups are not always associated with the host culture. If the groups are non-Japanese based groups, there is somewhat of a general disconnect from the host society. In the case of western foreigners they tend not to gather according to nationality, as their Asian or South American counterparts do. Language acts as a factor when joining non-Japanese groups (O'Keefe 2016).

Westerners who join Japanese groups to network or to study a traditional art form, such as the tea ceremony or martial arts, are also subject to more cultural experiences, which can enhance their connection to the host society. This may be considered “cultural appropriation,” a term which often has a negative connotation (Young and Brunk 2012), but only when a culture is appropriated by a member of another culture specifically individuals who are classified with

higher economic status and completely separated from the “other.” While this method of thought is common in many studies, there should be a distinction for LTWs of a country who wish to, on some level, integrate deeper into their adopted country. This split is often experienced by certain groups of LTW. Those who masterfully balance between the two and feel no stressful restrictions on their movement would be considered the ideal.

A host culture member as part of the family, usually in the form of a spouse or partner, creates a cushion and the possibility that balanced community interaction will increase. The quality of that cushion is of utter importance. If the non-Japanese person is too reliant on the Japanese partner, unnecessary stress could also be an aspect creating a narrow area of operation for the non-Japanese partner. The majority of survey responses, however, showed few rely on others for Japanese support.<sup>9</sup> Foreign women who marry Japanese men tend to speak at least intermediate Japanese according to Ann who mentioned this topic during her interview.

...women who stay in Japan are nearly always married to Japanese. Usually they are fluent or very good in Japanese, because if they hadn't and they did that fairly quickly because if they don't achieve a certain level of ... quite a good level of Japanese a lot of Japanese men won't consider them for their wives.

So, a lot of women that I know...like as I said I'm in my fifties. So a lot of women that I know, who I've known for twenty, thirty years they are also in their fifties or sixties or something. They're incredibly hearty and flexible, strong. They're generally quite good mothers I think and often quite good career women...most of the women I know who live in Japan are pretty amazing people.

Yeah, I'm not talking about the kids that are here for a couple of years and then go home, right. So, you can flip the whole argument around and say, if a woman doesn't learn Japanese she's unlikely to find romance. Which is the reason why she goes.

Because it's a bit harder here. It's very hard to date, for example. You know, a gentleman is not likely to pick you up and they're a little bit passive and things like that. So, if they don't find romance in let's say the first few years they are more likely to leave. (Ann: 6)

There is also data from the survey showing similar results which will be explained in the empirical review in Chapter 3. Other respondents had similar answers to Ann, saying they did not know of any married western women who did not speak Japanese. There is a long history of western men marrying Japanese women (Leupp 2003), but examples of western women

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<sup>9</sup> Appendix pg. A-13: Q78.

marrying a Japanese national are fewer. Japanese society still puts heavy responsibilities in the community on the mother to act as the social connection for the family and children at school.

An example of role reversal was discovered in an American woman, Judi, who took on the traditional male “breadwinner” role with her Japanese husband working part-time and acting as house husband. While her story is explained in Chapter 5 in typological findings, it shows Ann’s statement of long-term female residents in Japan being flexible in an observable situation.

Life satisfaction of the LTW is what is at stake when those married to a non-Japanese partner with children must plan how they will interact with the Japanese community as their children grow up. Especially western parents who do not speak the language need to find ways to supplement the language and remove cultural barriers so there is minimal stress for the children. This could be in the form of Japanese tutors or having them attend an international school in their area. The latter choice is only for those with the economic means or scholarship recipients. A married couple without a host culture member has some disadvantages, but parents who actively try to close the gap have shown success. This was the case with Cathy, who in her interview mentioned how well her two daughters had integrated into the Japanese school system even though both parents are non-Japanese.

Other westerners, who do not speak Japanese, have expressed difficulty when raising children. Some cases lead to the children having difficulty in school or being bullied (O’Keefe 2013) and children with one or two foreign parents have a higher dropout rate than Japanese children do (Miyajima 2010). Various factors have been calculated into the survey covering the results of items on life satisfaction of respondents. This topic is discussed in detail in Chapter 4. The goal is to show that while it is known that life satisfaction is one key to assimilation for “established” long-term immigrants (Angelini et al 2015: 5), there is a difference between being only satisfied or having created an identity connected to the host culture. Past studies have stated that life satisfaction carries over from the first to second generations from a socio-psychological viewpoint (Safi 2010). In general, studies show that the second generation of

immigrants has a higher life satisfaction than the first (Berry et al 2006; Mahmud and Scholmerich 2011). There may be an argument against this in the Japanese host culture. Social pressures of the Japanese host culture can create a less than optimal atmosphere for those who are different from what would be considered the norm in Japan (Morehead 2010). The style of the parents and how strongly they identify with the community or operate within a Japanese environment can be a deciding factor (O'Keefe 2014).

### **2.3.1 Cultural fit**

The cultural fit model has been used to describe a predisposition of first generation migrants to fit or to mesh well into a host culture. The cultural fit model can be interpreted two ways: the natural ability to fit into a particular foreign culture or someone who has applied the acquired knowledge learned before or after entering the host culture to fit in (Ward and Chang 1997). The term “agreeableness” (Buss 1991) has been used to describe a similar trait as cultural fit. In Japanese, the word *sunao* is often used by Japanese to describe those who are easy to work with. The amount of knowledge the individual has is not as important as actually being able to implement proper interactive methods (O'Keefe 2013). The concept is: one may be able to learn all the correct ways and different cultural norms in a Japanese community or organization from a book or classroom, but in practice such knowledge can be challenging and may go against some individuals' personal characteristics and belief systems. This adjustment can cause identity conflicts (Leong and Ward 2000). In some cases, cultural fit may just be an inherent trait of some people's personalities (Mount et al 1998), making it easier for them to apply what they have learned or to possibly naturally fit into the host culture. Older studies like Guthrie (1975) have said that personalities have nothing to do with cross cultural adjustment. However, research on the topic revealed the opposite soon thereafter (Searle and Ward 1990). Simply said a sojourner from America may fit into the French construct, but may not fit into the Japanese one.

Connections to stable emotions according to Ones and Viswesvaran (1999) also allow for a smoother transition. Emotionally negative situations will have an effect on the satisfaction of individuals and eventually resulting in a poor cultural fit. One example could be someone in a troubled mixed marriage will be more likely to have difficulty dealing with the stress of host culture differences than someone who is happily married. Burke et al (2009) also concluded that communication in the host language with host nationals was never shown to be a factor of integration. This was supported in research showing cultural fit having more influence on life satisfaction than language skills (O'Keefe 2016).

The implementation of cultural fit and measuring the cultural distance or the socio-cultural variances of different countries is also a critical point of the equation. Kogut and Singh (1988) took Hofstede's (1980)<sup>10</sup> widely used multidimensional model and simplified it into a single index, which has been slightly adjusted recently by Kandogan (2012). Kandogan, as did Hofstede, uses power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance plus adding long-term orientation as a guide to determine national cultural distance. Japan is often found at the opposite end of the spectrum when compared to western countries. Edward Hall (1976) used simplified terms such as "low context culture" and "high context culture" when explaining cultural distance or gaps. These concepts have been used in studies to determine the effects of cultural distance as well as language ability on an individual's assimilation (Froese and Peltokorpi 2011). In the case of LCC westerners entering the HCC of Japan, having the benefit of naturally fitting in constitutes a less challenging pass over the culture gap. Japan's cultural gap is very subtle to newer arrivals and could easily be mistaken by a newbie as a good fit. But a newbies inability to recognize the definitions of situations is their greatest weakness. The fit needs to be confirmed on both sides over the long term. Mistakenly assuming a fit has occurred will create growing difficulties as time passes.

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<sup>10</sup> Hofstede's (1980) model used four cultural dimensions including power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individuality and masculinity to determine cultural distance.

A smooth entry into the host culture may not promote language learning and other cultural necessities due to the seemingly forgiving nature of the Japanese. The initial feeling of easily entering Japan for some westerners can grow into a complex confusing experience with the passing of time creating doubt and confusion in one's personal and professional life. The HCC of Japan does not commonly correct those who are not an in-group member. Rather they may over compliment westerners instead. This is why entering a formal Japanese group can be a crucial part of integration for some. This also offers a paradox for others. The definition of what a formal group would be a company or organization with specific rules and goals which are generated from host culture members within said organization. Groups of friends would be considered an informal group. Self-employed subjects may not be part of the Japanese system unless their business is geared towards the Japanese market. Formal groups are more likely to view LTWs as part of their hierarchy; therefore they will sanction LTW members when necessary so the proper learning of the group's system can be attained. If one does not enter a Japanese system, they may receive a type of permanent guest status. When asked about his own status, Carlo replied like this:

...every day you're reminded that it's not your home...You get in taxi, oh we're you from? Every day you're reminded it's not, so it's hard to buy into my home. My adopted home? My current home? I don't know what I would call it, but the assault of the constant reminder that it's not your home, that you are a guest here...I could walk out the door any day and decide not to speak Japanese at all and be treated as oh, you just got off the plane just because of the way I look. (Carlo: 8)

Carlo is a self-employed Latino American, with a friendly open style, but even after 25 years, he still carries some frustrations. He chose to use the word "assault" when describing the repetitive nature of the same questions being asked to him which constantly remind him he does not belong in Japan. While this sounds demeaning, there are some westerners who prefer this route and enjoy the attention as the foreign guest.<sup>11</sup> The disconnect is valued and offers a separation from the Japanese system. Heavy cultural responsibilities are required when acting

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<sup>11</sup> This is reference to interview respondent MJ in O'Keefe 2013.

as part of the system. It could be described as a feeling of being satisfied but separated. While CF is not in many sociological works, this research would like to try and open up such a possibility. CF should not be confused with segmented assimilation theory or acculturation because its partial reliance on personality and predisposed traits before entering the host culture, which the two previous terms do not cover. The application of identity theory to the above discussions of culture, personality and life satisfaction requires an amalgamation of ideas to envelope the conceptual and contextual differences to be extracted and then reconfigured to construct how the identity of westerners are observed in the final typological forms.

### **2.3.2 Hybrid identity**

The term “hybrid identity” has appeared in several studies. The most notable work is a compilation of research articles edited by Smith and Leavy (2008), but the concept of finding the middle ground to form an identity conjoined and interwoven with the acquisition of a unique blend of two cultures is not necessarily unique to the term and has been used in immigration studies in the United States (Moreman 2009). Cultural hybrids are also referenced in past works. The term “transculturation,” which describes the merging and converging of two cultures, (Ortiz 1995 [1947]) was an earlier term used to describe this phenomenon. Pieterse (2004: 64) defined cultural hybridization as “ways in which forms become separated from the existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices.” The new forms and practices could take shape in many ways, such as one culture emulating something foreign and making it part of their own cultural makeup. The term could be the result of colonization whereby the colonized or the colonizers take on a cultural habit of the “other” not as an act of appropriation, but rather as an understanding of a systematic superiority to one's own past habits. The flexibility and elasticity of the term “hybridity” (Burke 2009) has left the application of the term rather fluid. In recent years the term has also been used in identity and gender studies (Jung, 2004; Bridges et al, 2014). This is most likely the reason the term has found a spot connected

with identity theory. Identity theory also covers a complex weaving of history and culture without ever really being a finished product (Hall 1996). Hall also added the parameters a subject wishes to identify can be taken on wholly, partially or not at all.

The concept used in this paper is similar to the basic framework used in identity studies, but due to the cultural, linguistic and socio-economic disparities of westerners in Japan definability of the hybrid identity model transforms into something new for this specific group. While there have been studies of westerners in Japan, they are often concerned with topics such as acculturation or management of expatriate staff. The approach from the identity standpoint has not been taken, although, if validity has been discovered, I do draw from studies outside the sociological field. Mostly due to the fact westerners in general do not stay for the long-term like other migrants. OEs will inevitably leave the country as their work advances them to different positions. SIEs who become LTW need to recognize the essential need to develop a sustainable relationship with the country and the culture. The experiences westerners have vary greatly from one another. This variance can be difficult to observe, but as the interviews and survey for this study showed, there are patterns that arise. The four patterns or types derived in this study: *frustration, the balance, satisfied but separated and the full circle* are labeled using statements and repetitive terms taken from the survey and interviews. Examples of being 100% assimilated or even finding a subject with that as their goal in mind was non-existent. These separations, in some cases, are done in a masterful way not to disrupt the Japanese relationships around them while creating a pattern of acceptance. Ethnic or racial groups have chosen to work within a host culture, but separate themselves as not to marginalize, but to benefit one's needs and goals (Simmel [1951]1971).

Hybridity may transform pieces of a culture, but hybrid identity model shown earlier in this Chapter 1 (Figure 1-1) encompasses an individual's actions represented by the catalysts to create a connection to the community. It defines who the respondents have developed into after years of living in their adopted country, in this case Japan. The transformations experienced by

an individual can extend from the minuscule to the extensive. “Hybridity encompasses partial identities, multiple roles, and pluralistic selves.” (Smith and Leavy 2008:5). This could be extended to racial, ethnic identity, religion, gender, language use and socio-economic adjustments. Individual papers could be written on all of these angles using the Japanese construct.

Language is an important part of an individual's identity for the transference of information within a community or workplace. A westerner who does not speak Japanese will most likely have a very different style of adapting to the host culture. The Japanese language is not only linguistically distant, but also culturally distant from western languages<sup>12</sup>. It often acts as a bridge into different cultural spaces while helping to define culturally different situations as well as offering entry into areas that would otherwise not be apparent to non-speakers. Most westerners are native English speakers, which brings up another point of discussion. According to findings in this study, both Japanese speakers and non-speakers have proven to do well in Japan. Other foreign groups would most likely not have this split. The western group is the only foreign group to do so. Asian and South American foreign groups could never move up within a job unless they had Japanese skills. Takenoshita (2015) stated in his study on Brazilians in Japan that “a lack of the host-country language fluency hinders immigrants from gaining access to employment, schools and organizations.” In general, non-western workers are not given the pass that westerners are given. Western status in Japan is undeniably higher than other foreign groups. While it would be incorrect to say that westerners do not have similar problems as other foreign groups, they are relatively minor compared to the hurdles Asian and South American migrants would have. Time, however, can be observed as the great equalizer. The passing of time shows where the biggest changes occur. The long stay can transform westerners from the once higher class of western guest to a problematic factor for companies and

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<sup>12</sup> Foreign Service Institute. 2013. “Language Difficulty Ranking.” Retrieved June 2, 2014.  
<http://www.effectivelanguagelearning.com/languagenguide/languagedifficulty> )

universities hoping to only hire on short term contract basis only. The term negative assimilation has been used (Takenaka et al 2015) to explain the decline in earning power westerners can face as they age in Japan. They do not move in tandem with the Japanese system, which promotes with the passage of time, but rather they can get caught in a spiral of contract work.

While this discussion is not as dire of the portrait painted by Park (1928) and Stonequist's (1937), *Marginal Man*, in which Park described living between two cultures as "one whose fate has condemned to live in two societies and in two, not merely different but antagonistic cultures". There is evidence that frustration is experienced by some living in Japan, but the word or even the sense of condemnation has never been apparent, although western and Japanese culture could be seen as antagonistic due to cultural distance. The middle space, also described as the "third space" (Bhabha 1994), has been used in a similar way as in the hybrid identity model. Due to the interwovenness of identities, the middle space is not necessarily an optimum way to explain this phenomenon. The suggestion of a new space puts it into a noticeable position. One who has attained a hybrid identity will fit into various situations without notice due to their seamless style which would appear effortless and almost unobservable to the onlooker. For this reason the concept of hybrid identity could be useful to clarify statements such as Church's (1982: 543) explanation of expatriates who are culturally adjusted: Culturally adjusted expatriates are those who "are open to the host culture, but who integrate new behavior, norms, and roles into the foundation provided by the home culture." Church's statement could be considered a broad definition of hybridity. Another example of cultural adjustment defined by Black (1988) is the degree to which expatriates are psychologically familiar and comfortable with different aspects of the foreign environment. The command of the different aspects of the foreign environment is where dynamic growth will appear.

A quote from Daniel Kahl in *At Home Abroad* (Komisarof 2012), a book which interviews successful westerners in Japan, describes how he uses his own uniqueness as an American while offering a mixture of approaches using both cultural viewpoints to create an irreplaceable talent. Paraphrasing his statement, he said he will never be able to speak Japanese at the level of his Japanese counterparts, but he also knows they will never be able to replicate his unique style, because his background as an American helps him see different angles to stories his Japanese counterparts would not recognize. This is what he attributes to his longevity. While his statement seems rather humble, in reality, Daniel Kahl's command of the Japanese language could be considered extremely high level, but for him the ability to create a hybrid space, is more important than just the language. The idea that non-Japanese have qualities that a Japanese community or organizations do not have access to, is a strength that should be recognized and not hidden or suppressed. Those who feel this way receive the benefits and freedom it offers:

You can do anything you want to...Whereas if you're in the States, now you've got to pull the party line....Yeah, not only that but there's so many politically correct things that have come out since I left that if you don't ... Well, so many issues that if you don't support them, you're shunned. Here, nobody cares what your political views are.

They don't care what your religion is. I love it here....Yeah, Japan is actually far more accepting when it comes down to that. No one will ever challenge me for my religious views, or lack of them, for example. You can be anything here....I told my kids to just be themselves. Don't try and blend in too much. Like what you like. Be who you are. (David: 6)

David is self-employed and regularly deals with Japanese companies. His employment status allows him to create a personalized space for himself in Japan. The existence of agency within his self-formed construct allows maximum flexibility with maximum return but coupled with high risk of failure in the early stages. The avoidance of conformity and negative aspects of his surroundings is his conscious effort to protect his agency (Schwartz et al 2005). He is consciously passing down his knowledge to his children. The answer lies in the individual understanding of the situation and the compromise of two ideas or concepts to create a new one

or in the case of this research, a hybrid one. This concept is not new to many westerners who live successfully in Japan, but this study attempts to define its existence.

### **2.3.3 Acculturation**

The observance of cultural modification or adaptation by an individual or group especially in cases of prolonged exposure is known as acculturation (Berry 1997; Gans 2007; Komisarof 2012). The term has evolved over the years to incorporate multiple levels. Acculturation studies have been used for studies in human resources for expats working in a Japanese work environment (Komisarof 2009). Other studies focus on the turnaround rate for expatriates in Japan through research on the decisions they make based on the “dualistic adjustment, dissonance and coping perspectives” used by expatriates to adjust to the host culture’s style (Takeuchi et al 2005: 123). Both of these studies focus on OEs who are more likely not to be in Japan for more than a few years. But this research can still be valuable to understand how early-stage westerners become acculturated and the strategies they use to accomplish it. This social psychological approach is a significant piece of what hybrid identity is. Cote and Schwartz (2002) used a psychological and sociological approach to identity as well, because of the necessary angles appearing in both disciplines. The combination of identity theory and acculturation are the basic elements of the hybrid concept. The two concepts have been in parallel for many years, but still remain separated (Padilla and Perez 2003).

Berry’s work on his four strategies gives insight to the process of acculturation. Life satisfaction has also been linked to the fourfold acculturation model in past research (Yoon E, et al 2008; Mahmud and Masuchi 2013). Berry split respondents into four categories by asking whether they valued to maintain their identity and whether they valued relationships with the larger society. These inquiries were the basis for the four strategies: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization (Berry 1997). The definition of identity used in his studies is focused on cultural, ethnic and national identity (Berry et al 2006), which are all predisposed

forms of identity before contact with an unfamiliar culture. The establishment of a new hybrid identity is meant to enhance what the individual's identity was prior to their entry and integrating into the newly adopted Japanese host culture. The conscious decision made to maintain their prior identity or try to enter the Japanese community is a component of the hybrid model which shows similar features to Berry's model. It is formed through the navigation and willing comprises made during daily interactions with the Japanese community. This is observed by whether or not self-sameness, described by Erikson, is present or not, which is what separates it from the acculturation concept. Berry also uses language, peer contact, family relationships and perceived discrimination, which are also congruent to this study. There is also evidence of intragroup judgment, which often goes unnoticed by many studies.

#### **2.3.4 Othering and intragroup othering**

In the interviews for this study, several respondents spoke about being *othered* by the Japanese. Respondents often spoke of being labeled with stereotypical images of being western. These stereotypes are rarely offensive in their actual words, but the problem is found in the constant repetition and improper labeling of an individual. The clear separation Japanese create between the host culture and the co-culture can be disconcerting for many LTWs who wish to be a part of their adopted community without always being reminded they are different. Westerners tend to be lumped together in Japan and not recognized for their variety of backgrounds, ethnic groups and individual accomplishments. Many respondents have commented on the term *gaijin* as only offensive if meant to be so, but in general they do not find it offensive. Many would prefer to be called by their country of origin rather than the grouping term *gaijin*. There is a strong case as the term is a tool of "othering", because of the reactions it can promote and define in a simple package.

In general, Japanese identity, through the process of "othering" put non-Japanese in opposition to themselves in terms of class, culture and ethnicity (Lie 2000). Reader (2003)

explained in a book review of how both Harumi Beffu and Eiji Oguma's books on the Nihonjinron display the perpetuated myth of homogeneity often woven in Japanese thought. The Nihonjinron acts as a basis for much of the othering experienced by non-Japanese. Weiner (2009) follows up on the unnecessary acts of *othering* done within the Japanese construct, which are acts mostly fortified with the falsity of homogeneity. The term "*ethnoracial*," rather than the culturally based term "*ethnocentric*," has also been used to describe the combination of race, ethnicity, and nationality in Japan (Hogan 2009). This is to define the shared genetic and cultural heritage of nationalistic based Japanese and what is central to claims that Japan is a homogenetic society (Moorehead 2010).

There were several respondents who spoke of how the Japanese *other* foreign residents into groups and have false images of them. A strong feeling of "us" versus "them" in intercultural interactions was present in some excerpts from the interviews. One respondent, Lee, explained it this way:

I have not been discriminated against in way that contained any personal malice, but by virtue of being a foreigner, there have been occasions where that has been pointed out, so to speak, and therefore essentially that has been a discrimination, but it's never been with any sort of malice. The Japanese people that made their comments were doing so in humor, but quite conscious of the fact that they were pointing out that I was a foreigner.

They call out *gaijin* or mothers and fathers that you would hear talking about some foreigners in the park. They use the word *gaijin*, which it not necessarily a derogatory term in and of itself, but often in the context of how it's used, it obviously does make a distinction between them and us and so, in that way, you could say it was discrimination. I stress again, it's not necessarily with any malice. (Lee: 3)

Lee stressed twice that he realizes no "malice" is intended and fully understands no intentional harm is meant. One reason he makes a point to explain he understands what his Japanese counterparts mean is because in the past when he has tried to explain his feelings to Japanese he was told he does not understand their intentions. This occurred early in his stay and it presents a conundrum which needs to be addressed by all LTW. If someone who is ignorant of the co-culture breaks the rules within the host culture's construct, which culture should change? A fair answer may be both, but the realistic one is most likely the co-culture, but

with the goal of educating the host culture to change over time. When Lee confirms his understanding, he has already accepted the situation but continues to explain his feelings so as to hopefully inject some change into the host culture. This is a learned action from years of experience of being told that he does not understand that Japanese are not trying to be hurtful. The term *gaijin* can be used in either a derogatory or harmless way. This depends on the varying levels of sensitivity from person to person. Experience over time helps smooth out possibly volatile exchanges from happening. Some respondents professed even over time they cannot get used to the bombardment of verbal flubs:

No, when it comes to (style of martial art). I've been practicing for 17 years now. I'm 100 percent assimilated. I'm *godan*, I'll challenge for *rokudan*<sup>13</sup> in May. I have all the rights and privileges and expectations of anybody else in my shoes. I love it.

For some reason, just to sit there and eat with other parents and kids and have to reintroduce myself and have to start from zero and put up with the, you use chopsticks, or you can eat this, you eat sushi. I just can't deal with it.

At the same time, I don't want to tell these people off because I have respect for them that their kids and my kids are best friends. I just can't tell them to go take a leap off a pier. My way of dealing with that is just don't get involved whatsoever. I would never share that on Facebook. I would never tell anybody that to be honest.  
(Chris: 3)

Chris showed a variance in how he has acclimated himself into one community through years of effort while finding it difficult to create relationships with other parents in his children's school groups. He has chosen complete separation from that group rather than trying to explain who he is all over again. He also stated he would never openly comment on this to SNS groups, but there were others who shared the same sentiment. They have just learned to keep complaints of certain stressful areas of the culture to themselves. Both Lee and Chris recognize no malice by the Japanese is intended, but there is still the feeling of a line being drawn between them and the Japanese person they are speaking with. This type of interaction has been dubbed a "microaggressions." This is when the actions or comments of a host culture member create separation between them and the co-culture member they are speaking to. While

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<sup>13</sup> *Rokudan* is translated literally as six (roku) and rank or level (dan) or sixth degree black belt. *Godan* is fifth rank or fifth degree black belt.

not intentional, they experience a constant barrage of similar assumptions which can create stress for co-culture members. These examples above show even over the long-term certain stereotypical images are constantly experienced in the Japanese community, which can complicate the process and balance needed to obtain self-sameness. Both of the individuals above have developed a one-way solution by dealing with this disparity in their own way. Chris expects no change, while Lee tries to incorporate change through continuing to comment with caution. There are no hard and fast rules, but for their styles to be successful, their actions need to be accepted by the host culture. Otherwise, if these disparities are not addressed by the individual, the friction created from these differences can become the seeds of psychological stress and a narrowing of the individual's functional space within their community.

While it is true that westerners are given a pass that other foreign groups in Japan do not receive, one similar trait foreign groups have is the presence of *othering* fellow group members. Many of those interviewed described what kind of foreigner in Japan they do not wish to be like or associated with. Several examples may be when a respondent associates learning martial arts or learning tea ceremony as selling out and acting outside of their boundaries. Others mentioned they never want to one of those foreigners who has lived and worked in Japan for 20 years and is not able to communicate in Japanese. This intragroup *othering* has been observed in other migrant communities in America as well. Selective acculturation (Portes and Rumbaut 2001) has been applied to migrants who try to distance themselves from what they perceive as a bad image of those in their own ethnic group. The definition of "bad" is relevant to which type of migrant the individual self identifies with. A westerner who does not wish to connect with the host culture will value protecting the non-Japanese aspects of their own self while those who wish to better integrate tend to distance themselves from ethnocentrically based western styles.

There was a study done on Peruvian immigrants in Japan that discussed similar instances in which migrants referred to not wanting to be associated to "bad foreigners" and sought a more positive image of a "good foreigner" who gets along with the community and

follows the rules (Moorehead 2010: 3). In many ways Peruvians, who have low socioeconomic status would have a hard time choosing to remain ethnocentric over the long-term. Those who do not learn about Japan would most likely leave or become pariahs. Westerners can choose either and still have the ability to find work that suits their skills set. Migrants resist the stigma applied to the identities of other foreigners and do not apply this to themselves (Lacy 2007; Lamont 2009). This is an adaptive response (Pyke and Dang 2003) and forms a moral boundary (Lamont 2000) in their struggle to avert the stigmatization of being a “bad” foreigner. This has also been called “intraethnic othering” (Pyke and Dang 2003).

Westerners come from different national, ethnic, racial, and economic backgrounds so this term may not be accurate in some respects, but for the purpose of this study *intragroup othering* has shown to be relevant within the interview data. Those who I interviewed did not use such labels specifically, but certain adaptive strategies they did not wish to utilize were referred to. Interestingly, the examples of “othering” came from various angles, especially when the topic of assimilation came up. I used Berry’s definition of assimilation, which is defined as a migrant absorbing the majority of the host culture’s attributes and abandoning others. This definition fits very few westerners who tend not to integrate to that level, but opt for the halfway mixed approach creating the personalized hybrid situation. One respondent when asked if she was assimilated in Japan said the following:

Absolutely not. Definitely not, I think there must be like one person in a million who might answer, "Yeah, of course my friends accept me, and I'm Japanese. I love *ikebana* and whatever martial arts."(Barbara: 2)

It was not uncommon for traditional arts to be used to describe other LTW to separate themselves from a specific type of westerner where the appropriation of anything Japanese may seem like they are selling out. More examples of this are introduced in the typological explanation in Chapter 5.

The topics amassed in this literary framework act as an important conceptual foundation to the original empirical work presented in this study. The next chapter will begin to explain the qualitative and quantitative measures collected along for this study.

## **Chapter 3: Empirical research data**

The qualitative and quantitative data will be laid out in this chapter. The methods and results will be given for all the empirical data respectively. The quantitative data will give brief examples which act as a prelude to Chapters 4 and 5. The results for the quantitative data are broken down into two parts. The first part is the cross tabulation of specific survey items which displayed a variance between the sexes. The second part will consist of factor analysis and the implementing of several hypotheses which are tested in a Pearson r test.

### **3.1 Qualitative methods**

The qualitative measures taken for this study are used to define and isolate categories of data to be used for the typological result described in Chapter 5. The search for interrelated patterns act as a crucial part of creating the definitions needed to separate the coded data into types (McCraken 1988). Some aspects of grounded theory (GTM) have been used when executing the interviews (Glaser, 2010; Zarif, 2010). Critical views, like Tolhurst (2012), of GTM have also been taken into account. Tolhurst breaks down the scientific significance of how GTM needs to follow the scientific method and distract itself from just common sense statements taken from interviews to protect the boundaries of natural science. Bestor et al's (2003) collection of how to perform fieldwork in Japan was also referenced. According to Lar-Johan (2011), GTM strongly upholds two (understanding and usefulness) of the three (not including correspondence) necessary elements to label it as scientific theory. GTM's recording of correspondence, which is related to positivism or absolute truth, is difficult to maintain with the hermeneutic nature of GTM.

A series of long interviews with LTW from O'Keefe (2013) was used to generate a series of questions. This breaches from GTM's defined approach by entering the process with some preconceived ideas. The flexibility to change direction to allow new ideas and concepts to develop was simultaneously upheld. This flexibility allowed for a maximum level of information

extraction similar to grounded theory with a few slight modifications. Semi-structuring of the interviews did remain consistent throughout the 25 interviews.

Information such as how long they have lived in Japan and their self-assessed Japanese language ability score are some examples of consistent questions used in all the interviews. Life satisfaction scores of their lives in Japan were also asked and ranked from 1 (low) to 10 (high). Several questions were also used to see if variations of segmented immigration (Zhou 1997) theories were applicable or not. This was to investigate some separation from recent immigration theory due to the socioeconomic status of westerners in Japan. Interviews for this research were performed only once but were prefaced with a brief warm up period. Online social networking service (SNS) connections were also created to maintain a reference for before and after the interviews took place. Many of the respondents allowed me to join their SNS networks, where I was able to gain access to their online personal lives per their permission. This access allowed me to observe disparities between what they said in their interviews and what they write about online.

### **3.1.1 Criteria**

The criteria for this study are what make it somewhat unique. All the respondents needed to have been living in Japan consistently for more than 10 years until the time this study was conducted and be from a native English speaking country or a European capable of performing the interview in English. They also could not have been in active military duty during the 10 years prior to this study. Most studies on western foreigners in Japan use exchange students or famous western figures in Japan (Ward et al, 2004; Chirkov et al, 2005; Burke et al, 2009; Komisarof 2012). These criteria are consistent throughout this research, including the survey appearing in the latter half of this chapter.

Several conundrums arise when trying to classify westerners as only native speakers. I chose to expand beyond that by including several countries that have cultures that would not be

considered culturally distant (Hofstede, 1980; Kogut and Singh, 1988; Kandogan, 2012) to many native English speaking countries when compared to Japan. In the case of the European label used in the criteria, I included Western Europe. However, in the final group of interviews only representatives of France and Italy were accepted. These two countries have observably different cultures compared to many native English speaking countries, but according to Babiker et al, they are in a similar in contextual range (1980). Babiker et al determined this through anxiety related to changes in language, food, and living quarters generated upon entering Japan. There are some Asian countries like the Philippines, Singapore, and India which label English as an official language, but they were not included in this study. This was determined more from the context of culture and their socioeconomic status upon entry in Japan rather than solely on language.

The final piece of criteria implemented was not to include those in military service within the last 10 years of residence. This reason was summed up by a statement made by a respondent who is a former military man. He stated that a large majority of servicemen do not leave the base and tend to live in a protective “bubble” away from host culture interaction<sup>1</sup>. Many restaurants and bars cater to military, so they do not need to bother learning the language or understanding the culture beyond the basics. This would make collecting data from that group counterproductive to this study, so they were not included in the criteria.

### **3.1.2 Gathering respondents**

Many westerners who have lived long-term in Japan often develop a life away from western foreigner based groups and can be more challenging to locate. Potential interviewees were also collected from the 2014 nationwide survey forms allowing for a selection of respondents from various professions and nationalities. All respondents signed a release form or gave electronic permission to use their interview for research purposes. The pre-interview

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<sup>1</sup> Found in Transcripts: Collin pg.1

questions proved to be especially effective for the respondents who thought about their answers before the interview began. Their answers offered a much deeper source of well thought out information. This is why certain interviews have been referenced to more than others. On average the interviews ran in full at 45 minutes to an hour, but they were edited down to around 30 minutes apiece. The parts which were edited out were often due to unrelated content or parts covered in the pre-interview questionnaire making the information redundant. The final transcripts can be found at the end of this paper and represent the edited versions only.

### **3.1.3 Transcribing and coding**

All the interviews were performed between May and September of 2015. Each respondent was given a pseudonym for the sake of anonymity. The progressive line of questioning was used as part of the substantive coding process (Holton 2007) as well to record themes directly from the data. I also used interview techniques I have developed over the years<sup>2</sup>. After finishing the transcription, the initial open coding revealed some themes which are part of the original hypotheses while others were completely new. Indicators were noted and then checked for theoretical saturation. Theoretical coding can be one of the most challenging and problematic stages to coding interviews (Hernandez, 2009; Saldana, 2015). Glaser's (1978) use of theoretical coding families was also applied to clarify the construction of the axial themes. After coding, the breakdown of the data resulted in reinforcement of the hybrid model as well as other useful data congruent to understanding the focus group.

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix pg. A-26

## **3.2 Results**

### **3.2.1 Basic statistics of interview respondents**

This section will report on the basic statistics of the respondents (figure 1). The basic information<sup>3</sup> provided in this section was taken from the pre-interview sheet mentioned earlier in this chapter. This was either done verbally or electronically before the interview took place. This way, questions and the interview's focus could be adjusted per their answers from the pre-interview sheet. Some respondents may be single or married, have the ability to speak Japanese or not, employed full-time or part time; these types of factors affected the questioning before the interview started.

Overall the 25 respondents included 18 males and 7 females. It must be remembered the respondents interviewed for this research are not necessarily a representation of the whole LTW group, but rather a micro sociological glimpse into the character of each respondent as well as the group, and their own exclusive interactions with the host culture.

I found it particularly difficult to find female respondents to interview. Several who had committed to an interview cancelled before it took place. Their reasons for cancelling were similar. They thought due to their status as western females they would be easily recognizable even in an anonymous interview. I had expressed there would be no mention of even the city they were living, but I would only delineate whether they lived in an urban or country area. In all the interviews place names and personal details were removed. Specific references to any interests or groups to which a respondents belong were also changed. Through the nature of each interview, the openness of the respondent was rather easy to understand. If there was any doubt, to what extent they wished to be revealed during the interview was confirmed with the individual. Home countries are left in for research reasons as well as confirmation that they fit the criteria for the study. Even knowing these facts, 4 female respondents decided to back out of

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<sup>3</sup> Appendix pg. A-21 and A-22.

their interview. The reasons for this may be more evident in the questionnaire results to be discussed in the latter half of this chapter.

The majority of the respondents were from the United States with a total of 17 followed by 3 from Canada, 2 from Australia, and 1 each from the United Kingdom, France, and Italy. It was no surprise that the majority is from the United States. Americans are the largest demographic in the western group at a population of 52,271<sup>4</sup>. I performed the interviews on the weekends as I received permission from each respondent. I did not choose by country or ethnicity as long as they fit the criteria. This resulted in the majority of respondents being Caucasian. Of the respondents, 23 out of the 25 were Caucasian while 1 was Asian Canadian and 1 was Dominican American. While it would be ideal to have more from different ethnic groups to gain a wider perspective on the lives and experiences of many types of westerners in Japan, due to the randomness of the interviews it was difficult to control for this outcome without rejecting others who entered the process through the natural flow that occurred. The search for specific ethnic groups or nationalities would be influencing results that would be a creation of the author rather than a true reflection of the group being researched. Research focusing specifically on western born ethnic groups would be an interesting topic for future studies.

Visa status is also an important part of life when living in Japan. Its tentativeness can be a cause of stress and feelings of impermanence. Most of the respondents have a permanent visa, while two had work visas, one a spousal visa, and one business visa. The respondent with the spousal visa had been in Japan for only 10 years, which is often the time many receive their permanent status. The one respondent with a business visa was rather interesting. He had been in Japan for more than 25 years but still had not become a permanent resident. His reasons for this are covered later in this paper.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.e-stat.go.jp/SG1/estat>List.do?lid=000001150236>

Table 1: Interview respondent basic statistics.

pseudonym	PC	age	sex	CoO	eth	LOSJ	vs	job	ms	nos	# child	LS	sp	lis	re	wr
David	810	55	m	USA	C	30.00	PR	SE	mar	NJ	3	9	7	4	2	1
Chris	165	45	m	USA	C	23.00	PR	FTC	mar	jap	2	7	8	8	7	5
Edward	411	47	m	FRA	C	20.00	PR	FT	mar	jap	2	9	6	8	3	2
Robert	811	53	m	CAN	A	24.00	PR	PT	d (n)	NA	0	7	8	7	6	5
Donald	811	75	m	USA	C	39.00	PR	ret	mar	jap	2	9	7	8	5	2
Anthony	810	56	m	USA	C	23.00	PR	SE	mar	jap	0	8	7	8	4	2
Mark	826	34	m	USA	C	14.00	PR	SE	mar	jap	2	8	8	8	4	4
Carlo	810	51	m	USA	H/L	25.00	bus	SE	sing	NA	0	8	5	6	3	1
Judi	223	49	fe	USA	C	21.00	PR	PT	mar	jap	1	9	5	6	4	3
Tim	630	43	m	USA	C	15.00	PR	FT	mar	jap	2	8	8	7	6	5
Tom	432	52	m	USA	C	28.00	PR	FT	mar	jap	2	7	10	10	10	10
Dorothy	640	70	fe	USA	C	31.00	PR	PT	d (n)	NA	0	8	6	7	4	5
Nick	812	38	m	UK	C	10.00	PR	SE	mar	jap	0	4	6	6	6	6
Joseph	810	38	m	ITA	C	11.00	PR	FT	mar	jap	2	7	7	7	7	7
Am	330	51	fe	AUS	C	30.00	PR	SE	d (j)	NA	3	7	10	10	10	10
Cathy	810	46	fe	CAN	C	17.00	PR	FT	mar	NJ	2	8	6	7	4	2
Gary	810	41	m	USA	C	11.00	work	FT	sing	NA	0	7	6	7	4	2
Dan	999	40	m	USA	C	17.00	PR	SE	mar	jap	3	7	7	8	6	5
Barbara	546	45	fe	USA	C	20.00	PR	PT	mar	jap	0	7	6	7	7	4
William	816	35	m	AUS	C	11.00	Sp	FT	mar	jap	1	8	8	7	4	8
Theresa	200	67	fe	USA	C	18.00	PR	SE	sing	NA	0	5	3	3	2	2
Steve	802	43	m	USA	C	11.00	work	FT	sing	NA	0	7	7	4	3	3
Amy	819	45	fe	CAN	C	21.00	PR	PT	d (j)	NA	0	8	8	9	8	7
Collin	350	40	m	USA	C	18.00	PR	SE	mar	jap	2	8	8	8	5	5
Sean	658	50	m	USA	C	27.00	PR	PT	mar	jap	2	8	7	7	5	5

CoO = Country of Origin

LOSJ = Length of stay in Japan

Job

ms = Marital status

nos = Nationality of spouse

SE = Self-employed

FTC = full time contract

FT = full time

PT = part time

ret = retired

re = reading

wr = writing

sp = speaking

lis = listening

re = reading

wr = writing

vs = Visa status

Job

ms = Marital status

nos = Nationality of spouse

jap = japanese

NJ = non-japanese

mar = married

sing = single

d(nj) = divorced (non-japanese)

d(j) = divorced (japanese)

The mean for the age of respondents was 48.36 years ( $SD=10.35$ ). This was to be expected because of the criteria for the interviews. The average length of time in Japan was 20.6 years with a standard deviation of 7.52 years, which is very close to the results found in the questionnaire. Their life satisfaction was also in line with the survey results at 7.52 ( $SD=1.15$ ).

Like the survey, speaking skills were rated on a self-determined 1 (low) to 10 (high) scales. The scores for language skills are recorded as: speaking 6.96 ( $SD=1.51$ ); listening 7.1 ( $SD=1.65$ ); reading 4.5 ( $SD= 2.6$ ); writing 5.2 ( $SD=2.15$ ). These scores are very subjective in nature and act better as a confidence in language/communication scale rather than a ranking of their raw language skills. Some of the respondents compared themselves to other foreigners they knew while others compared themselves to native speakers. The former often gave themselves much higher scores than the latter, which is to be expected. These two styles of self-ranking are also an interesting reflection of an individual's deeper connectivity to the host culture.

Of the respondents, 17 were married while 4 were divorced (2 non-Japanese and 2 Japanese partners) and 4 were single. Also, 2 out of the 17 married respondents had non-Japanese partners. One of the respondents who was divorced came to Japan after getting a divorce in her own country. International marriages alone could be an interesting topic. This paper uses family connections as one of the catalysts in the hybrid model but doesn't try to enter too deep into that discussion due to its depth and complexity. The comparison between mixed marriages with a Japanese national and marriages between two non-Japanese would be an interesting topic of discussion, but one which will be left for future researchers.

Also, 1 of the respondents was retired, 8 classified themselves as full time workers, while 1 is classified as full-time contract. 6 of them were part-time university teachers and 9 were self-employed. There was an observable variance in responses between those who were self-employed and those who were working in a company or organization. Self-employed respondents spoke of how they are required to create a system or service that can be easily used

and understood by Japanese customers or clients. Errors of any kind result in income loss. These errors have to be self-corrected in an atmosphere of very little feedback from their Japanese customers. Those who were employed have a built-in system of support. If they make a mistake with a student or client, they will most likely be corrected formally by their superior. This culturally based corrective system can create frustration for both employees and teachers, but it tends to create more of psychological stress than economic. Self-employed individuals need to adjust themselves psychologically and socially to protect their economic earning potential. While finding a Japanese mentor to teach them how to run a business may be a choice, according to the respondents it is better to just figure it out on their own. This is primarily because many western business people need to learn how to adapt their own style to their work. This is in contrast to those working at a Japanese company who may have to conform more to their employer's culture. Anthony, who is a self-employed respondent, gave an example of how he creates his own system while functioning within the Japanese one when he sells his product at department stores. He puts it like this:

I go to a department store and you have to sell and you watch everybody else how to sell and because I'm a foreigner and I can get past the, I don't know, the customs of having to say certain things to the customers. I can just say anything I want to the customers where other people can't do that.

I have that advantage because I'm a foreigner that I can act differently and I don't have to follow all the customs and people will, they like that and they allow me to do that. I can sell much better sometimes than department stores and other people because I can smile at people and I can joke to other people.

I can even tease them a little bit where of course if there was a young girl trying to say that to that person they would be shocked and they would go to the manager and say this person said this to me. Because it's me, I can do that. (Anthony: 4-5)

This type of thinking is necessary to succeed in business in Japan. He understands that it is not how "Japanese" he becomes, but how he mixes his own communication skills with needs of his Japanese customers. This simultaneous blending of two communicative techniques and mutual understandings leads to an original style which is complex in its nature but simple in its appearance. While he said he can "say anything," this does not mean he could say anything outside what the Japanese would contextually expect from him. He still has to maintain basic

social norms, but while injecting his own personal style which few, if any, Japanese workers would even think of trying. He is unique in this aspect, leading this discussion into examples found in the interviews of catalysts for change and the four types of long-term westerners.

### **3.2.2 Examples of the catalysts**

I will start with what I call the *catalysts*. The catalysts are comprised of various forms of commitment. They include learning the language, having family, friends, and groups connected to the host culture. The conscious commitment to living in Japan has also been observed as promoting stability. These all have the similar purpose to connect an individual to the community, which in the case of this study defines the depth of a westerner's identity within the Japanese construct. All of the catalysts are options, not necessities, but the acquisition of some or all of them have shown results in respondents to advocate change within the host culture which in turn promotes formation of a strong identity. This section will introduce preliminary examples of the catalysts.

This section will also acquaint the reader with some illustrations derived from the interviews of the types of westerners as well as the catalysts. Two of the four types which are represent opposing themes both appeared in past research: *balance* and *frustration*. *Frustration* in was labeled differently as *doubt and confusion* (O'Keefe 2013), but was changed due to the frequency of the word appearing in research. The other two types: *satisfied but separated* and the *full circle* are the other two final typological labels. Quotes representing examples of the types are not always labeling the individual as belonging to a specific type, but rather using the quote as an independent example of a quality of one of the types.

Some respondents are still discovering their integrative style and with this comes success and failure which causes some to lose their balance at times. The migration from one quadrant to another would be considered common. Some quadrants may be more inherent to movement than others. Many admittedly stated they have times when a cultural mishap or situation may

bother them, but they act positively to return to their balanced state with the end in mind. This is true in the case of Lee. He is often approached by people who assume he cannot speak Japanese, but he counters the situation with his years of experience and patience:

The issue for me there is not about being pointed out per se, it's more that they're considering me to be deficient if you will, perhaps. They may not be, but there's a small part of me that sort of feels that they might be thinking on their side that I'm deficient in Japanese so they therefore feel obligated to speak to me in English, but that aside, I mean this has happened to me on many many occasions and I'm very well used to it now. I just go with the flow and return their conversation in English as best as I can or if it turns out that they can't continue in English, then I try and help out with Japanese as best as possible. (Lee: 5)

Not all respondents feel this sense of forgiveness when not given the credit for adapting to the "Japanese way." The opposing view can be observed in the frustration or microaggression themes. Upon observation, Lee has created a system of default for this type of situation. Some of those interviewed just do not wish to be placed in such a position. The reasons for this are many and difficult to track due to historical, racial and ethnic backgrounds and culture. Black or Asian Americans will experience varying frustrations when compared to their white counterparts. Non-native English speakers from European countries will also be subject to different experiences in contrast to native speakers. The list goes on, but in the end an extensive amount of examples of the types appears in the interviews, which are continuously reported on throughout this paper. An example of frustration was given by Chris showing the decisive moment when he decided not to be involved in activities at his children's school.

If you're going through the Japanese education system, you'll notice that parents are incorporated a lot. Whoever the stay home parent is, if there is a stay home parent. My wife works and she still has to take care of all the stuff, because I absolutely refuse. I had a really bad experience with my son in kindergarten, my oldest. After that, I have nothing to do with any of their education. I don't go to parents day, I don't go to the whatever sports festivals, I don't go to anything. I told my wife I would leave her if she made me do it ever again. We had huge fights.

She just didn't get it. I don't need the gaijin thing. All it was, was I ate a sandwich at a picnic with my son. The women were like, "Why aren't you eating a bento, where's your bento?" We finished the sandwich in like 10 minutes. They're sitting there and they're just criticizing. I went to the teachers, I went even to the principal, and they wouldn't do anything. I was like, screw this, I'm out of here. I left, and I never had anything to do with my son's education ever since.

My wife's like, well there's other international couples in my neighborhood, and all the fathers participate. I know on Facebook, and other people, everybody seems to be happy go lucky and participate with their children's education. I can't deal with it. I don't know why. (Chris: 3)

He just decided to end his connection with his children's school events. The truth is, even though he states at the end that he does not know why he feels this way, the actions he made are congruent with his style of adaptation. He consciously has separated himself from a specific activity which is an action associated with being satisfied but separated. The reason this is not added to the frustration label is because he is highly functional in other parts of his life and satisfactorily connected to various other systems within the Japanese community. He decides to make the cut knowing that to continue to go to school events may create mounting stress which could lead to other problematic outcomes. Additionally, this decision could be complicated by his wife's willingness to accept his decision or not. In Chris' case he and his wife have a very functional relationship, so his separation was successful. This specific quote does not show this, but later in the interview he seems to express a close understanding with his wife, which leads this interviewer to believe they have come to an agreement.

All foreign groups in Japan have some sort of documented form of discrimination whether it was systematic or perceived. The level of discrimination western foreigners experience is not as prominent when compared to their Asian or South American counterparts. The difference can be found in their socio-economic status. I also gathered information from respondents on what has been labeled positive discrimination. This is when a western foreigner is treated different in a positive way by gaining access to things that Japanese or even other foreign groups do not have access to. This is especially true for white westerners. This was observed in the interview with Carlo who is a Latino American. He commented on the difference he experienced from his time in Japan versus the "white male Caucasians" he has seen. To paraphrase what he stated, Americans emerging from minority groups in America have already experienced discrimination in the past, so the transition is not as shocking for them as it is to the high class white

Americans who may be experiencing it for the first time. His statement is also proof of the need to record the unique experiences of minority groups from western countries in Japan.

Westerners may come from many different countries, but in Japan they tend to be treated according to first impression rather than their country of origin. This is shown in Roberto's statement of his experience with how he is perceived by Japanese when they first meet him:

I think my unique view about it was that as an Asian Canadian, thinking of myself as a Canadian first, here, I would sometimes, not always, if I was to encounter any kind of discrimination, negative or positive, it would be not because I'm a Canadian but because I look Asian. That, sometimes, when it was the negative kind of discrimination, it's a little bit saddening but it didn't happen a lot but it happened enough that I can remark on it.

Most of the time though, it was positive discrimination because I would say, "Oh, I'm a Canadian." "Oh," and then everybody's eyes would light up. "Oh, he's the safe kind." (Roberto: 1)

This could act as an example of how Japanese see nationality. Visual appearance may be how they judge foreigners at first, but nationality seems to trump this fairly quickly especially if played up by the westerner. The pattern of having to keep confirming this with every new Japanese person Roberto meets requires him to have a special kind of patience. He also mentioned how he has experienced both positive and negative discrimination, which is also a common theme through interviews. I also observed when the topic of negative or systematic discrimination arose follow ups on the part of the interviewer often came up empty. I would directly ask them the story, but respondents would often default to saying that they could not think of a story at that moment. This is a result of feeling discriminated against, but without cause. If someone was systematically discriminated against, the incidents should be clear and easily remembered.

I would like to back up this observation with the acknowledgement there are examples of discrimination against non-Japanese groups in Japan, including westerners. It also must be said that accurate reporting with various factors taken into consideration for all cases of discrimination does justice to the argument. Not disclosing systematic or other forms of

discriminatory acts are an injustice to all. On the other hand, inflating stories lacking information with half-truths or leaving out necessary facts should not be tolerated.

Another form of discrimination, which has been dubbed *microaggressions* (Sue 2010), has been a topic of recent discussion and tends to fit the western experiences of feeling singled out from the crowd. The term basically refers to an action or something said by a member of the host culture to a minority which implies difference or inferiority. It should be noted that these actions by the host culture members are not done with malice. Actually in many situations the host culture member may even be trying to make a connection with a non-Japanese. The concept of microaggressions is applicable to any country, but they are reported in this paper as specific examples in Japan only. According to the 2014 survey, women tended to be more susceptible to this than men which are. This is reported on later in this chapter. The survey also showed that speaking Japanese did not reduce the amount of microaggressions as it did in the case of discrimination. This can be seen in the case of Tom, who is highly fluent in Japanese and economically stable, but he still gets a little irritated when Japanese treat him like he knows nothing about Japan:

They give you the dumbass treatment, yeah. I'm so used to that by now...I don't tell them otherwise. I just let them make asses out of themselves in my eyes....If I get a chance though, and this is something I enjoy doing a lot ... This is my own back blast, push back microaggression: when someone's going off like that, I'll just let them keep going, and then I'll find a spot where I can insert a blurt of Japanese, and then you know. I'm sure you've done this too. I don't know any guy who's never played this trick on a Japanese person who's giving them the dumb gaijin treatment...It's so much fun. I love it. The way I look at it ... I don't look at it as ... Well, I am teasing them a little bit, but I can rationalize that in thinking that I'm teaching that person a lesson. (Tom: 6)

His referral to the Japanese as “they” instead of relaying a story about a specific individual reveals his irritation when dealing with such situations. His description of “pushing back” shows he feels like he has been pushed. It is not uncommon to hear LTWs struggle to explain who they are and be recognized for their accomplishments and experience in Japan. The

survey showed that feelings of discrimination decrease over time for western foreign residents<sup>5</sup>, especially for Japanese speakers. On the other hand, microaggressions have shown to be perceived by both speakers and non-speakers even after years of living in the country, although some are not bothered by them at all. There was one comment at the end of the survey that stated only “whiners” complain of microaggressions and use the word to cover their frustrations with the culture. The buildup of years of being subjected to numerous times of similar questioning and assumptions can seem harmless to those who have only experienced them several times. The feeling can intensify for some after hundreds of misunderstandings. As seen with Tom, even when superior Japanese skills are present, some still have situations or overall feelings of discontent towards the host culture. While on the other hand, there are cases of those who report minimal to no problem with the cultural missteps of the Japanese and integrate well.

This is where the concept of “cultural fit” comes into the picture. Cultural fit refers to an immigrant who enters a host culture with a predetermined characteristic to succeed due to their own personal history or personality traits. Their demeanor fits into the host culture naturally or with only slight adjustments. On the opposite side of the spectrum, this same person may not do well in their own country or other cultures in the distance spectrum. The straightforward style often used in the States or other western countries in a successful way may not always be transferrable in the Japanese construct. Individuals who do not fit into the Japanese model may return home or stay and fall into a state of frustration which can create years of struggling within the mismatched environment. When responses of agree and disagree were combined, 67.3% of the respondents stated they felt like their personality fit Japan.<sup>6</sup>

Another factor which assists in defining the interconnectedness of the quadrant types of LTWs formed by this research is *life satisfaction*. Language is often commonly thought to be the connector needed but in recent research, culture fit seems to have a higher correlation (O’Keefe

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<sup>5</sup> Appendix pg. A-16: Q84 from the survey.

<sup>6</sup> Appendix pg. A-11: Q42.

2016). The correlation was twice as strong as that for the language factors. Life satisfaction is an important part of staying power and a possible building block to form an identity within the host culture. Life satisfaction can also be obtained as an individual and does not necessarily involve being a part of the community. This means an individual can be satisfied without a community connection but this lack of connection to the host culture's community would not support the hybrid formation this study is searching for, but would place such a person into the *satisfied but separated* quadrant. There may be a connection to a "community" of westerners, Japanese with western tendencies or even some Japanese groups, but there is a conscious disconnect from certain areas of the culture they do not wish to participate in. This was seen in Dorothy's statement<sup>7</sup>. She separates her satisfaction from her physical presence in Japan, which is in contrast to other respondents. Anthony spoke of his connection with Japanese even when he went back to the States to be with his sick mother, and he realized it may be hard for him to go back to the States. His connectedness with the Japanese has become part of his nature. He says:

...I felt most of my adult life has been more than in America has been in Japan. When I went there, I really felt a little bit out of place I think. I felt more like Japan is my home than back home.

Just friendship, you do friendship in a different way here than you do there and it became "how do I do friendship back there and what was it like?" I taught a little (English) back home to some university professors that were doing exchange programs over there. I found out that I wanted to hang out with them more than with my regular (friends). Even though I was back in America for the first time in twenty years, I felt more comfortable with those kind of people (meaning Japanese).

I don't know if it was my problem or just that I like Japanese people more than I like American people's personality I don't really know why. It was kind of strange for me to feel like that I kind of searched out, looking for Japanese people. I felt comfortable making friends with them a lot easier than I did with Americans.  
(Anthony: 5)

Anthony's feelings of connection are stronger and deeper than Dorothy's. His feeling of fitting in ("cultural fit") has developed after spending the majority of his adult life in Japan. This may be understood from observing two contrasting points of each of these respondents. The

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<sup>7</sup> This quote can be found in Chapter 4

first is their chosen occupation. Dorothy is a competent teacher who has gained respect in her field, while Anthony is a self-employed restaurant owner. The amount of connectedness needed with the community is evident. Teachers have more control over their work environment while someone who is self-employed needs to connect to the community if they wish to be successful and survive. The level of necessity is comparatively different seen in two specific points.

Dorothy needs to be flexible and effective within the framework provided by the school she teaches in. This framework does not exist for self-employed work which while allowing a certain kind of freedom, also opens up the individual to an environment with no written rules and little feedback.

The second difference is language. The effects of language skills are elusive to those who have not learned them and indispensable to those who have. Those who have not learned the language are masters at finding ways around linguistic barriers by using the human resources around them, i.e. spouse, friend and/or bilingual coworkers. There are westerners who have spent years in Japan without ever learning the language at any depth. Daily conversations may be possible but tend to be repetitive verbal actions learned in the first few years of their stay. A self-employed business owner does not have such an option. The possibility of successful business owners who do not speak Japanese decreases as you leave the metropolitan areas. This statement is subjective because it only relates to the research from this study. Success in business is often a reflection of communicative abilities, which in many cases will involve the host culture's language at some level or another. The growth of their business relies on it. One difference in approach was observed in two different successful business owners' statements. One business owner, Carlo, who admittedly does not speak Japanese as fluently as he should, often spoke of what he saw as deep systematic obstacles faced by foreigners in Japan. Carlo's solution was to be reliant on network creation and stressed this as very important.

My time here, I've always been an advocate of networking. I've always been an advocate of group building and always been advocate of a foreigner who plans to stay

here a long time should own his own business, so I've always been pushing that, because Japan does not offer us a real option. (Carlo: 7)

Carlos has been in Japan for over 25 years and still struggles with not having the same options as native Japanese. He has a Japanese partner who has been with him for almost his whole 25 years in Japan. I am sure the cultural differences he witnesses are not just apparitions but actual experiences. However, he basically has geared his restaurants and bars to the foreign community, while offering Japanese international atmosphere. His business connection to the foreign community may make him more susceptible to such interactions. Plus, his level of language skills put him at a communicative disadvantage to grasp the depth of a conversation unless his partner is there with him. Conversations only in English may result in difficulty overcoming sociolinguistic orientations which are most likely to complicate conversations with Japanese people (Peltokorpi 2008). His years of experience help to fill in the gaps, but linguistic communication is irreplaceable. Assumptions could be made from experience, but not all actions in business are repetitive. When new ideas and concepts arise they need to be understood in detail. Japanese subtleties can be hard for someone who even speaks the language, let alone someone who does not. On the other hand, Dan, too, is reliant on his own network, but he is also supported by his own Japanese language skills. He performs all the sales and contract negotiations for his company himself in Japanese and is not reliant on a middle person to help him do business. But his situation is not void of stress.

Every time I try to communicate and don't communicate as well as I'd like to...I feel stressed there. I feel the same stress when miscommunications happen in the US, but they happen here more often. The level of stress is probably a little bit high. (Dan: 6)

Dan compares his stress as being the same as in the United States, but such situations are just more common in Japan and he copes with the stress as a singular problem rather than seeing it as the full weight of cultural opposition. Throughout his interview, Dan was less likely to use the "us" and "them" comparisons as Carlo and Tom did. The irony of these cultural

conundrums is they are not exclusive to Japan. Some long-termers have a dilemma when returning to their home country.

*Reverse culture shock* (RCS) was a topic that emerged from the interviews. This is not a Japan-specific phenomenon<sup>8</sup> and is even listed on the U.S. Department of State website,<sup>9</sup> although it tends to use older versions of culture shock theory (Oberg, [1960] 2006; Pedersen 1994). As noted in later chapters, the thought of moving back home for some is almost unthinkable. It affects respondents in various ways. Exchange students have been known to deal with this upon returning to their home country (Gaw 2000). The change is much deeper for long-term residents. Some respondents described RCS as stronger than the culture shock they experienced when first arriving in Japan. The subject of RCS was first brought up by Donald, a 45 year resident of Japan. The original question was if he feels any stress in Japan. His answer went as follows:

No. (Stress in Japan) I feel stress the few times I've been to the United States I felt stress...Yeah and it seems like the United States is a foreign country now because it's been 45 years so the United States has changed tremendously in the time that I've been gone....I had no more dissatisfaction here than I would if I'd lived in the United States. (Donald: 6)

Similar feelings were expressed by other respondents. Judi said the mere thought of moving home causes her stress, although Barbara, like others, says as much as she likes Japan she thinks about moving home with her husband. The typological explanation in Chapter 5 gives a clearer look at respondents' feeling on this subject.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, *othering* and *intragroup othering* often plays a part of understanding identity. Identity is a “negotiated construct dependent on external markers and signs, and above all the presences of ‘others’ who mirror and delimit private-individual and

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<sup>8</sup>Bart Schaneman taken from The Week.com. September 5, 2016. I lived in Korea for 5 years. Here's what happened when I came home to Nebraska. Last accessed on September 10, 2016.  
<http://theweek.com/articles/637911/lived-korea-5-years-heres-what-happened-when-came-home-nebraska>

<sup>9</sup>The U.S.State Department. Last accessed on September 12, 2016.  
<http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c56075.htm>

public boundaries" (Cunningham 2008:19). There are clear examples of respondents explaining how they have felt *othered* by Japanese in the workplace or in public. There are also examples of respondents displaying intragroup othering when talking about their foreign counterparts. Respondents gave examples of various traits they obviously did not like being associated with as experienced long-termers. Some paraphrased examples would be akin to becoming a Japanophile<sup>10</sup> or losing who you really are in the culture. Others stated positions from the other side of the coin saying they never wanted to become someone who lived in Japan for years but could not speak the language. Roberto stated something similar about how he felt when he first arrived in Japan:

...You just struggle along, but what I didn't want for myself was...I didn't want to be seen as one of those foreigners who just kind of struggle along. You got to pat them on the head and you get that condescending attitude. I wanted to be treated as much as possible as a peer among the Japanese. For that, you need...you got to sort of pay respect to the language and the culture by learning the language properly.

(Roberto: 2)

As a member of the western foreign group, this author has witnessed many examples of this feeling. While the success of those does not mainly seem to rely on language skills, bringing up the topic of language skills can provoke a heated debate of their necessity. Styles of adaptation are taken early on in one's life in Japan, which is why most who speak, read and write Japanese learned early rather than later in their stay. In Roberto's case, he knew from the start of his time in Japan that learning the language was going to be one of his goals. Tim shared some of Roberto's feelings, but in a stronger way when he commented on westerners who do not speak Japanese even after years of living in the country.

I don't understand (someone) who has been in Japan 30 years and can't speak anything. I think it's insulting frankly. You live in someone else's country; you at least have to meet halfway. At least make the effort to do basic communications so

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<sup>10</sup> Japanophile or Japanophilia refers to the appreciation and love of Japanese culture, people or history. In Japanese, the term for Japanophile is "shinnichi" (親日), with "親" "shin" (しん) equivalent to the English prefix 'pro-', and "日" "nichi" (にち), meaning "Japanese" (as in the word for Japan "Nihon" (日本)). The term was first used as early as the 18th century, switching in scope over time. Taken from Wikipedia September 9, 2016.

you can go to a restaurant and order food without pointing at stuff. I think it was important for me especially being kind of thrown into the countryside, I had to make friends and there were no non-Japanese people around so the only logical alternative is to make friends with Japanese people....If hadn't learned the language. I can't expect them to learn mine. That's not fair. (Tim: 3)

This is a difficult and sometimes sensitive subject to bring up among mixed company.

From an objective perspective, Japanese skills and literacy are learned and attained through dedicated study and should not be seen as anything but that. While this researcher's own work has shown that language ability is not necessarily a factor in professional advancement in areas where English is the dominant language, it has been shown to be that LTW believe it is linked to higher general life satisfaction. The majority of respondents, including non-speakers, agreed it affects the quality of life<sup>11</sup>.

An example of a different style puts value on other skills and attributes. This was displayed through statements of *othering* when speaking of skills other foreigners do not have. Dorothy mentioned her 15 years of teaching experience before coming to Japan:

I'm a teacher who came to Japan unlike...I hate to say it this way but I'm a real teacher, a lot of people who have come here to teach to get ... That's the way they earn their living but for me teaching is my life and then Japan was the location I chose to teach, so it's maybe it's a little bit different from someone. (Dorothy: 1)

Dorothy came to Japan in her early 40's, which would put her in a position to have ample experience over her teaching counterparts who on average arrived in Japan in their mid to late 20's. This type of discourse continued in various combinations. The interconnectedness of the different angles of *intragroup othering* will contribute later in this dissertation.

One of these types reflects the completeness of entry into life in Japan. This is not insinuating individuals become Japanese or even experience full assimilation. The full circle (FC) is the state in which the individual, after years of trial and error, becomes essentially adjusted to their life in Japan while creating interconnectedness to the Japanese community. They have few cultural difficulties and basically feel living in Japan is as comfortable as they

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<sup>11</sup>Appendix pg. A-11: Q37.

could be. This means they are able to interact with whoever comes their way and are not limited to having people assist them in their daily operations. This quality exists no matter where an individual stands, whether it is in their own country or abroad. To find such acceptance in an environment which has been determined through past social scientific studies as culturally distant as Japan is from western countries, is a task more easier said than done. The leap requires major insight into one's own belief system and how much one is willing to compromise. It is the compromise that keeps many from entering FC. The compromise is sometimes seen as "selling out," which is another form of othering that occurs.

In reality, it is more the accomplishment of the individual to integrate while protecting the self. "Selling out" is going against who you are and will not eliminate differences needed to be addressed to achieve the FC. FC shows how cultures merge and become one, a personalized interwoven complex combination of years of mistakes and successes bound together in the experience of one person. This is the freedom to be and to do what one wishes to by accomplishing goals without cultural barriers. Failures are only part of experience and recognized as such. Those who fit the FC type view Japan as the place they live. Any frustrating concepts of "us" and "them" are all in the past. Japan becomes just another place with the good and the bad as any country would offer. This differs from the balance type because in FC there is no distinguishing of sides anymore. The balance type requires constant negotiation of the middle which can still be unstable. Those in full circle have mastered the middle to the point of negotiations becoming non-existent.

### **3.3 Quantitative Methods: Questionnaire creation and testing**

The majority of the items on the survey were taken from recurring themes which arose in long interviews performed in the summer of 2013. There were also several questions taken from common discussions from westerners living in Japan which had been observed on various SNS sites and blogs. After several months of pondering over the wording of questions and through

consulting with my advisors the items were narrowed down to the final form which consisted of 93 items, some of which had multiple parts. To say the least it was rather a long form. The length was needed in some respects because this group has never been previously researched. Debito Arudou has done extensive work on the human rights of non-Japanese from the activist standpoint. He also has written a comprehensive guidebook on human rights and legal matters for “newcomers” in Japan (Arudo and Higuchi 2012). His work is invaluable to all westerners, but this study is only focused on LTW.

The items in the questionnaire used sociological and social psychological approaches to frame the questions rather than conflict theory styles often used in activism. Similar topics were grouped into multiple questions utilizing different approaches. This was all done with the purpose of creating composite factors to be used in a test for correlation. This chapter attempts to explain the process from creation to implementation and finally the results of the survey. The long-form questionnaire took on average 20 minutes to complete. It is needless to say this researcher was thankful for all those who took part in the survey for both their time and valuable information. Special thanks to those who took the time to add comments at the end of their forms. Comments ranged from complimenting the efforts of this study to pointing out flaws in the method or questions. It was a wonderful learning experience.

The majority of the respondents came from a nationwide internet survey. Before the online questionnaire was put online, it was tested with 50 respondents in June, 2014 by using an interactive PDF questionnaire sent through email or by a hard copy through standard mail. The respondent’s criteria for the study allowed for non-native speaking westerners to respond to the questionnaire, so it was also tested to see if it would be universally understood by native and non-native English speakers. There were variances in vocabulary meanings between nationalities that required attention to specify clearly what is needed. It could be as simple as writing postal code instead of the American term zip code. The choice of transgender for sex was also omitted unwittingly. This was brought up by one respondent after the questionnaire was

distributed online, who stated there is a “large community” who fit that description and it should have been available on the form. Otherwise all other respondents answered the question of being male or female. Another hurdle of fulfilling the criteria was to find westerners from different professional and economic backgrounds, races and religions. While westerners from various professions were included, ethnic and racial backgrounds tended to be Caucasian.

LIKERT style scales as well as scales using 1 (low) to 10 (high) appear on the questionnaire. Yes and no items were also used, but through the testing process many were changed into LIKERT scales for higher variance in the results. There were a few major problems discovered in the first 10 trials which required some adjustment, so the data prior to these changes was not used. After the testing was completed, the questionnaire was then transferred to an online questionnaire service (Survey Monkey). One difference between the online version and the interactive PDF was the use of required gateway questions<sup>12</sup> for the online form. Respondents would need to check off all the gateway questions which confirmed they fit the criteria and approved the use of their answers in the study before they were allowed to proceed onto the questionnaire. Another difference between the online version and PDF file was the order of the questions. This was changed mostly due to formatting trouble with the online system, which required more pages than the PDF did and limited creative page setups.

### **3.3.1 Implementation**

Once the online questionnaire was ready, the link was shared through email and networks of LTWs which was built up over the last several years through research connections. It was also shared on SNS networks (i.e. Facebook, Twitter). In total, over a two month period from testing to the final implementation of the online survey, 366 responses were collected from postal codes ranging from Hokkaido to Kyushu. Incomplete forms were dropped. There were

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<sup>12</sup> The gateway questions were as follows: 1) I fulfill the criteria written above to be a respondent for this study. 2) I understand the purpose of this research. 3) My participation in this research is voluntary. 4) I understand this survey is anonymous and I shouldn't write my name in any of the text areas. 5) I give my consent for my responses to be used for research purposes

also a few completed forms removed because their home country did not fit the criteria (i.e. Russia, China, and Korea).

The breakdown of nationalities (Q5) ( $n = 307$ ) was as follows: Americans 51.8%, United Kingdom 18.2%, Canada 15.0%, Australia 7.8%, New Zealand 2.6%, European 4.2% (Germany, Italy, France), Other .3%. The general frequencies were as follows. The life satisfaction (Q17) as rated on the single 1 to 10 scale was 7.4 ( $SD = 1.4$ ). The years lived in Japan (Q1a,b) was 19.8 ( $SD=7.3$ ), the age of respondents was 48.7 ( $SD=8.4$ ) (Q4). The males were represented at  $n = 184$  and the females were  $n = 122$ . 79.8% of respondents were married, 11.5% were single and 6.7% were divorced (Q10). 72.1% of respondents were married to a Japanese national and 7.7% were married to a non-Japanese. (Q10b). The birth rate was measured at 2.48 (Q10c), which is high in comparison to the Japanese birth rate (measured at 1.43 in 2013<sup>13</sup>). 82.8% of respondents plan to stay in Japan for an unspecified time (Q89) while the remainder has plans to go home. However, when asked in an open-ended question when they plan to return home or leave Japan, many could not give a specific plan or date to do so. The final number of useable forms fell to 306, but this will vary depending on each cross table or factor created due to variance in specific item responses. The  $n$  will never exceed 306 and remain at 306 unless expressed otherwise.

The education level (Q9) of those who participated in the study can be reported ( $n = 306$ ) as follows: high school graduates were at 2.9%, junior college 2.0%, university 27.1%, graduate degree 45.8%, doctoral degree 12.4%, other certificates or educational backgrounds 9.8%. This shows on average a fairly high level of education. Language skills (Q23-26) were recorded on a self-rated scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high) broken down by speaking = 7.2 ( $SD=2.5$ ), listening = 7.6

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<sup>13</sup> This was taken from a 2016 article in the Japan times which is using 2013 data according to the World Databank. 2013 was the last year for which full data for total fertility rates (TFR) were available. Other later numbers as of 2016 are just estimates. Article title: *Japan and its birth rate: the beginning of the end or just a new beginning?* By Olga Garnova

(SD=7.6), reading = 4.9 (SD=2.8) and writing = 3.8 (SD=2.6). A composite of the descriptives of the four skills are 23.7 (SD=9.4).

The question on race was asked as an open-text question requesting the individual's ethnicity rather than race, which resulted in a plethora of various answers. When broken down into racial groups, Caucasians were predominant. The breakdown of racial groups (Q6) is as follows: Caucasian 90.7%, Black 1%, Asian 1.6%, Latino/Hispanic 1.3%, mixed White/Asian1%, mixed Black/White 0.9%, other 1.4%. The answers for ethnicity were interesting, because it revealed various ways people from the same countries identify differently with their country and nationality. One example is how British nationals wrote down they identify as Scottish, English and Welsh and not British. This represents the complexity of grouping all westerners together.

### **3.3.2 Basic Quantitative Results**

While all the cross tables for the survey will available in the appendix of this paper, only the significant results between the sexes from item 31 to 86 will be reported. This section will also report necessary results from items 11 through 30 and 87 through 93 first. A copy of the survey from the original PDF form is available in the appendix<sup>14</sup>. All cross tables in the explanation below are found after the PDF survey form and will be referenced by the question number as it appeared in the PDF form, not the online survey.

After presenting the results of the items on marriage at conference and in the general meeting at Kyushu University, a similar question arose about whether or not there was a variance between the life satisfaction of those with non-Japanese spouses and Japanese spouses. Out of curiosity a simple test was run. n = 243 (Japanese spouse =222, Non-Japanese spouse 21) represents the amount of married couples. There was very little variance in the 1 to 10 scale except for the 6 and 7 results. 8.1% with a Japanese spouse scored a 6 on the life satisfaction

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<sup>14</sup> Appendix pg. A-1.

scale while non-Japanese scored 14.3%. 23.4% of those with Japanese spouses scored a 7, followed by only 9.5% by those with a non-Japanese spouse. These are rather arbitrary numbers mostly because there are only 21 respondents with non-Japanese spouses versus 222 with Japanese ones. Another inconsistency would be whether how many of the 21 westerners were married to each other. While the concept is interesting, a more focused line of questioning and criteria are needed to arrive at a better result. Due to the small sample numbers, it was decided not to continue testing. This may have some potential with a larger sample and could lead to some interesting data in future research.

The reasons LTW came to Japan sets them apart from other immigrant and migrant groups. Items Q13 and Q14 of the survey dealt with respondents' reasons to come and their reasons for staying in Japan. They were allowed to choose three from the list provided so the n will vary from answer to answer. Item Q13 asked why respondents came to Japan. The choices were as follows: work related, self-actualization, family, marriage, adventure, fun, language study, study culture. There was also a choice for "other" as well<sup>15</sup>. The top three responses were: work related: n = 186, males = 104, females = 82; adventure: n = 127, males = 84, females = 43; fun: n = 82, males = 56, females = 26; study culture was a close fourth: n = 78; males = 44, females = 34. Q14 was a follow-up question to Q13. It asks why respondents have stayed in Japan for the long-term. The choices were work, business, study, enjoyment, quality of life and family. A choice for "other" was also given<sup>16</sup>. The top three choices were: work: n = 224, males = 145, females = 79; family: n = 215, males = 125, females = 90; quality of life: n = 177, males = 121, females = 56. Work remained the highest in importance, but the second and third choices became family and quality of life.

The next group of questions is yes/no items. The idea was to get a clear indication of where LTWs stand on certain topics. Q27 and Q28 dealt with the Japanese national health and

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<sup>15</sup> Appendix Pg. A6

<sup>16</sup> Appendix pg. A7

pension schemes. One respondent suggested I should have asked about private healthcare systems because not everyone is in the national health plan. This is evidence that even some long-termers do not know that foreign residents (longer than a year) are required by law to pay into the national health scheme. The answers for Q27 were recorded as: All respondents n = 305, yes = 263 (86.2%), no = 42 (13.8%); males n = 183, yes = 156 (85.2%), no = 27 (14.8%); females n = 122, yes = 107 (87.7%), no = 15 (12.3%). Q28 covered the national pension scheme. The results are recorded as: All respondents n = 301, yes = 216 (71.8%), no = 85 (28.2%); males n = 180, yes = 126 (70%), no = 54 (30%); females n = 121, yes = 90 (74.4%), no = 31 (25.6%).

Q29 and Q30 asked if respondents would be interested in dual citizenship and the right to vote in all elections. These are both yes or no items. Q29 inquired about dual citizenship. The answers were recorded as: All n = 301, yes = 231(76.5%), no = 71 (23.5%); males n = 181, yes = 137 (75.7%), no = 44 (24.3%); females n = 121, yes = 94 (77.7%), no = 27 (22.3%). Q30 asked about the interest in gaining voting rights in all elections. The results are recorded as: All n = 300, yes = 234 (78%), no = 66 (22%); males n = 181, yes = 139(76.8%), no = 42(23.2%); females n = 119, yes = 95 (79.8%), no = 24 (20.2%). These questions may be looked at as successive. Dual citizenship could be the first step followed by the right to vote in all elections, which seems more reasonable than giving non-citizens the right to vote. Currently, foreigners are allowed to vote in all elections if they renounce their current citizenship and become a Japanese national. The dual citizenships route, however, would be preferable by many.

The respondents' opinion of the Japanese education system was the target of Q87. Many LTWs have children who have gone through various forms of the education system in Japan. Many of the respondents are also educators. This gives them a distinct insight into the system. This item was broken into four parts. Respondents were asked to rate Japanese elementary, junior high school, high school and university to the best of their knowledge from 1 (low) to 10 (high). While elementary schools scored high, the rating got progressively worse as it progressed to the university level: elementary school: n = 300, mean = 7.6; junior high school: n = 297,

mean = 6.1; high school: n = 291, mean = 5.8; university n = 288, mean = 4.9. Many of the respondents classify themselves in education or a profession connected to education. These ratings might be an interesting key to future research into why the numbers moved progressively negative in the way they did.

Q88a, b and c furthered the questioning of respondents' contact with the Japanese school system. The item asked if they had children, did they send them to a Japanese or international school. One part of the question asked if their children were enrolled in the Japanese system, did they personally take part in school activities. For Q88a 71.3% answered "yes" that their children attend Japanese schools, while no received 3.9%. 24.8% were labeled not applicable. Q88b asked if parents take part in school activities. They were given five choices: never, rarely, sometimes, often and always. The results showed women participating in school activities more than men. When combining the choice of "often" and "always" males (n = 118) scored 33.1% while females (n = 81) resulted in 51.9%. On the opposite end, when combining "never" and "rarely" the males scored 31.3% and the females resulted in 11.1%. Q88c asked if parents sent their children to international school. Only 11.7% of respondents sent their children to international school, while 71.8% did not and 16.5% were N/A. The high tuition rates of international schools can be a deterrent for many who do not fulfill scholarship requirements.

Q89 (n = 301: males = 181, females = 120) asked respondents if they planned to stay in Japan. This was followed by an open ended question asking if they do plan to leave Japan, to please state the date of when they plan to leave. This was asked to research respondents who wish to leave but do not know when they are leaving. They do not see a future in Japan, but the solid plan to leave is not in place. This feeling of impermanence could be seen as a frustrating situation. Without further inquiry, the reason for the "no" answers without a plan is hearsay and subjective. The absence of a plan after a minimum of 10 years in Japan is a rather telling number. Someone who is always planning to leave but never actively moving towards such a goal acts as an example of cognitive dissonance. The "yes" replies showed 83.8% (within sex:

males = 85.8%, females = 80.8%). “No” was scored at a total of 16.2% (within sex: males = 14.2%, females = 19.2%). A summary of the open-ended questions can be found in the Appendix section with the Q89 cross table<sup>17</sup>.

Q91 through Q93 inquired about friendship with Japanese nationals. First respondents were asked if they have Japanese friends of the same sex as themselves. This came up several times during interviews. This was especially true with the western men stating they have difficulty maintaining friendships with Japanese men. Overall the respondents answered 66.2% for “yes” (within sex: males = 55.7%, females = 82%) and 33.8% for “no” (within sex: males = 44.2%, females = 18%) for Q91 (n = 305, males = 183, females = 122). Western females seemingly are more likely to have friendships with Japanese women. Q92 (n = 300, males = 181, females = 119) continued this trend by asking how many Japanese friends they have without specifying sex. Respondents were given five choices: 0-1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-more. The largest overall percentage was observed with 46% of all respondents for 2-3 friends. Males scored within sex at 42.5% for 2-3 friends while the result for the same amount of friends for females was 51.3%. The jump in the score for men possibly reflects they are likely to have Japanese female friends rather than Japanese male friends.

The next item was on language use. Q93 (n = 306: males = 184, females = 122) requested which language respondents used when speaking with Japanese friends. The results show 35% (within sex: males = 31%, females = 41%) use more Japanese than English, while 59.2% (within sex: males = 63%, females = 53.3%) stated they use more English. This item was unclear and should have covered more options for mixed conversations. The original goal was to observe what percentages of western foreigners are using mostly Japanese in their daily life. A few stated in the comment section that they use a 50/50 mix of Japanese and English. While this is statistically unlikely for someone to be using each language at an equal level, this could be a

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<sup>17</sup> Appendix pg.A-18

question for further research. An educated guess would be if an English speaker is saying 50/50, then they most likely are using English more. This may be simplifying complex language environments, but those who answered 50/50 also answered in the average or low range for the self-rated language scale in the first half of the questionnaire.

One of the items covered a question that often arose during past interviews. It was about the supposed phenomenon of when the seat next to the non-Japanese on the train was always the last one empty. This would technically be labeled as a “microaggressions”, but was added to the survey out of curiosity. Some respondents expressed they were offended by the question. No harm was meant by it. It was rather self-indulgent to do so, and I apologize for bothering my fellow long-termers with such questioning. Q90 (n = 301, males = 181, females =120) was a “yes” or “no” question about whether or not respondents had experienced “the empty seat syndrome” or not. 73.1% of respondents said they had experienced it. 77.9% of males and 65.8% of females answered “yes”. This is open to many interpretations, which this paper does not attempt to do because of the lack of proper data. Respondents wrote in the comment section while they answered “yes”, they by no means are bothered by it, and one respondent said he even enjoys having the extra space. The goal was to discuss the existence of it, not the reasons for it or how people feel. A researcher has to have some fun now and again.

### **3.4 Cross tabulation for significant variables between males and females**

This section will cover the significant results between the sexes of individual items gathered from the 2014 questionnaire. The full list of all the cross table results can be found in the Appendix. A significant result is defined here as having a difference of 8% or over between sexes. Variances between the sexes include the majority of the results, but there are several exceptions. Items are referenced in the Appendix by Q+number of each item. The results will be reported in the order they appear in the questionnaire. The n for items will vary, but will never exceed the original 306 count.

Starting off with Q41 (Table 2) as one of many items that resulted in a variance in the way the sexes responded. Respondents were asked if they would consider themselves more patient after living in Japan over the long-term. This also had a clear positive result of 38.7% for “agree” and 31.5% for “strongly agree”. There was an interesting split for males and females for both of the top two choices. While men answered “agree” slightly more than females, females answered “strongly agree” at 38%, which results in a 10.8% variance compared to the males at 27.2%.

**Table 2: Q41 You consider yourself more patient after coming to Japan.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total
Sex	male	Count	5	21	33	75	50	184
	% within Sex	2.7%	11.4%	17.9%	40.8%	27.2%	100.0%	
	female	Count	0	12	20	43	46	121
	% within Sex	.0%	9.9%	16.5%	35.5%	38.0%	100.0%	
Total		Count	5	33	53	118	96	305
		% within Item	1.6%	10.8%	17.4%	38.7%	31.5%	100.0%

Personality has been shown to be factor when entering a host culture (Ward and Leong 2004). Some personalities fit better than others, which is the basis of the culture fit concept discussed in Chapter 4. Q42 (Table 3) directly asked respondents if they feel their personality fits into the Japanese construct. Many of the LTWs stated 48.2% “agree” followed by 19.1% who “strongly agree” that their personality is suitable for Japan. There was a significant split between males and females for “agree”. Males answered 52.5% while females responded at 41.7% with all of the other choices coming closely together.

The topic changes as Q44 (Table 4) covers whether respondents feel they have job security. It was a fairly flat response with every choice scoring over 15%, although “agree” was the highest response with 25.8%. When broken down between the sexes this number shows more significance. Males answered at 30.8% for “agree” while females answered with 18.3%, which is a significant split of 12.5%. Employment or income security is a key factor with life satisfaction.

**Table 3: Q42 Your personality is suitable for Japan.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	3	9	42	96	33	183	
		% within Sex	1.6%	4.9%	23.0%	52.5%	18.0%	100.0%	
	female	Count	3	12	30	50	25	120	
		% within Sex	2.5%	10.0%	25.0%	41.7%	20.8%	100.0%	
Total		Count	6	21	72	146	58	303	
		% within Item	2.0%	6.9%	23.8%	48.2%	19.1%	100.0%	

**Table 4: Q44 You have job security.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	24	34	35	56	33	182	
		% within Sex	13.2%	18.7%	19.2%	30.8%	18.1%	100.0%	
	female	Count	24	19	31	22	24	120	
		% within Sex	20.0%	15.8%	25.8%	18.3%	20.0%	100.0%	
Total		Count	48	53	66	78	57	302	
		% within Item	15.9%	17.5%	21.9%	25.8%	18.9%	100.0%	

Both Q51 (Table 5) and Q52 (Table 6) showed variance between the sexes, which is understandable due to the nature of the question. Q51 asked if respondents thought women had a harder time than men in social environments. The responses showed a fairly strong response with a combined score of “agree” and “strongly agree” at 58.6% and 26.3% and 32.3% when broken down in their respective scores. The split between the sexes showed males agreed at 36.1% with the statement while only 26.7% of females agreed, while on the opposite end of the scale 25.8% of females disagreed compared to 20% of males. This trend continued in Q52. When asked if respondents thought women have it harder than men in a Japanese work environment, males answered 42.5% for “agree” and females replied with significant result of 31.4%. The score for all respondents was 38.1% (agreed) and 20.1% (strongly agreed) for the top two choices. Studies have been done on Western women in the Japanese workplace, but were limited by sample size (Volkmar and Westbrook 2005).

Throughout this study the social connectedness of western females compared to males seems to be fairly evident in the interview results as well as the survey. Q58 (Table 7) adds to

this conclusion. Respondents were asked if they feel down after a cultural mishap. While the overall trend reflects a negatively skewed response, the female “agree” response resulted in 29.2%. This is 11% higher than the male response of 18.2%.

Q61 (Table 8) inquired if respondents were satisfied with their professional performance in Japan which is considered a connection to life satisfaction. While a combined score for “agree” (42.4%) and “strongly agree” (20.2%) fell at 62.6% there was almost a 10% difference between males and females. 26.1% of females said they strongly agreed while 16.4% of males answered the same resulting in a 9.7% difference.

A long stay in Japan does not necessarily mean respondents feel they have stopped learning about their adopted country. Q62 (Table 9) and Q63 (Table 10) are somewhat related. Their relation is one of progress and their ability to have accomplished a level of comfort while still feeling open to parts of Japan they haven’t learned about yet. Q62 asked if they still feel they have more to learn about Japan. This resulted in 37.7% agreeing and 23% strongly agreeing with the statement. Females agreed 11.4% more than males (males 33.2%, females 44.6%) and males strongly agreed 6.5% more than females (males 25.5%, females 19%). Q63 was a general question asking if they felt comfortable living in Japan. There was a strong positive response with “agree” receiving 53.5% and “strongly agree” receiving 29.6%. This is consistent with other similar questions on the topic of satisfaction.

Q67 (Table 11) and Q68 (Table 12) both reflect the interactions of westerners with Japanese nationals in different contextual situations. Q67 showed a 10.3% split between males and females when asked if they can express their feelings to Japanese friends. The general score for “agree” was 36.8. Males replied at 40.9% and females at 30.6% for agree. Fewer females agree that they can freely express themselves even within a friendship with Japanese counterparts. As a total, Q68 revealed a slightly negative skewed total with 35.5% of respondents answering the middle of the scale and 28.6% replied with “disagree”. The difference

in genders was seen in the “agree” response with 25.3% of males and 16.8% of females expressing they feel free to express their feelings to Japanese co-workers.

**Table 5: Q51 Foreign women have a harder time than foreign men in social settings in Japan.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	5	36	46	65	28	180	
		% within Sex	2.8%	20.0%	25.6%	36.1%	15.6%	100.0%	
	female	Count	2	31	33	32	22	120	
		% within Sex	1.7%	25.8%	27.5%	26.7%	18.3%	100.0%	
Total		Count	7	67	79	97	50	300	
		% within Item	2.3%	22.3%	26.3%	32.3%	16.7%	100.0%	

**Table 6: Q52 Foreign women have a harder time than foreign men in a Japanese work environment.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	6	20	47	80	30	183	
		% within Sex	3.3%	10.9%	25.7%	43.7%	16.4%	100.0%	
	female	Count	3	15	22	48	31	119	
		% within Sex	2.5%	12.6%	18.5%	40.3%	26.1%	100.0%	
Total		Count	9	35	69	128	61	302	
		% within Item	3.0%	11.6%	22.8%	42.4%	20.2%	100.0%	

**Table 7: Q58 You feel down after you experience a cultural mishap.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	9	61	69	33	9	181	
		% within Sex	5.0%	33.7%	38.1%	18.2%	5.0%	100.0%	
	female	Count	3	37	37	35	8	120	
		% within Sex	2.5%	30.8%	30.8%	29.2%	6.7%	100.0%	
Total		Count	12	98	106	68	17	301	
		% within Item	4.0%	32.6%	35.2%	22.6%	5.6%	100.0%	

Table 8: Q61 You are satisfied with your performance in your professional life in Japan

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	6	20	47	80	30	183	
		% within Sex	3.3%	10.9%	25.7%	43.7%	16.4%	100.0%	
	female	Count	3	15	22	48	31	119	
		% within Sex	2.5%	12.6%	18.5%	40.3%	26.1%	100.0%	
Total		Count	9	35	69	128	61	302	
		% within Item	3.0%	11.6%	22.8%	42.4%	20.2%	100.0%	

Table 9: Q62 You feel you still have a lot to learn about Japan.

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	1	23	52	61	47	184	
		% within Sex	.5%	12.5%	28.3%	33.2%	25.5%	100.0%	
	female	Count	2	10	32	54	23	121	
		% within Sex	1.7%	8.3%	26.4%	44.6%	19.0%	100.0%	
Total		Count	3	33	84	115	70	305	
		% within Item	1.0%	10.8%	27.5%	37.7%	23.0%	100.0%	

Table 10: Q63 You feel comfortable living in Japan.

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	0	11	21	94	56	182	
		% within Sex	.0%	6.0%	11.5%	51.6%	30.8%	100.0%	
	female	Count	1	4	14	67	33	119	
		% within Sex	.8%	3.4%	11.8%	56.3%	27.7%	100.0%	
Total		Count	1	15	35	161	89	301	
		% within Item	.3%	5.0%	11.6%	53.5%	29.6%	100.0%	

Table 11: Q67 You feel free to express your feelings around Japanese friends.

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	7	31	57	74	12	181	
		% within Sex	3.9%	17.1%	31.5%	40.9%	6.6%	100.0%	
	female	Count	7	21	46	37	10	121	
		% within Sex	5.8%	17.4%	38.0%	30.6%	8.3%	100.0%	
Total		Count	14	52	103	111	22	302	
		% within Item	4.6%	17.2%	34.1%	36.8%	7.3%	100.0%	

**Table 12: Q68 You feel free to express your feelings around Japanese co-workers.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	15	49	65	46	7	182	
		% within Sex	8.2%	26.9%	35.7%	25.3%	3.8%	100.0%	
	female	Count	18	37	42	20	2	119	
		% within Sex	15.1%	31.1%	35.3%	16.8%	1.7%	100.0%	
Total		Count	33	86	107	66	9	301	
		% within Item	11.0%	28.6%	35.5%	21.9%	3.0%	100.0%	

Q69 (Table 13) and Q70 (Table 14) were designed to be connected. Q69 showed some interesting results with a break between females and males when it came to whether or not they had experienced a cultural difficulty that made them want to leave Japan. While a large majority replied with 21.1% and 40.5% for “strongly disagree” and “disagree” respectively, 25.8% of males and 13.9% of females answered they “strongly disagree”. There was also a difference with the replies for “agree”. 11% of males and 21.3% of females answered “agree”. It can be clearly observed some women perceive more cultural difficulty than males. An interesting follow-up to the previous question is whether or not respondents have a support group to deal with such cultural difficulties. The general responses for Q70 were 36.9% and 17.3% for the top two answers, but males scored lower with 17.2% and only 7.4% of females answering “disagree”. This is contrasted by only 10% of males but 28.1% of females stating “strongly agree”. Females are almost three times more likely to have a support group.

**Table 13: Q69 You have experienced a cultural difficulty that has made you want to leave Japan.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	47	73	28	20	14	182	
		% within Sex	25.8%	40.1%	15.4%	11.0%	7.7%	100.0%	
	female	Count	17	50	18	26	11	122	
		% within Sex	13.9%	41.0%	14.8%	21.3%	9.0%	100.0%	
Total		Count	64	123	46	46	25	304	
		% within Item	21.1%	40.5%	15.1%	15.1%	8.2%	100.0%	

**Table 14: Q70 You have a support network around you.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	3	31	61	67	18	180	
		% within Sex	1.7%	17.2%	33.9%	37.2%	10.0%	100.0%	
	female	Count	1	9	33	44	34	121	
		% within Sex	.8%	7.4%	27.3%	36.4%	28.1%	100.0%	
Total		Count	4	40	94	111	52	301	
		% within Item	1.3%	13.3%	31.2%	36.9%	17.3%	100.0%	

During the first set of interviews, several of the respondents mentioned how they had been told they are more Japanese than Japanese. This was not connected to language ability because this was stated by both those who rated themselves high and low on the language scales. Q71 (Table 15) attempts to ask if respondents had been told this by native Japanese. While 29.9% and 22% answered “agree” and “strongly agree”, the bigger difference was found in the space between the sexes. Males answered 18% while females responded with 28.1% for “strongly agree”.

**Table 15: Q71 You have been told you are more Japanese than Japanese.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	32	37	24	57	33	183	
		% within Sex	17.5%	20.2%	13.1%	31.1%	18.0%	100.0%	
	female	Count	12	20	21	34	34	121	
		% within Sex	9.9%	16.5%	17.4%	28.1%	28.1%	100.0%	
Total		Count	44	57	45	91	67	304	
		% within Item	14.5%	18.8%	14.8%	29.9%	22.0%	100.0%	

Q73 (Table 16) asks whether westerner foreigners can live a functional life in Japan without Japanese language ability. Respondents replied with 31.8% and 20.3% for “agree” and “strongly agree” respectively. There was also a strong showing for the middle ground at 29.2%. When split into male and female answers for “disagree”, the results are 23.5% and 37.7% respectively. Language focused items often resulted in variance between the sexes. The basic definition of “functional life” may vary from gender to gender.

**Table 16: Q73 Long term residents can live a functional life without speaking Japanese.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	22	43	65	39	14	183
	% within Sex	12.0%	23.5%	35.5%	21.3%	7.7%	100.0%	
	female	Count	18	46	32	23	3	122
	% within Sex	14.8%	37.7%	26.2%	18.9%	2.5%	100.0%	
Total		Count	40	89	97	62	17	305
		% within Item	13.1%	29.2%	31.8%	20.3%	5.6%	100.0%

Past studies have discussed the interconnectedness between language and understanding the culture of a country (Kramsch 1998). Q75 (Table 17) directly inquired if the Japanese language was needed to understand the host culture. The responses were 36% and 27.7% for “agree” and “strongly agree” respectively. There was little variance between males and females. The question of whether Japanese employers value Japanese language skills of workers were observed. Bilingual employees have a highly unusual skill, but their skills are not always reflected in compensation or interest by many employers of western foreigners in Japan. It was reported that Peruvian immigrants working in factories were not compensated any differently whether they spoke the language or not (Moorehead, 2010). This is also true for the western foreign group. Language skills tend to become more pertinent after receiving employment rather than being a prerequisite of initial employment. Q76 (Table 18) asked if respondents used Japanese at their place of employment. 34.6% and 33.9% for “agree” and “strongly agree” with a combined 68.5% saying they use Japanese for their job or business, with 16.3% in the middle. 41.2% of females agreed with this statement compared to 30.2% for males. While this question is inquiring whether or not they use Japanese at their job, the level to which they use it was not specified.

The final group of questions focuses on discrimination and microaggressions. Out of the several items on discrimination Q83 (Table 19) was the most representative of a divide between sexes. Q83 asked respondents if they have been discriminated against by their in-laws (if applicable). Females answered 18.1% for “agree” followed by 9.1% of males. The trend was

observed on the opposite side with 35.4% of males stating they “disagree” and 25.5% of females for the same choice. A total score of 30.6% and 31.8% for “strongly disagree” and “disagree” respectively was observed. Western females who marry Japanese nationals are more likely than their male counterparts to experience unfair treatment by the Japanese in-laws.

**Table 17: Q75 Japanese ability is necessary to understand the culture.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	5	22	40	63	53	183	
		% within Sex	2.7%	12.0%	21.9%	34.4%	29.0%	100.0%	
	female	Count	1	17	25	46	31	120	
		% within Sex	.8%	14.2%	20.8%	38.3%	25.8%	100.0%	
Total		Count	6	39	65	109	84	303	
		% within Item	2.0%	12.9%	21.5%	36.0%	27.7%	100.0%	

**Table 18: Q76 You need to use Japanese for your current work or business.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	5	25	33	55	64	182	
		% within Sex	2.7%	13.7%	18.1%	30.2%	35.2%	100.0%	
	female	Count	3	13	16	49	38	119	
		% within Sex	2.5%	10.9%	13.4%	41.2%	31.9%	100.0%	
Total		Count	8	38	49	104	102	301	
		% within Item	2.7%	12.6%	16.3%	34.6%	33.9%	100.0%	

**Table 19: Q83 You have been discriminated against by in-laws. (if applicable)**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	53	58	28	15	10	164	
		% within Sex	32.3%	35.4%	17.1%	9.1%	6.1%	100.0%	
	female	Count	26	24	15	17	12	94	
		% within Sex	27.7%	25.5%	16.0%	18.1%	12.8%	100.0%	
Total		Count	79	82	43	32	22	258	
		% within Item	30.6%	31.8%	16.7%	12.4%	8.5%	100.0%	

Q85 (Table 20) and Q86 (Table 21) cover the topic of microaggressions. This topic was brought into discussion in Japan several years prior to this study by Arudo Debito<sup>18</sup>. At the end of his article, he mentioned he hoped social scientists try to quantify how microaggressions affect non-Japanese. The research offered in this dissertation does not cover all non-Japanese, but it is a start. This topic also arose several times in interviews which resulted in these two basic items. Q85 showed a large majority believe microaggressions exist in Japan. While microaggressions most likely exist in every country, data showing the argument of whether the group in question experiences such encounters in Japan is crucial to even have the discussion in the first place. The combination of “agree” (34.9%) and “strongly agree” (34.2%) resulted in 69.1% answering on the positive side of the item with 24.9% in the middle. A variance between males and females for “strongly agree” was 28.7% and 42.5% respectively. This is a strong observable difference between the sexes which was also mirrored in Q86.

When respondents were asked if they had experienced microaggressions in Q86, 34.6% answered “agree” followed by 31.5% answering “strongly agree” to create a combined score of 66.1%. 21.8% chose the middle response. An observed difference between males and females was again present for the “strongly agree” choice at 26% for males and 39.7% for females. More research would be needed to determine why these differences occur. Any inferences made from the results of these final two items would be fairly subjective.

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<sup>18</sup> This is reference to a 2012 article on microaggressions in Japan written by Debito Arudo. Title: *Yes, I can use chopsticks: the everyday ‘microaggressions’ that grind us down.* Can be found at: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2012/05/01/issues/yes-i-can-use-chopsticks-the-everyday-microaggressions-that-grind-us-down/#.V2chUtR95Id>

**Table 20: Q85 You think micro-aggressions exist against foreigners in Japan.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	5	11	49	64	52	181	
		% within Sex	2.8%	6.1%	27.1%	35.4%	28.7%	100.0%	
	female	Count	0	2	26	41	51	120	
		% within Sex	.0%	1.7%	21.7%	34.2%	42.5%	100.0%	
Total		Count	5	13	75	105	103	301	
		% within Item	1.7%	4.3%	24.9%	34.9%	34.2%	100.0%	

**Table 21: Q86 You have experienced micro-aggressions.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	11	19	43	58	46	177	
		% within Sex	6.2%	10.7%	24.3%	32.8%	26.0%	100.0%	
	female	Count	0	6	22	45	48	121	
		% within Sex	.0%	5.0%	18.2%	37.2%	39.7%	100.0%	
Total		Count	11	25	65	103	94	298	
		% within Item	3.7%	8.4%	21.8%	34.6%	31.5%	100.0%	

### 3.5 Factor analysis

The results from the factor analysis and the tests for reliance will be reported in this section. This section will also explain how the factors determined from the analysis will be run through a Pearson's r bivariate correlation test. The analysis shown in this section has been reported on earlier in a previous study by this author (O'Keefe 2016). Eight factors were identified during analysis and assembled. All factors were created by combining 1 to 10 scales and/or LIKERT scale items. All the factors were also checked for reliability through a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient test. The LIKERT 1 through 5 scales used "somewhat agree" for the number three choice, which is not the common neutral answer often given. This was done to create a continuous scale for when the items were combined.

There are three tables showing the factor analysis below. Some of the factors are repeated on the first two tables below to separate the cultural fit (Table 22) and the frustration factors (Table 23). Language was also tested separated (Table 24). The factors involved in all

the tables always used the same items. The general life satisfaction (GLS) was compiled from 5 items: 1(low) to 10 (high) scale for life satisfaction was combined with 4 LIKERT scales and was tested with a reliability of .78 in Cronbach's  $\alpha$ . The LIKERT items for GLS focused on being personally satisfied with their life in Japan. The factor used to represent life satisfaction professional (LSP) was meant to represent professional satisfaction and confidence of the individual, consists of 3 LIKERT items focusing on future economic stability, i.e. job security, room for professional advancement and whether or not they could find work if they happen to lose their current job or business. It scored a .66 on the Cronbach's  $\alpha$ , which is recognized as below the common acceptance of .70.

Two opposing composites recognizing cultural fit (CF) and frustration (FRUS) were compiled in factor analysis.<sup>19</sup> They scored .78 and .84 respectively with Cronbach's  $\alpha$ . The CF factor consists of 5 LIKERT scale items. The 5 items included interaction with Japanese counterparts, having a support network, and feeling free to express him/herself to Japanese friends and/or co-workers. Finally, the ability to communicate within the community was also included, but this item did not specify which language they communicated in. The FRUS is made up of 9 LIKERT items dealing with the feelings of frustration, exclusion, stress, and feeling stuck in Japan and difficulties with cultural differences. The CF and CF FRUS components act as opposition to each other and were expected to score that way from the start. Both of these factors are also reflective of the connectivity and interactions by the individual with the host culture. This differs from the life satisfaction factor which primarily deals with the individual's satisfaction only.

During factor analysis two factors for language ability were recognized. The first was labeled language ability (LA) and consisted of 7 items. Four of those items were the self-rated 1 (low) to 10 (high) scales on Japanese speaking/listening/reading/writing skills. The remaining

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<sup>19</sup> This factor was labeled CF balance in O'Keefe 2016.

three were LIKERT scales items dealing with whether or not the individual feels confident in Japanese-only speaking situations or using the language in an emergency situation. The second factor covered daily language used by respondents (DL), which was compiled of three LIKERT items. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  were .88 (LA) and .59 (DL). A subjective reason is all that can be given for the split between the two factors. The DL items may reflect daily language use which does not necessarily require high language ability. LA factor scored high on reliability and the weaker DL factor was used for reference to basic language needs.

Finally, the composites for discrimination were broken down in factor analysis into two components. They were labeled as discrimination and microaggressions with respective Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of .76 and .91. The 5 item component for discrimination is a compilation of LIKERT scales which include personal experiences with discrimination. The 2 LIKERT items for the microaggressions components represent whether or not respondents believe microaggressions exist in Japan and/or if they experience them personally or not.

**Table 22: Factor analysis 1**

	Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>				
	CF	discrim	GLS	micro	LSP
You feel free to express your feelings around Japanese friends.	.723	-.231	.333	.041	.003
You feel free to express your feelings around Japanese co-workers.	.611	-.241	.195	-.149	.150
You have a support network around you.	.618	.022	.079	.105	.106
In general, it is easy to communicate with Japanese people.	.745	-.133	.167	.005	.143
Western foreigners can be fully accepted in a Japanese community.	.657	-.096	.109	-.360	.186
You have experienced a cultural difficulty that has made you want to leave Japan.	-.152	.519	-.425	.092	-.023
You have been discriminated against at your work in Japan.	-.070	.753	.054	.272	-.188
You have been discriminated against by Japanese friends.	-.276	.793	-.045	.110	-.074
You have been discriminated against by a stranger.	-.038	.595	.082	.526	-.090
You have been discriminated against by in-laws. (if applicable)	-.033	.620	-.253	.036	-.006
Life Satisfaction	.248	-.263	.767	-.104	.054
You feel welcome in the area you live.	.246	-.051	.353	-.221	.148
You are satisfied with your performance in your personal life in Japan.	.430	.031	.554	.005	.309
You are satisfied with your performance in your professional life in Japan.	.121	-.041	.596	-.099	.507
You feel comfortable living in Japan.	.393	-.056	.736	-.042	.022
You think micro-aggressions exist against foreigners in Japan.	-.041	.182	-.099	.909	.030
You have experienced micro-aggressions.	-.082	.204	-.117	.892	.028
You have job security.	.080	-.115	.030	-.111	.716
If you lost your current job, you could find new employment quickly.	.246	.062	.038	.097	.750
You have room for professional advancement.	.135	-.209	.194	.058	.735

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

**Table 23: Factor analysis 2**

**Rotated Component Matrixa**

	Component				
	GLS	Discrim	LSP	Micro	FRUS
Life Satisfaction	-.778	-.187	.069	-.117	-.122
You feel welcome in the area you live.	-.664	-.213	.158	-.128	.256
You are satisfied with your performance in your personal life in Japan.	-.638	.075	.331	-.026	-.211
You are satisfied with your performance in your professional life in Japan.	-.498	.025	.539	-.176	-.090
You feel comfortable living in Japan.	-.826	-.039	.070	-.010	.022
You have been discriminated against at your work in Japan.	.054	.823	-.155	.151	-.051
You have been discriminated against by Japanese friends.	.227	.775	-.043	.069	.116
You have been discriminated against by a stranger.	-.016	.653	-.085	.472	.060
You have been discriminated against by in-laws. (if applicable)	.221	.457	-.002	.110	.166
You have job security.	-.042	-.152	.718	-.113	.025
If you lost your current job, you could find new employment quickly.	-.136	-.005	.760	.122	-.067
You have room for professional advancement.	-.223	-.200	.713	.091	-.155
You think micro-aggressions exist against foreigners in Japan.	.144	.219	.028	.879	.081
You have experienced micro-aggressions.	.153	.217	.006	.894	.104
You feel stress when you think about your future in Japan.	.285	.165	-.338	.077	.359
You feel stuck in Japan.	.389	.180	-.175	.033	.416
You feel frustrated in the Japanese community you live in.	.212	.184	-.134	.156	.162
You feel frustrated in a Japanese work environment.	.137	.312	-.319	.107	.222
You feel frustrated in personal relationships with Japanese people.	.273	.271	.019	.085	.419
You feel down after you experience a cultural mishap.	.040	.082	-.126	.198	.778
You feel a strong sense of cultural difference with Japanese.	.321	.252	-.061	-.039	.554
You have experienced a cultural difficulty that has made you want to leave Japan.	.107	.252	-.007	.074	.239
You feel excluded from the Japanese around you.	.360	.391	-.143	-.035	.326

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

**Table 24: Factor analysis 3**

	Components	
	LA	DL
speaking	.867	.143
listening	.840	.155
reading	.854	.112
writing	.810	.101
You feel confident functioning in a Japanese only environment.	.720	.127
You would feel confident using Japanese in an emergency situation.	.754	.117
You have been told you are more Japanese than Japanese.	.487	.247
The quality of your life is affected by your Japanese level.	-.069	.871
Japanese ability is necessary to understand the culture.	.426	.652
You need to use Japanese for your current work or business.	.580	.443

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method:

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

### 3.5.1 Hypotheses

Several hypotheses taken from a previous study were derived from the factors from the above section (O'Keefe 2016). The majority of them deal with the hybrid model's *styles of belonging*. Life satisfaction and cultural fit act as the center lines for the typological results found in Chapter 5. The frustration factor used in the Pearson r correlation is not the same as the frustration type, but rather acts as the opposite to the cultural fit factor. Many of the items used for the frustration factor display conflict or difficulty with interaction with the Japanese community.

The first two hypotheses are related to common beliefs in the LTW group which often arose during the interview process. Language ability was tested with general and professional life satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1 a-b: General life satisfaction is positively correlated with a) language ability and b) daily language skills.

Hypothesis 2 a-b: Life satisfaction professional is positively correlated with a) language ability and b) daily language skills.

The next two hypotheses deal with the opposing nature of the cultural fit (CF) and the frustration (FRUS) factors. These factors are expected to act in complete contrast to each other. The items for CF were focused on free expression of feelings in the community, the ease of communication, acceptance in the community and the observance of a support network. None of the items used for the CF factor asked which language they communicated in when interacting with the community. A respondent speaking only English or a combination of English and Japanese would be limited in some ways, but this may be the necessary form of communication for the community the operate in. The FRUS factor is constructed of items dealing with stress, feeling stuck in Japan and frustration in personal, professional and community-orientated relationships. Exclusion and feelings of cultural difference were also included. Language ability is not incorporated in the FRUS factor. Speaking the language, according to past research (O'Keefe 2013), does not mean one is void of culturally inhibited stress. There are several hypotheses that can be derived from this.

Hypothesis 3 a-c: Cultural Fit is positively correlated to a) general life satisfaction  
b) life satisfaction professional c) language ability.

Hypothesis 4 a-c: Frustration is negatively correlated to a) general life satisfaction  
b) life satisfaction professional c) language ability.

The factors for discrimination and microaggressions comprise the final pair of hypotheses. It was a challenge during the interview process to get clear examples of discrimination due to the lack of strength in stories once certain bias are questioned. The separation of fact from subjective recounts of past incidents can prove to be somewhat problematic. This topic is often the subject of debate in online foreign groups, forums and editorials. The reverse side of this discussion is the overwhelming amount of positive discrimination many LTW respondents

received during their time in Japan which has been observed in past studies as well (Komisarof 2012). True social or institutional systematic discrimination would and should equally affect people in the same way. This particular study found little to no evidence of systematic discrimination, but could never claim that it doesn't exist. On the other hand, examples of microaggressions were fairly common, but respondents were not equally affected. While microaggressions will be discussed more in Chapter 4, the hypotheses below hope to offer a quantitative view of the phenomenon.

Hypothesis 5 a-b: Cultural Fit is negatively correlated with a) discrimination  
b) microaggressions.

Hypothesis 6 a-b: Frustration is positively correlated with a) discrimination  
b) microaggressions.

### **3.5.2 Pearson's r correlation**

The attempt to measure their life satisfaction and its correlation to language ability and the *cultural fit* model (Ward and Leong, 2004; Chirkov et al, 2005) is to understand what factors determine success from the social and psychological angle. The factors for discrimination were also used in the bivariate correlation to get a multi-angled view of the situation. All eight factors were then tested for correlations using a Pearson's *r* (Table 25) analysis and published with the mean values ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard deviations (SD). Due to the amount of items used for each composite the *n* varied for each correlation, which was also reported separately when necessary.

While this was fully reported in O'Keefe (2016), this section will report those findings again and reveal the relationships to this study. As explained earlier, this study is seeking to define various integrative habits of LTW from a social psychological manner over the long-term in Japan. There are some LTW use techniques to interact with the host culture while others separate themselves from it whenever possible. This study hopes to clarify these patterns through the forming of the typological groups.

The results of the Pearson's r analysis observed the strongest correlation between the CF and LS factors. The 2016 (O'Keefe) study had several hypotheses, but this section will review 6 of the most significant findings. Cultural fit (CF) as explained earlier in this paper is the connection to the community. This connection does not necessarily represent the self-sameness experienced with the community needed for identity achievement, but it does serve as valuable information when determining the typological goals of this study. This is also information that has not been considered before about the western foreign group in Japan.

**Table 25: Pearson correlation**

	mean	SD	Correlations										
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 Sex	1.40	0.49											
2 Age of respondents	48.78	8.43	.040										
3 Length of time living in Japan	19.83	7.38	.090	.67**									
4 Marital status	1.26	0.59	.12*	.16**	.060								
5 General Life Satisfaction	22.61	3.82	.000	-.080	.070	.040							
6 Life Satisfaction Professional	9.79	2.75	-.010	.14*	-.040	-.024	.37**						
7 Language Ability	34.62	11.48	.050	-.021	.088	.030	.30**	.32**					
8 Language Daily use	11.46	2.40	.000	-.043	.059	.010	.060	.13*	.36**				
9 Cultural Fit	18.56	3.22	.000	-.024	.13*	-.085	.73**	.35**	.35**	.14*			
10 Frustration	24.00	6.20	.070	-.063	.143*	.036	-.60**	-.307**	-.221**	.030	-.59**		
11 Discrimination	13.94	4.25	.100	-.061	-.030	.079	-.329**	-.203**	.097	.120	-.406**	.59**	
12 Micro-aggressions	7.78	1.96	.26**	-.078	.010	.097	-.221**	-.029	.18**	.28**	-.271**	.39**	.58**

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

One of the most significant discoveries in the analysis was the correlation between language and life satisfaction. When respondents were asked the importance of language, it was common for them to put weight on its necessity. The result of the Pearson's r was significant enough to say according to this survey, language ability does not have the strongest correlation to LS among the factors tested. There were two language factors which represented ability and daily use of language. The variance between the two factors representing language ability scored .30 for LA and .06 for DL when correlated to GLS.

This section will give a brief overview of the 6 results from the findings of O'Keefe's (2016) paper. The first and second hypotheses were both tested with a sample of n = 286. The general life satisfaction composite showed a positive correlation with language ability ( $r = .30$ ) but the daily language composite accepts the null hypothesis ( $r = .06$ ), creating a split for the 1st

hypothesis. The 2nd hypothesis showed both language ability ( $r = .32$ ) and daily language use ( $r = .13$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) had positive correlations with professional confidence. The 3rd hypothesis can be reported also as displaying a positive correlation between CF and a) general life satisfaction ( $r = .73$ ,  $n = 274$ ), b) professional satisfaction ( $r = .35$ ,  $n = 274$ ) and c) language ability ( $r = .35$ ,  $n = 281$ ). The FRUS composite for the 4th hypothesis can be recorded as negatively correlated with a) general life satisfaction ( $r = -.60$ ,  $n = 274$ ), b) professional satisfaction ( $r = -.31$ ,  $n = 274$ ) and c) language ability ( $r = -.22$ ,  $n = 281$ ). The 5th hypothesis ( $n = 233$ ) can reject the null. The composite for CF communication was negatively correlated with both a) discrimination ( $r = -.41$ ) and b) microaggressions ( $r = -.27$ ). The 6th and final hypothesis shows that FRUS is positively correlated with a) discrimination ( $r = .59$ ) and b) microaggressions ( $r = .39$ ) respectively. All of the above correlations are significant at the  $p < 0.01$  level unless expressed otherwise.

### **3.5.3 Methodological limitations**

In all, this study can only be considered exploratory because of its inherent limitations. To begin with, although the respondents were from varying postal codes nationwide and were at least two separations from the researcher, the sample was not random and originated with the researcher on SNS networks. Moreover, even though the criteria for the study appeared at the beginning of the questionnaire and elicited approval from every respondent, this means it is completely reliant on the honesty of individuals who answered the questions. Through the process used it would be challenging to secure the accuracy of those who chose to answer the questionnaire. This could lead to the sample as not a true representation of the group. This type of personal bias has also been mentioned in other studies of ethnic groups in Australia (Mak & Tran 2001). This bias can most often be noted in the language area. There may be some respondents who overrate their ability, while others may be more humble and underrate themselves. This was apparent in some of the preliminary testing, but to confirm language ability beyond the self-scored item is problematic. While those early preliminary questionnaires

have not been added to the final sample for this paper, they offered valuable information into how the survey in general was received. However, the self-rated scales could also be a representation and reflection of how confident a person feels about their ability, which gives insight into their personal feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction with their language ability.

In hindsight there are items that may have performed better if worded slightly different. This was brought to light by comments at the end of the survey. One example is how homeschooling was not offered as a choice. While not a common practice, it came into the discussion as a viable choice for some foreign parents. This was never covered in the survey. Japanese would mostly likely never even entertain the concept of homeschooling. This may be especially true for families whose parents are both non-Japanese (O'Keefe 2013). Another topic brought to attention was the lack of choice for transgender individuals or couples. This will be considered in future work.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

The first section of this chapter reviewed the whole qualitative process used in the performed interviews. It also started to detail some of the pieces of the puzzle for this research as a whole. It offered a glimpse into some of the raw statements made by respondents, which will be compiled and compared with the quantitative data from the 2014 survey. It also cast a brief look at the types and the factors which are involved in their creation. While borrowing some methods from grounded theory, techniques learned through past work experience were implemented. The line of questioning also evolved as in GTM as new data was collected from respondents. The discovery of new information was embraced and quickly added to new questions for following interviews. One obstacle faced early on was that I also personally fit the criteria for this study. This does create an inherent corruption of objectivity at some level. Early on in this research, it was realized that many respondents who had very different outlooks and

opinions than originally hypothesized, which allowed this research to be aware of researcher biases and lack of knowledge of different viewpoints. This was crucial to enhance the results of this research as being as objective as possible.

The criterion for the interviews was strictly enforced to the point of fault. Two interviews were removed after finding out during the interviews the respondents did not fit the criteria. This happened even though they had been informed through the pre-interview confirmation of the criteria. Overall the criteria chosen was understood and accepted by many of the respondents as necessary to gain information about Japan from truly experienced people. This research believes that time is a revealer of truths, which is the basic logic behind the choice of LTWs rather than non-specific lengths of stay.

The second half of this chapter offers several interesting quantitative results which will be used in the following chapters to reinforce the types of respondents discovered in this study. The obvious distinctions made between the sexes in the cross tabulation were significant and have also become a meaningful part of this study. The compiled factors used in the Pearson's r analysis offered some additional angles to help create an even more detailed image of respondent types. Female respondents in general displayed higher language ability and were found to interact with the culture more than male counterparts. Female respondents were also more likely to experience microaggressions from host culture members. This may be due to the fact they interact more with the host culture therefore they are exposed to such encounters, but this would be a subjective conclusion. While these findings may not be a surprise to many LTWs, prior to this study no such data existed. There are also conclusions that defy common beliefs as well. Finally, the responses observed exhibited differences between the western and other immigrant groups.

Work was one of the major reasons many westerners come to Japan, but adventure and/or fun also scored high. When comparing these results to South Americans or Asian groups, who have said they come to Japan primarily for work, shows the focus on economics to be much

less for westerners in the beginning of their stay. In general, the policy problems found against non-western migrants working in Japan are more systematically abundant (Miyoshi 2004) than for westerners. However, when respondents were asked why they stay in Japan, the top three answers were for work, family and quality of life.

LTWs as a whole also show interest in earning the right to vote in all elections as well as dual citizenship. Dual citizenship is seen as one of the best ways to allow foreign residents to vote, but the restraints that Japan puts on it makes it more of a dream than a reality. However, with the march to globalization, Japan may want to rethink dual citizenship by starting with selected countries only, possibly instituting a small group of selected allied countries so as to perfect the program before implementing a full blown change.

Female westerners, although not the majority, were observed as having had more cultural interactions than males do. Japanese culture traditionally puts more pressure on females in social roles especially if they have school aged children. This would be compounded if their spouse is a Japanese national. Results also clearly show females have more difficulties with in-laws than males do. The traditional expectations of a foreign wife can be more than of a foreign husband. Japanese ability is shown to be more important to females than men in numerous items. The ability to speak the language is an important factor for western females when entering into a marriage with a Japanese national.

## **Chapter 4: The catalysts**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter hopes to clarify the application of parts to the hybrid identity model for western foreign residents (LTW) in Japan. Before getting into the typological results which will be discussed in the following chapter, the specific catalysts which compile or affect the creation of each type need to be explained. Each catalyst has a specific effect which acts as a piece of the model to be applied to the target group. The empirical research generated for this study will be used as the framework to support the model. The interview responses, while visceral in nature at times, hold extremely important insight into the group from a micro-sociological perspective. For this reason, coded responses from the interviews will be used alongside the quantitative data taken from the survey to support or in some cases refute common beliefs of those interviewed. While the primary goal of this study is to create the four quadrants or types, the secondary goal is to open a dialectic focused on how this specific group integrates into the Japanese host culture over the long-term.

The styles of belonging introduced at the end of this chapter differ from the catalyst because they are rated in scales for all the quadrants and are always present at some level for each quadrant. The catalyst can either be present or even non-existent as the term suggests.

### **4.2 Catalysts**

The catalysts detailed in this section are accelerants or enhancements of the individual's ability to advance or undergo metamorphosis within the community, but are not all present within the types presented in this paper. In fact the absence of some of them is not uncommon. This absence also separates the catalysts from life satisfaction and cultural fit factors that are necessary on some level to promote a more prosperous environment. The most practical reasons for staying in Japan, according to this study's survey, are for professional or family reasons. The catalysts act as promote success in these areas. For example, the presence of language skills

will, in general, make life easier and promote agency in the community while the absence of such skills may cause a void of communication creating a smaller area of access to the community. It has been recognized that some teaching jobs allow such English-only patterns, which can lead towards professional success even without Japanese language skills.

In the case of family, if a westerner marries a Japanese national, they are inevitably attached to that family therefore to the culture by default. Some success for international marriage can be explained by observing the mix of which nationalities are marrying (Ting-Toomey 1991). A study by Vasquez concluded that Hispanics who marry a white partner tend to leave their ethnicity behind (2011b). This does not occur as often with the western group in Japan, rather there are compromises which are made when joining a Japanese family, but their nationality or ethnicity is not often discarded. This attachment can be positive if the family becomes a supportive foundation to the internationally bound relationship. The international bond of marriage also can act as an agent to multiculturalism (Burgess 2008b). On the other hand, the negative aspects are also apparent if either side is not willing to be flexible on certain issues involving deep cultural variances in family roles which may not even be recognized as such on either side. This also leads to cultural clashes found when trying to professionally advance themselves (Clausen 2010). Professional advancement can be problematic because very little clear feedback is given by Japanese employers who see most contracted western workers as temporary in nature and often exclude them from strict hierarchy found in most Japanese organizations. This is where foreign support groups and associations help promote such advancement, especially in the case of those who do not speak the language. The catalysts discussed in this section, hold an integral part when looking at successful integrative techniques for western foreigners.

#### **4.2.1 The Commitment**

The term *commitment* arose many times in the interviews, which will be referenced throughout this chapter and the next. It has also been observed in past studies on foreign immigrants in Japan, which revealed the pressures Peruvian immigrants have from the Japanese school system. Peruvian parents expressed the pressure put on by the school system to commit more to living in Japan. Commitments included improving language skills and participation in school activities to support their children within the Japanese community (Moorehead 2010). Children of immigrants assimilate differently in terms of psychological well-being, educational achievement, and at-risk behaviors depending on which ethnic group they belong to (Greenman and Xie 2008). Westerners may experience some trouble, but there are also examples of the opposite. In many ways, westerners have more choices than other immigrant groups in the Asian or South American ethnic groups.

The necessity of a conscious commitment to form a deep relationship with a Japanese person is observed by some LTW. Commitment to life in the country comes in various forms such as learning the language, having a Japanese spouse and/or children, or belonging to a group which is easily recognized within the community the westerner belongs to. These different forms of commitment all show a pledge over time to attempt to integrate. They require a conscious effort to understand the depths of the host culture. A westerner planning on being in Japan with a long-term goal changes the foundations of the temporary based mind of being a “guest” or “visitor.” This must not be misunderstood as abandoning one’s nationality or ethnicity. On the contrary, as seen in the interviews, it is a redefining of the self with a commitment to find the personally negotiated middle ground interwoven with the host culture. This redefinition by the individual is then simultaneously accepted by their specific community over time. The acceptance of the host culture is a product of efforts of the non-Japanese individual who through experience has discovered methods to allow them to maintain who they are without becoming separated from the normal construct of the community. This negotiation is

the core of the hybrid identity theory. The sacrifice of any core values for an adopted one may create cognitive dissonance in the individual, later leading to confusion, doubt, and frustration in one's existence in Japan. Commitments to learning the language and to family can create a reduction in dissonance over time (Maertz, Hassan and Magnusson 2009) resulting in an essential understanding of what is needed to live and work in Japan's high context culture before many years are invested.

70.1% of respondents did not originally plan on staying in Japan for the long-term when they first arrived.<sup>1</sup> Their original reason to come to Japan was as a sojourner rather than for economic growth like other foreign groups. As reported in Chapter 3, 83.8% of respondents plan to stay in Japan. Those planning to leave were asked to give specific times. Out of 51 answers 33 were non-specific. Words like "around," "probably," "soon I hope." 8 answers referred to retirement and 10 were specific answers such as "January 2016."<sup>2</sup> The non-specific answers could be considered the main focus of the commitment or lack thereof. Westerners should have a goal set to leave the country or an understanding to commit to their current situation of living. While a successful career may be connected to developing a satisfied life, it does not necessarily equate to community connectivity. According to the interviews, there are cases that professional success may even separate them entirely from the community. Once a position has been procured, the necessity to incorporate themselves in the community becomes less mandatory and completely voluntary unless children are involved. Some westerners choose to separate themselves from involvement even when the children are involved. This was witnessed in Chris' encounter at the school picnic with his sons.<sup>3</sup>

Competition for jobs also has become more intense as time passes. Education levels are fairly high among the western group in Japan with 139 (n=305) of the survey respondents

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix pg. A-13: Q64.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix pg. A-18: Q89 & Q89a: The full responses for this item are posted in the tables and charts section.

<sup>3</sup> This quote appears in Chapter 3

having a master's degree, with an additional 38 with doctoral degrees<sup>4</sup>. Long-term life satisfaction needs clear goals to recognize "optimum means-end paths" that lead to mechanisms of feedback creating growth (Sirgy et al 1985: 222) and a stronger connection to their surroundings. Contrary to this would be a sort of cognitive dissonance, existing in someone who is always thinking about leaving the country but continuing to search for work in Japan hoping for the best. Rather than focusing on what life could be outside of Japan, they should center themselves in the opportunities they have inside or outside Japan, not both. Whether they actually end up leaving the country is inconsequential, the point here is, if they understand for the time being they are in Japan, being committed will help their situation improve. Some improvements such as education, language skills, or general cultural knowledge take years of attention; ignoring the need to improve these areas may create a void which will be problematic and hard to adjust for as time goes by. The feeling of impermanence was a common theme among respondents, especially when talking about their earlier years in Japan. It was often referred to as having "one foot out the door." Respondent Cathy elaborates on this point:

I can say that until I got this job in K---, I feel my whole life here has been in a state of there's always this temporariness. I'd say that until I got this job, I always felt like I had one foot out the door.

Not by my own because I wanted to be there, but if the country, if the job situation wasn't going to show any loyalty to me, I was going to have to leave because ultimately, I have to provide for my family, and I have to say that when I got this job... We've never bought a house here, we rent this place... We didn't buy a house, the furniture we have is just ... Someday, we'll have good furniture, but for now, this is enough.

...I suppose in that regard, for a long time until last year (her 18th year), I didn't have a real commitment. There was always this thought that maybe we'll have to leave. (Cathy: 4-5)

Cathy received a full-time non-contract position at a university, but this is after 15 years of being in the country with a sense of "temporariness." Another respondent, Ann, also stated similar feelings:

I mean I lived with one foot out the door I think up until such a point that I got married. That suited my age, at the time I was in my twenties I wasn't ... So no, I think if you're just looking, if you're not planning on creating a long term life for yourself in the

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<sup>4</sup> Appendix pg-9: Q9

country then you don't need to be committed. I would suggest if you are looking to be here for some time then not being committed doesn't make sense. (Ann: 4)

While it may makes sense in practical terms when starting a family, committing to living in the country isn't always as straightforward for some people. Another observation, outside of economic stability, was the stark difference between institutional employed respondents and self-employed respondents. Self-employed respondents tend to be self-made and follow personally created paths, which differs from westerners who are employed and taught to exist within their employer's organizational culture. Carlos, a self-employed 25 year resident of Japan, said this about the importance of commitment to the business community:

Maybe I lean towards that now more than I ever did, but I think that frame of mind of never actually deciding I'm moving to Japan, I'm going to be here, I'm going to be here long term, and with that mindset decided, making the decisions you do to accommodate yourself here, I don't think I ever really, really did that to.... (Carlo: 2)

He continued by clarifying this later in the interview:

Japanese respect the commitment and they recognize it and they look for it....They look for it.....In me they haven't seen it and I think this also could be one of the issues attributed to my problems here that outside, the Japanese community looking at me and the way I live my life here, and because they saw me going and coming for fifteen years, they never would label me as committed. I never married; they never labeled me as committed. I don't have kids; they never labeled me as committed. (Carlo: 5)

The commitment to the community could be envisioned as Merton's (1949) concept of anticipatory socialization. Those who find ways to exhibit to host culture members the willingness and commitment to take on necessary traits will improve their chances of success. This would be especially useful for those who do not speak the language and wish to work in Japan. The basic recognition of just doing what is expected to fill in any gaps of understanding in the workplace could be the difference between success and failure. This is akin to Merton's example of a private in the army who molds himself into the image of his superior officer. Such a soldier is most likely promoted. Due to the strict hierarchical system in Japan, those who can do this will most likely find a place in the workforce than those who do not. Ironically, not speaking the language limits communication, but within the Japanese hierarchical construct,

those maintaining a lower rank often only listen and execute a higher ranked person's request, so minimal language skills are sometimes all that is needed to exist in the lower ranks of the system.

There is a saying in Japanese business which I learned from a Japanese businessman years ago called *horenso*. When it is directly translated it means spinach, but it is actually an acronym meaning *hokoku* (report), *renraku* (contact), and *sodan* (consult). On further observation, none of these words are disconnected from the higher ranked person. The promotion by individual problem solving ability is not expected and in many cases unnecessary in a Japanese-managed environment. A dilemma could occur when trying to determine to what degree this molding should take place without being seen as relinquishing your own cultural values, history or self. Observations made in this study recognized those who understand how host culture members perform certain tasks, will most likely do better than those who try to apply their own culture's "common sense" to a situation in which it may not be applicable or "common."

An example of this would be Garry's story about an American co-worker at the same IT company. It was the habit of the company president to interview all foreign hired employees. The president is a very well-known Japanese international businessman and has made extra efforts to create a globally focused company. In the case of most American companies, the president would never meet with such new hires unless they were of extreme importance to the company. The message the young American got the impression was he was a special hire. One day the company president visited the young American's general office area. While this was a visit meant to focus on the general dealings within the office, the young American went straight up to the president calling him by his first name and trying to shake his hand. This was obviously meant to be a power move on the part of the American but he was later reprimanded for the action by his Japanese superior. He was thoroughly confused about the grounds of the sanctioning he received.

Even by American standards, it was a rather bold move, but unthinkable by Japanese standards. Ultimately, many westerners find working within the lower echelons of a major Japanese company slow and not time efficient. The rate of promotion is also slower and determined by seniority rather than solely on the most competent. The irony of the story above is this particular company is considered one of the more progressive globally focused companies in Japan. This may be true from the Japanese perspective, but from the western point of view it is far from a more autonomous result-based environment which westerners would more likely thrive in. Another respondent, Ann, who experienced a Japanese working environment, described it as moving at a “snail’s pace.”

On the other hand, creating a connection within the community requires a different set of rules than the workplace. There are some western residents that feel judged for not taking part in community events. Theresa is busy running her business, so she rarely helps when community clean ups or events take place in her small neighborhood. She told a story of a housewife in her neighborhood that was not friendly when she first moved in and has remained such for the 13 years of her stay in that particular home. It could be considered normal to have unfriendly people in any neighborhood in any country, but it is the reason for the unfriendliness that makes it interesting. After several non-friendly exchanges, the woman’s husband helped Theresa clear off her pathways after a big snowstorm. She said it was nice he did it, but it made the relationship with the woman all the more awkward. She assumed it is due to her lack of participation with the local events which that particular neighbor’s wife is always taking part in. Another respondent showed her awareness of the pressure of entering a Japanese-managed situation when she volunteered at her local library:

When I volunteered at the library, I felt I did need to prove myself as a foreigner, like I am committed to this...I think a lot of Japanese people are a little cautious with foreigners because of a lack of commitment in some cases. (Judi: 2)

Feeling the responsibility to act as a representative for all foreigners arose during the interviews. This same pressure can act as a barrier for individuals from even trying to interact

with the community. Understanding the unwritten rules in the community can be much more difficult compared to a company setting due to the lack of sanctioning by fellow community members. Sanctioning in a company, although harsh at times, is a part of training and can be easier to understand for a westerner. The hardest part is being able to swallow what is being asked of you. The commitment is what pushes the individual through the harder times of misunderstandings. The transition into understanding the importance of the commitment early on in one's stay is a crucial step and may be a determiner of success. It is easier to pull out of a commitment if such an occasion arises, but to catch up to those who committed much earlier in their stay can be a challenge too overwhelming for some. Other catalysts are actually all different forms of commitments. The choice made to learn the language, participate in group activity or start a family are all forms of commitment as well. Zhang and Ta Van's (2009) researched attempted to determine immigration related factors to length of residency in the U.S., proficiency in English and various types of support (family cohesion, relative support, friend support and neighborhood cohesion) to determine social connectivity. The next several sections will expand on these other forms of commitment.

#### **4.2.2 Language**

The language section of this chapter is probably one of the largest due to the common appearances of the theme during the interviews. Language is also connected to education and learning within a society (Cummins 2000). To properly learn the language is a huge time commitment which is filled with failures and successes. In the end, few would argue its worth, but to what extent is it a necessary skill? Many of the results from the interviews and the survey display the importance of the language as a social connector to the culture and how it is perceived to affect the quality of life.<sup>5</sup> Selmer (2006) studied westerners in China to find language ability led to high rates of satisfaction as believed by survey respondents. While

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<sup>5</sup> Appendix pg. A-11: Q37

Selmer's claim may seem obvious, this is not always the case in Japan when observing some of the respondent answers. This section hopes to shed light on this concept. Anyone who has ever tried to have a deep conversation with someone who does not share a common language can tell you it takes a lot of extra effort and energy to do so at any depth. When David, a 25 year "lifer," was asked how he thinks people can get along without speaking the language he professed:

I can only imagine that they must have a lot of insecurity and a feel of lack of power and control of their lives. (David: 4)

This type of directness about the importance of language skills is rarely spoken out loud in foreign groups because non-speaking westerners could be offended by such directness, possibly affirming what David states above. Japanese nationals are also hesitant to bring up language skills with non-speakers as not to offend anyone, but will openly state bewilderment to westerners who speak the language as to why some LTWs cannot speak Japanese. Japanese people often feel ashamed of their inability to speak English. This especially goes for those who work alongside foreign staff.

The self-scored language scale in the survey was one way the level of respondents was tested, but separate items in the survey also touched on language ability. 64.9%<sup>6</sup> of respondents said they do not need language assistance on a regular basis. Also, when asked if they could function in a Japanese only emergency situation, 57.4%<sup>7</sup> replied they would be confident doing so. While Japanese language skills are determinant of success in some professional fields, it is not necessary for others. 68.5% (n=301)<sup>8</sup> of respondents stated they use Japanese for their job or business. The extent of this use is unknown. In past interviews, respondents mentioned they had observed Japanese skills as a hindrance rather than a benefit, because they will be given more work and responsibility, which was the primary reason that specific person didn't learn

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<sup>6</sup> Appendix pg. A-15:Q78

<sup>7</sup> Appendix pg. A-13:Q57

<sup>8</sup> Appendix pg. A-14:Q76

the language. But this “hindrance”<sup>9</sup> was not reflected in the majority of respondents in the survey. One university teacher added his two cents on the topic of using Japanese with students after being asked of the importance of language.

I think you hit the... bigger button when you said the word language and language knowledge at the end of your question there. The people, whether they're full time or part time, the line that I draw in terms of truly understanding the students and truly knowing what the students need and dealing with them in a better way, are those instructors who actually can speak the language.

They don't have to speak the language inside the classroom like I do, but they should be able to speak the language outside of the classroom to a degree where the student feels comfortable talking to them. It's not like you're speaking in broken Japanese, you're not speaking in party Japanese or you're not speaking where everything is a joke or a mix of English and Japanese so that you no longer come across as a foreigner, a *gaijin*, but you come across as a teacher, someone to be trusted, someone who can answer a question with a level of intelligence and with a little of knowledge as can be respected. For me, that's always been language. The people who can understand and use the language well are the ones that, just by definition, understand the culture.

They still might have some strong vestiges of their Americanism or their Canadianisms, but you can't learn this language without understanding its culture. In that sense, when a student comes up to you and says, "Oh, I'm sorry Mr. ---- but my father has this and that problem and so this and this and that. I can't come to class. What should I do?" Because they've already told you this, it makes you see them in a little bit better light, and I don't know..., if I put all of this in a Canadian context and I was dealing with, oh I don't know, a Chinese teacher and I was trying to study Chinese and this Chinese teacher couldn't really speak English, I don't think I would approach him at all. I would just take the absence mark, you know, and take the penalty on my grade. (Roberto: 6)

Roberto was not the only teacher who mentioned this kind of situation. Interviewees who worked at a company all spoke Japanese, but university teachers or lecturers did not always follow this suit. Japanese language skills are only becoming a requirement for university jobs as of recent, but it seems to be more of a request than a standard. The skill of teaching English can incorporate specific techniques to move around language barriers. It may run into barriers when situations deviate from normal classroom work. Such deviations would be becoming a student advisor or communicating with staff when lacking language skills could cause problems. Seemingly, these problems tend to be suffered on the Japanese side rather than the western one. One piece of information that arose in the interviews was those who had learned the language at a highly fluent and literate level with few exceptions learned the language early in their stay.

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<sup>9</sup> Appendix pg. A-14: Q74

One respondent, Collin, mentioned he learned the language from his seventh year. His focus was on the spoken language to support his business, but his studies did include some reading. The data collected shows the commitment to learn the language needs to be within the first several years of entry to become literate in the language although fluency could be attained at a later time. Those who had not learned Japanese often spoke of, for a lack of a better word, regret for not studying the language earlier in their stay. As time passes and a level of normalcy is formed it becomes harder to be a student of the language. Dorothy strongly suggested not waiting until you settle but rather start as early as possible to learn the language:

I think it's extremely important and I really regret that I did not spend more time learning Japanese before I came, or in my early years here. I haven't spent time studying Japanese, I would say for the past ten years or more and so my level of Japanese has not increased, especially in reading. I really urge anyone who is planning to come to Japan to learn the language, learn as much Kanji as you can, get as much vocabulary as you can. I think it's essential to do that as early as possible because otherwise you're losing out on a lot of communication, you're missing what is written around you, what is being said around you and I have missed out on a lot because of that. (Dorothy: 2)

Dorothy has lived in Japan for 31 years. She also fits into a smaller group of those who came over later in life. She arrived in Japan when she was 40, which could also be a factor in language learning. Several of the respondents started living in Japan after the age of 40, and all had lower than average self-rated language scores. This is most likely not just age, but they came with work as their primary goal and learning the language takes a secondary or even tertiary position to economic needs. Learning Japanese properly requires a lot of focus and time which most do not have as they get older and are busy with their career. The Japanese language has been given a difficulty level of 5 out of 5.<sup>10</sup> This puts it in a rare group of languages considered the most difficult for a native English speaker to learn. The level to be considered literate would be the equivalent of a 2nd year junior high school student. The ability to read

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<sup>10</sup> This information was found on Effective Language Learning.com. The specific web page can be found at: <http://www.effectivelanguagelearning.com/language-guide/language-difficulty>

newspapers, fill out forms and comprise simple letters would all be included when considering literacy (Taylor and Taylor 1995)<sup>11</sup> while fluency is competence at a spoken level.

The respondents from the survey were in some ways split on the necessity of language. 42.3% (n=305)<sup>12</sup> stated the language is needed to live a functional life while 31.8% said they did not need it with the remaining 25.9% in the middle. Language ability has also been broken down into functional zones in past studies as well (Babcock and Du-Babcock 2001). The key phrase in this discussion is “functional” life, not fluency or literacy, which means basic needs, can be fulfilled. In the end, it is a relative term and should have been clarified better. Dan made a comment about this:

Well, I think they (non-speakers) get along in the sense they can live life, but they never get to be a part of the culture, and they never really get accepted into the community. They'll get accepted into a group of Japanese people that are really into English or into expat type stuff. (Dan: 2)

Dorothy stated earlier that she “regretted” not studying the language, but through our conversation she seemed to be functional enough in the language to perform the basics in her daily life. She also seemed active in some group activity, but she lamented on the depth of her connectedness to her surroundings. There are many groups that support English, especially in the Tokyo and other metropolitan areas, but once you enter the smaller cities or the countryside, English becomes less of an option with a narrow frame of effectiveness. One respondent, who teaches and lectures in Japanese as a tenured professor, also started out in an area beyond the limits of Tokyo and had this to say:

If you don't learn Japanese, or if you only learn half-assed izakaya Japanese oral skills, and you never take on the kanji and all of your ... You'll never amount to anything here than a trained poodle, basically. When I came here, that was one of the first things ... I

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<sup>11</sup> Taylor and Taylor 1995 define literacy as the ability to understand the four writing systems at the Japanese Junior High School level. There are two syllabic writing systems: hiragana and katakana. The Chinese character (kanji) system also includes the various readings of a single Chinese character. The fourth system is the romaji style system which includes several versions, but the Hepburn system tends to be the most widely used by the west, followed by the Kunrei-shiki and the Nihon-shiki Romajii. The ability to read newspapers is often used as a standard way to assess a level of literacy.

<sup>12</sup> Appendix pg. A-14: Q73.

was lucky. Not every *gaijin* is this lucky as when you land here, and you don't know your ass from your elbow, and everything's weird...

If you're lucky, and you land yourself, what I would call, a *gaijin* mentor, a guy who knows the ropes, a guy who's seen the various stories or life trajectories, the different *gaijin* lifestyles..., and can tell you the stuff to watch out for and the stuff to do ... I was lucky enough to have a guy like that. He told me ... because this is literally like a week or so after I had gotten here, he said, "You don't have that much work right now. You're not that busy.

Start doing the Japanese right now and push yourself, and don't learn it from those books where it's written out in Romaji. Learn Hiragana right now, this week. Starting now, make some cards." I did that, learned the Hiragana, and then I jumped right into the *kanji* because he said, "If you don't climb the *kanji* mountain right away, you'll always find an excuse for putting it off, and you'll never do it. If you never do it, you'll never be anything more than basically what you're doing right now, which is being a trained poodle in *eikaiwa*." (Tom: 3)

Tom would be considered to have attained a high level of literacy. He makes a distinction between what he means by learning a certain levels of Japanese. He sees literacy as the goal, not just basic communication. He is also well aware many do not move beyond verbal communication and never climb "the *kanji* mountain." This is also reflected in the self-rated language scores of the surveyed respondents showing a noticeable drop in reading and writing skills versus listening and speaking.

The case for literacy could also be disputed depending on the knowledge of language per the situation. An individual could be language proficient (LP) in one situation and the same individual could be language deficient (LD) in another which requires understanding of vocabulary beyond their normal use of language (O'Keefe 2015). There are westerners who choose early on to only use English instead of studying Japanese. One example was given by Mark during his interview. He spoke of a fellow LTW in his neighborhood:

I have a guy that lives kind of close to me, he's from Canada, we're not friends, his way of thinking is totally opposite to mine, but he's been here for about eight or nine years and he doesn't think that learning Japanese is a necessity, he thinks that every Japanese person needs to learn English. He thinks that his way of life or his way of thinking depicts his own situation. I don't agree with that. I feel comfortable around Japanese. (Mark: 7)

The type of ethnocentric thinking Mark speaks of is not uncommon among English teachers and foreign executives who are awarded by default a higher social status within the

framework of the Japanese host culture. There are short term benefits to this way of thinking, but problems of a narrow area of effectiveness will slowly become apparent only after years of working in the environment. For western women, it could be the difference between getting married or not. Ann was quoted in the introduction on her opinion on long term female residents in Japan<sup>13</sup>. Ann attributed language as a catalyst necessary for women who wish to raise their chances of marriage. On the other hand, this research has found many cases of men who do not speak the language and are married to a Japanese national. The reasoning behind this is usually because traditionally in Japan the female will take the role of the household controller and the social connector to the community especially in cases involving children, while the men are expected to work and excel professionally. If children are in the mix, western mothers need to carry themselves linguistically when attending events at their children's school and other activities. Men, on the other hand, can get a cultural pass on this end if their job does not require Japanese language skills. Research shows how gender has an effect on cultural acquisition. Women tend to have more assimilation flexibility while males can be more racialized and more defensive in a situation requiring cultural flexibility (Vasquez 2011a). While Vasquez's research was performed on Hispanics in the United States, the application of it is observable within the interview content collected for this study. Furthermore, those who chose not to learn the language can utilize the parts of the host culture that respect the higher social status of the westerner while focusing on actions to increase their value at their job. Japanese culture tends to be very forgiving of low Japanese language skills whereas western cultures most likely would not.

There are Japanese who speak English very well in the university system, but in general the level of English according to worldwide statistics tends to be fairly low on the scale when

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<sup>13</sup> This quote can be found in Chapter 2

compared to other countries.<sup>14</sup> Some studies show using only English in conversations in Japan causes a stunted or limited form of communication with most information being simplified to a point to where interpretation of the conversation is left up to the imagination of the individuals involved, which could easily lead to misunderstandings. Peltokorpi reported English-only conversations may have difficulty overcoming sociolinguistic orientations which are most likely to complicate conversations with Japanese people (2008). Peltokorpi also stated that Japanese skills are needed to adapt and adjust to living in Japan. This is meant to be total adjustment, which combines a connection with the host culture as well as professional advancement. This could be seen as an extension of Dolainski (1997), which stated the host language was not only vital to non-work and work relationships but necessary to learn the culture first-hand. This is why language skills and in-group acceptance and advancement are viewed as connected to each other (Francis 1991). 63.7% (n=303)<sup>15</sup> of the survey respondents for this study felt the language is necessary to understand the culture of Japan. The Japanese language is only native to Japan, so it has a stronger symbiosis to the culture than English, Spanish or other western languages would have. This symbiosis was even seen as an opportunity to spread interest of the Japanese language in the 90's (Suzuki 1995). It could be utilized as a soft power connection to the country through language and culture.

Some aspects of the culture and communicative interaction within the Japanese community could be more challenging to recognize without language skills. Lee, when interviewed said:

...what are you missing out on is really sort of how I think of it? I mean, when I think of all the friends that I've made and all the conversations that I've had and all the laughs, all the experiences that I've had as a result of being able to communicate my thoughts and my feelings and being able to participate with the Japanese people, I think the people that obviously can't speak Japanese miss out on a great deal of those experiences. (Lee: 2)

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<sup>14</sup> This information was taken from a 2010 article from the Asian Scientist. Retrieved on April 28, 2014. The article can be found here: <http://www.asianscientist.com/2011/04/academia/toefl-singapore-worldwide-english-proficiency-top-asia/>

<sup>15</sup> Appendix pg. A-14:Q75.

Japanese language is a part of national, cultural, and personal identity in Japan (Gottlieb 2005). The term *ethnoracial* (Hogan 2008) has been used to describe the Japanese tendency to link culture, nationality and racial background together and can act as the gatekeeper or the default setting used by host culture based in-groups. The reactions many Japanese have are also verbally different when they meet a westerner who speaks Japanese. There is often a sigh of relief from the native Japanese when they meet a westerner who speaks Japanese. Edward explains this from experience:

For instance I just came back from the hospital, if I was not able to fully communicate, I would not be able to explain what was my problem....And I understand what the *sensei* is telling me....Actually “relieved”, I think is more the word..., I'm a *gaijin* and so they're automatically shy and then when they realize I'm capable of communicating with them, it changes the aspect of the situation. (Edward: 2)

Japanese are known to praise any foreigner who even speaks the simplest Japanese. What Edward is speaking of is different. The situation he is recalling goes beyond the condescending praise many westerners have experienced for even showing the slightest knowledge of Japanese. The level of information exchanged with him from the Japanese counterpart is anything but condescending. Rather it could be just considered normal. This is a clear example of what a non-speaker would most likely never witness, which makes it a likely catalyst for change but in the end not a necessity for some. Quotes such as Edwards were recurring throughout the interviews.

#### **4.2.3 Friends/groups/family**

In previous work these labels have been separated into three categories, but as this research progressed all three categories were recognized as forms of social capital. The networks LTWs create are different from other foreigner groups in Japan. Foreign groups from Asia and South America tend to default to networks within their ethnic group (Takenaka 2015). As mentioned in the section on language, some styles of integration form relationships with Japanese nationals based mainly in language rather than ethnicity or nationality. Friends, family and groups were often attributed directly to the feeling of belonging or support from one

of these three catalysts. There were also examples of how the constructs of friendships, family life, and group were consciously modified when compared to their native countries norms.

In general, Japanese tend to rate friends by work title, educational background and/or family status (Moorehead 2010). This extends into the way the foreign community is rated. Especially westerners who come from respected establishments, such as graduates of a highly ranked university or employees of well-known corporations. The average self-initiated expatriate (SIE) westerner in Japan is not part of such groups when they arrived and must settle for being judged by their profession or accumulated accomplishments over time in the domestic market. This can often cause identity conflicts with westerners who do not see themselves as the Japanese community sees them. One example is when they are seen as an English teacher, which among many westerners is seen as the easiest job to attain, putting them low on any scale of success. This term can be used for a wide variety of jobs, but tends to support a particular stereotype associated with newbie foreigners with little to no experience. Another example this researcher has witnessed would be a blonde western woman who has lived in Japan for many years and has a successful career. She is often asked if she is Russian by older men. They are inferring she is or was a Russian hostess from one of the night districts. These role confusions could trigger an identity crisis for those who cannot form the proper coping mechanism.

Many long-termers tend to be educators, but this is being challenged by the upward flux of western foreigners being hired by Japanese companies.<sup>16</sup> Educators in Japan are generally respected by Japanese, especially those at the university level. As expected, the longer a westerner resides in Japan, the more chances they will have to form relationships with Japanese nationals. This is not always a welcome reward for LTW who fall into specific types.

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<sup>16</sup> Japan Time: "Increase in foreigners points to diversified future for Tokyo", *KUCHIKOMI* MAR. 06, 2015. link:<http://www.japantoday.com/category/kuchikomi/view/increase-in-foreigners-points-to-diversified-future-for-tokyo>

Due to collective styles and emphasis on concrete relationships by Japanese (Hall and Ames 1987), conflicting definitions of what a relationship should be, can create a dilemma. Many respondents explained their carefulness when accepting responsibilities within a Japanese group. The bond is too restrictive by western standards, who prefer more autonomy or groups that support this flexible nature. Theresa shared her opinion on this matter:

I am hesitant to join things because when I was living in K----- I found that once you join something you get locked into it. And then it's tough to quit. I've been very careful about what I commit to. I was teaching 30 classes a week up until this past March. There wasn't time for a lot of anything else. The teachers association is my family in Japan. I've gotten to see places or go to places in Japan that I normally probably couldn't have afforded to because of teachers association, (I'm) very active in the teacher's association. (Theresa: 2)

This feeling of being locked into the group was a fear expressed by several respondents.

Theresa participates actively in the teacher associations group because it is a mix of foreign and often English speaking Japanese members. Many of the group officers are also foreigners so the culture of the group fits the lifestyle of many westerners better than a Japanese based one. Tom stated his theory on friendship with Japanese people from his 28 years of experience.

When you become a friend with a Japanese person, that's a really serious commitment. Again, going back to the structure of the self-thing, I think that the Japanese have one additional step, or one additional border sort of between myself and the rest of the world thing. That additional border that we don't have is there, their primary identification group. They might even have a few at the same time. They'll have a family, and then they'll have their circle of tight friends, and to really be friends with a Japanese person, you have to be in one of those tight circle things. It might even be only a circle of two, which I guess you wouldn't call that a circle....I don't know, but you're in this thing, in this relationship with a person where the depth of that, and the strength of that, exceeds anything that you're allowed to do with anybody else, and if your counterpart senses that you're backdooring him or something, which is what the Japanese would consider it if you're going out trying to get other friends, they would interpret that as a betrayal, and you'll be ostracized.

...Yeah, but you know, like in college, or high school, or whatever, you're like Wednesday you hang out with your buddies. You know, "Tomorrow I want to go off to the Star Trek Convention with these guys," and no problem with your usual guys, but here in Japan you say, "We're friends today, but tomorrow I'm going to go off with Yama this time and do whatever." Your Japanese counterpart is going to be crushed by that, and they'll (be) very close to violently reject you. As I was saying, very early on, I realized how different the ground rules were in making "meaningful relationships" with other people and how much commitment was involved. I was like, "Nah, I don't really want to give up that much individual autonomy in order to make those meaningful relationships," so what the hell. You've got to draw the line somewhere. (Tom: 5)

Tom stated he has “to draw the line somewhere” creating boundaries of entry into relationships with Japanese. Tom’s “boundaries” are self-defined and while other respondents did not use the same words, they stated similar views. Acts of self-defining a situation is designed with host culture members in mind are a common occurrence with those interviewed. Tom has to skillfully weigh the normal definition of the situation and acts so not to offend his Japanese counterparts. This is a self-initiated action without revealing his intent to his Japanese counterparts. If he succeeds, he still will maintain the respect needed to function in both his professional and personal life. Due to his high fluency level in Japanese, many Japanese who know very little about western styles of friendships may be intrigued by him and wish to get into a closer relationship. Tom needs to masterfully navigate through the thick cultural brush as not to upset the relationship and protect what the Japanese call *wa* or maintaining a harmonious atmosphere. There is one study showing that Americans do not culturally avoid conflict as much as other Asian groups, specifically Taiwanese (Trubisky et al 1991) in the case of this one study. Conflict is seen as a chance to identify and solve the difference therefore becoming stronger. The same study also showed how Taiwanese used a different method to bridge gaps of difference. They integrate through a style based in compromise rather than conflict. While this study wasn’t focused on Japan, the similar level of cultural distance can act as an example of what LTWs in Japan need to implement to achieve a satisfactory level of connectivity in their life.

This aversion to tightly controlled groups or friendships does not necessarily mean westerners completely remove themselves from Japanese groups. On the contrary, some may join groups depending on how much their hybrid style of negotiation has developed and whether or not they can remain at a functional yet acceptable distance. They can contribute to the group, but still maintain a significant amount of autonomy. This is done through preventative self-initiated actions. Understanding how host culture members will define their actions early on in the relationship will prevent any irreversible damage. These deeper involved friendships should

not be confused with fringe relationships, which are of a non-intimate nature (Adelman 1988). Non-intimate relationships could be anything from shopkeepers, bartenders or even people in the neighborhood who may exchange greetings regularly with the subject. Groups which require membership can offer examples of deep or fringe relationships as well. The depth to which the individual wishes to enter a group should be a conscious action taken while understanding the expected level of participation needed to cultivate the relationship.

Japanese group types vary, but those who have joined traditional arts learn intricate benefits from forming relationships with Japanese. Traditional groups also have a higher rate of sanctioning and various forms of correction of culturally unacceptable habits. Some non-traditional groups (i.e. baseball club, soccer team, etc) may have lighter forms of correction to be in line with general cultural norms, but not at the depths a traditional art would have. The correction in a traditional art is for the sake of the art form or martial art itself, so the consistency of correction is part of the training. Often in everyday settings, Japanese will not correct western foreigners, but rather dismiss them as unable to understand the complex culture of the Japanese (Beffu 1993). Edward from France explained how practicing a martial art has helped him become more in tune with Japanese thought.

It's...the traditional part where you...there are reasons why we do certain things in Japan, and you understand it by doing martial arts. It helps you actually understand that important parts (of the culture). (Edward: 4)

Edward uses “we” to describe how things are done in Japan. It shows how he includes himself as part of Japan. While martial arts have a history of being connected to the old customs and traditions of Japan, what they learn is far from outdated. The manners they learn from practicing traditional arts are often quickly recognized by many Japanese. Even if native Japanese does not know a person’s background in a traditional art, they will notice the actions of that specific westerner are congruent to a Japanese setting. This goes beyond martial arts or even knowledge of the language. Even joining a Japanese community baseball team will give insight into the cultural norms that in most settings they would not have a chance to observe.

Albeit, it can be challenging for a westerner to conform to the ways of a Japanese baseball team compared to a martial art. Due to prior exposure to baseball in their own country, they need to be willing to see Japanese baseball as how it manifests in Japan and not their home country. The Japanese way may seem unnecessarily complex and too rule based. This author remembers one story of an amateur rugby player from New Zealand. He had played rugby since he was a boy. He joined a Japanese rugby team, but quit soon after. He said he was annoyed at how fixated the coach was on players keeping their socks pulled up. The coach would even go as far as making players sit out games if they did not comply. In the end, he had enough and quit the team. This strict way of thinking is usually accepted by westerners who take up a more traditionally Japanese based art form or activity, but a sport they have had deep exposure to in the past can make being flexible more difficult.

Carlos, who has been an entrepreneur for more than 25 years in Japan, understands relationship building is a do or die situation for his business. He also explained his broader concept of LTWs in Japan:

My time here, I've always been an advocate of networking. I've always been an advocate of group building and always been advocate of a foreigner who plans to stay here a long time should own his own business, so I've always been pushing that, because Japan does not offer us a real option. (Carlos: 7)

Historically Japan, especially areas outside of areas like Tokyo and Osaka, has offered very little in the forms of opportunity for those who stay long term outside of education based jobs. This is reflected in the majority of teaching related visas. This has changed as of recent due to the amount of foreign graduates from Japanese universities being hired by Japanese companies. These jobs tend to be contracted positions and few are allowed regular employment status. Carlos' advocating of creating a network is something that takes time and commitment, but it also opens up a new option for foreign residents, who have the patience to do so, to build a business. He stated his opinion in an early part of the interview that the commitment of any foreign resident is of great importance. Support coming from Japanese investors or backers will

most likely come after years of contact and relationship commitment. This would also apply to the Japanese themselves.

An interesting anecdote of a Japanese insurance salesman displays this tendency for to only do business with well trusted individuals who have been time tested. The story starts with an insurance man who took the same bus every day, and consistently everyday he greeted a well-dressed gentleman waiting for the same bus. Every day for years, the men greeted each other with the same consistency. One day, it suddenly started to rain and the insurance salesman happened to have an extra folding umbrella which he lent to the gentleman. Soon after the salesman's act of kindness, their relationship became closer. The gentleman turned out to be a successful self-made businessman who admired the stoic attitude of the insurance salesman's consistency. His greetings only originated from his own genuine kindness. The relationship turned into the insurance man's biggest contract and made him a wealthy man. This anecdote shows the importance given to consistency and commitment to the moment over the long-term. Westerners who have this type of patience will do well in Japan. If they try to rush anything they will have trouble gaining ground.

91.4% of married respondents were married to Japanese nationals while 8.6%<sup>17</sup> were married to non-Japanese. 77.7% of all women and 83.2% of all men were married.<sup>18</sup> The survey asked for several reasons the respondents stay in Japan. Family ranked number two<sup>19</sup> with males and females combined at 215 out of 307 respondents. Marrying into an established self-employed family can be a unique experience in itself. In Mark's case, he discovered a different type of flexibility compared to his past experience. Through Mark's testimony, he is easily labeled a flexible person, so his in-laws flexibility, although stylistically different, acted as invaluable support. Mark discusses how his in-laws helped him start his English school.

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<sup>17</sup> Appendix pg. A-6: Q10b

<sup>18</sup> Appendix pg. A-6: Q10

<sup>19</sup> Appendix pg. A-7: Q14

We went through separate ideas of renting a facility to run the English School and then renting an apartment but just my chance, my father-in-law had purchased pieces of land, pieces of property here and there. There was a perfect piece of property to build on, so that's where one thing lead to another and we went from building a house to incorporating our English School and house together. (Mark: 1)

Mark lives in a fairly rural area, so he was fortunate to have such support. Family acting as a catalyst for integrative advancement arose in other interviews as well. To paraphrase a statement by Tim, he said his wife's family was real "the reason" he married his wife. He said this in a half joking way, but you could tell he had a fondness for his in-laws. In Mark's and Tim's cases, family acts as social support which functions as a cushion against stress. The opposite is also true. In-laws could act as a negative catalyst creating pressure to conform to family culture outside expectable boundaries for the non-Japanese spouse. Family has the power to act as a support group which is conducive to becoming part of the newer cultural environment. The choice of what kind of Japanese family to marry into should be taken with serious introspection.

One of the hardest hurdles for many westerners is to discover ways to interact with a Japanese based group without interfering with their own needs and lifestyle. David's observation led him to this conclusion:

Although the interesting thing is when I go to look at my life, like today, the next step in my business requires cooperation from my human network. I think that these people that I consider my acquaintances are more reliable than what I used to call friends in the United States....

Well, I think because Japanese people have been raised to sort of... They don't look first at what Europeans call the WIFUM, "what's in it for me." They actually see the benefit of helping other people first. It's an enlightened self-interest that people grow up with. Kids serve each other in the school cafeteria, the *kyushoku*...Kids clean their own classroom. People in the *dojo* clean the *dojo*....We don't do that in the States....There's an Eastern thing that it just reinforces it. (David: 4)

In general, westerners see Japanese are very reluctant to get into deep relationships, but when they are in a group in which they see commitment, as David described, they are often fully cooperative and willing to work with together. This also requires the LTW to do the same. This is a subjective statement by David, but he has obviously put time into his "human network"

which has offered him support in many ways. The depth of commitment shown in groups or organizations in Japan is an area many LTWs enter with. But the importance of it cannot be ignored if they wish to make progress in their life and career with a Japanese-only environment. In many ways, this separation is out of respect. They are not rejecting the host culture but rather participate at a level which meets their own needs without offending host culture members. This will be explained in the factors section on cultural fit.

While maintaining their “safe” distance from the Japanese side, the need for contact with home is very apparent for many. One could be assumed contacting your home country would slowly drop in a weaning process over the years, but in some cases, mostly due to the popularity of SNS in the expat community, some westerners call home daily. Tom stated he calls his mother every day. A female LTW was interviewed in past work (O’Keefe 2013) who wrote a postcard to her mother daily for 26 years. While writing postcards is most likely not common, the use of SNS has actually become the go to way of communicating for many LTW. David said this:

...I no longer care whether people stay here forever or leave. People are going to come and go as they please. I used (to be) really upset if people that I became attached to left. I think part of that is the Internet. You never lose touch with people now, ever, so let them go. (David: 6)

Friends leaving Japan would have been one of the greatest disappointments up until the creation and access to SNS and online free telephony software. This has made living overseas almost irrelevant for some. It can also extend the reach of effective support from friends and family overseas. Physical connectivity with a community or group has been seen as vital to identity (Putnam 2000), but the above example also shows the shift to SNS which is easier to implement into the lives of some westerners. Support groups can act as a web of healing and promote mental and physical health (Pilisuk and Parks 1986). 28.1% of LTW women said they strongly agreed that they have access to a support group, while the men answered only 10%.<sup>20</sup> A

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<sup>20</sup> Appendix pg. A-14: Q70

high level of connectivity creates smooth integration into societies ranked on the other end of the contextual spectrum, but this connectivity needs to be a well balanced mix of host and non-host culture members.

Connectivity could also be linked to freedom of movement. Respondents were asked if they felt a similar level of freedom of movement compared to their home country, but a majority said they do not. 53.3%, which is a combined score of the “strongly disagree” and “disagree” choices (n=302)<sup>21</sup> indicated that they do not feel as much freedom of movement in Japan compared to their home country. Whether it is support groups or freedom in general, sacrificing such basic needs could lead to an individual’s stress if not consciously addressed.

This study does not attempt to examine the effects of first generation stress on the second. There are studies which have researched these effects. Dewaele et al (2009) researched “third culture kids.” The study found while second generation immigrants score high on cultural empathy and open mindedness, they scored low on emotional stability. This was especially true with multi-linguals who scored higher with both cultural empathy and open mindedness, but noticeably lower on emotional stability. These findings would make an interesting question to whether this is true in the Japanese setting.

### **4.3 Reality Check**

The reality check is a specific incident which on some level makes an individual question their existence in Japan. The reality check is based in conflict. Ting-Toomey (1988) researched the “face-threatening” and “face-saving behaviors” of people when confronting conflicts and how they negotiated their actions to define their success. There are a wide range of incidents included. It could be an incident of being unfairly treated at an izakaya or something more serious like legal or marital trouble. Specific critical incidents have been researched in cross-cultural encounters, but were only recorded from respondents experiencing short-term stays

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<sup>21</sup> Appendix pg. A-13: Q55

(Arthur 2001). It could be argued people who have perceived such experiences have a higher chance to leave the country they are visiting, but it could also be said those who can adjust to such situations will stay. This can be a difficult task to gather examples for. A common occurrence in the interviews when asked about discrimination or specific incidences was that the details became blurred. This could be for various reasons. Some may not be willing to share the whole story or the story could not factually stand up to the scrutiny of the interview. The importance to research discrimination should be a high priority in any society, but the factual reporting of such incidences should be taken very seriously. False reports of discrimination only enhance false narratives, which should be abolished rather than used to promote interest in the subject. C.W. Mills used an example of how to delineate from an individual problem and a social one. When one person is unemployed out of 100,000 then he/she has an individual problem, but when 15 million out of 50 million are unemployed it is a social one. An abundance of examples are needed to prove a problem is endemic. If only a few examples are found, the individual must reflect on their own performance rather than expecting or forcing society to change for them.

The reality check may create an irreversible gap or misunderstanding between the individual and the host culture, therefore the accuracy of statements should be scrutinized. The difficulties one may experience with the host culture could range from the enigmatic to the specific on both sociocultural and psychological levels (Ward and Kennedy 1999). But the reality check does not deal with enigmatic feelings; it is defined as a very specific incident. This incident should be able to be retold in a clear way. Language or cultural misunderstandings should also be taken into account when assessing these situations as well. Some of these incidents of perceived discrimination could be classified as extensions of frustration and general feelings of dissatisfaction with the host culture. This will be covered in the section on frustration in the next chapter.

The reality check is often potentially devastating to someone who has settled or committed to living in Japan. Negative catalysts such as divorce from a Japanese national, legal

trouble, business failure or dissatisfaction in their professional career are all potential game changers for those affected. Although, many examples of discrimination can be found in news reports, no solid examples of such catalysts were found in the interviews, but such problems are definitely a potential subject for future research. The survey showed in 18.7% of men and 30.3% of women have experienced a reality check style incident which made them question their existence in Japan.<sup>22</sup> Women again scored higher on a scale related to host culture interaction as seen earlier with a high level of consistency. The interviews did provide any solid examples of perceived discrimination, but it did collect what many called positive discrimination. Positive discrimination was described as receiving special treatment because they were not Japanese and most likely because they are from the west.

One example of a reality check would be the devastation of divorce and the difference of visitation rights of parents from the Japanese point of view. Divorce is approached differently in Japan than many western countries. Japanese divorce often means a complete cutoff between the parents, leaving one parent, often the father, losing access to the children. Western divorce often includes regular visitation rights. It would be almost unbearable for some Japanese parents to have to meet with their ex-spouse regularly even if it was for the children. This problem has also become the center of international kidnapping cases focused on Japan. Japan has recently adopted the internationally law used within the framework of the Hague convention which arbitrates international legal cases, but many cultural hurdles remain.<sup>23</sup> Even with the passing of the new law, those who reside in Japan still need to follow Japanese law which is not privy to visitation rights. In Collin's interview, he told his story of how he was denied access to his daughter until she was old enough to come and find him on her own. They are now reunited and enjoy spending time together.

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<sup>22</sup> Appendix pg. A-14: Q69.

<sup>23</sup> Japan Times: Two years after Japan signed Hague, children have been returned but old issues remain, Colin P.A. Jones  
<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2016/04/17/issues/two-years-japan-signed-hague-children-returned-old-issues-remain/#.V5f-4OR7TQg>

#### 4.3.1 Discrimination

Perceived discrimination can vary from subject to subject. The psychological hurdle of cultural transition can also affect a LTW who lacks a fit within the host culture. Perceived discrimination has been broken down between males and females and tested for connections to mental health. While females experience more perceived discrimination, males experience higher levels of depression (Tummula-Nana and Claudius 2013). Proof of true systematic discrimination can be elusive, so as a researcher, I needed to be careful to objectively visualize each respondent's example. One answer that three of the respondents, Chris, Garry and Barbara, gave was similar in the sense they feel discriminated against every day. Beginning with Chris' experience:

If I had a day, I freely say it. Even the first day of classes. I've been here (Japan) 23 years, I haven't had a day without feeling discriminated against. I'm sorry, I'm just being honest. The thing is, I just had to do this, our university is being evaluated by a third party. ...

There's this third party evaluation system, my university got chosen for one of those first ---- schools. We have to turn in all this paperwork, what we've done for the past 6 years. I didn't do it, because I'm not tenured. Everybody else on my campus is tenured; I'm the only one who's not tenured. The reason I'm not tenured, even though I do all the same work and have all the rights and privileges as the associate professors, simply because I'm *gaijin*.

They made a rule when I was hired, and they never hired anybody else non-Japanese after me. The rule is my rule, (*his name*)'s rule. Nobody has any intent of reversing that rule as far as I can tell. Basically, my daily life, as long as I'm working here, I'm being discriminated against.....Then they tell me, but you are a full time faculty member, so please do the paperwork, even though it's 2 weeks late. That's what I was doing this morning. (Chris: 7)

Chris is functionally literate in Japanese and has built a very respectable resume throughout his career. According to the information collected for this study he would be a model for receiving tenure if he was Japanese. He mentioned once in his interview he was told if he changed his nationality he could become tenured. It was a step he was not willing to take. Since the interview Chris has left this position and received a tenured position at a major Japanese university after working 14 years at his prior position on yearly contracts. This could also show the variance in institutions. Chris' experience at his past university was more of a battle with

that school rather than the host culture, although, the argument could be made that the host culture is a part of it. The financial insecurity of many smaller universities is evident in recent years in Japan, which causes a reluctance to commit to even reliable long-term contracted employees. This could even be observed as economics mixed with a culturally based problem where such reluctance to hire foreigners instead of Japanese occur in a financially unstable situation.

Garry and Barbara also stated they felt discriminated against daily, but immediately explained it was not meant to be literal. It may not really be a daily experience, but an accurate portrayal of their feelings. All three are also proficient in Japanese and still have a feeling they are being singled out. The general image for many would be westerners who speak Japanese would be less susceptible to such feelings, but in actuality, those with certain sensitivities to the cultural appeared from both speakers and non-speakers. From the interviews, language skills seemed to have little effect of acting as a shield from such uneasy feelings. This was also shown in past studies where language was not the strongest determinant of life satisfaction (O'Keefe 2016). This does not mean to imply speaking the language makes people more susceptible to stress. Other fluent speakers were highly satisfied and felt little to no cultural stress. It could be noted, those who have not learned language tend have different stories of feeling discriminated against. Some stories could be possibly labeled as misunderstandings due to language deficiency.

Japanese speaking westerners with a high level of literacy and communicative skill in Japanese need to work hard to attain such a skill. This is often seen as a bonus but not a necessity for being hired by Japanese employers, especially in fields of education. If looked at from an opposite standpoint, if a Japanese person worked in a company in America for 5 years, they would be considered an expert on America upon their return to their to Japan. While on the other hand, a western foreigner could live in Japan 4 times as long and sometimes not be recognized as knowledgeable about the “Japanese way.” At the same time, there are many westerners who do not speak the language but remain highly functional within the necessary

work related constructs, which supports the stereotype many Japanese have that westerners are given a pass on learning the language.

Westerners who have chosen not to learn the language expose themselves to various types of stress. As mentioned earlier, some will have a fit with the cultural and not sense this stress after years in the country. The ability to learn to avoid or receive assistance from linguistic or cultural liaisons to assist non-speakers is crucial for them to stay in control of their situation. Cathy's story of her husband's misunderstanding of their landlord makes this point clearly:

Another thing that happened, and it's sort of based on language difficulty, we've had some back and forth with our landlady and recently, I think it wasn't me, it was P---. She some months ago asked him if he would think of doing some weeding and this and that and they agreed on that she would pay him, like she said, she offered to pay, and he's like "You don't have to pay." She's like "I want to pay," and then she came again and said something and he took offense, he thought she was changing the deal and he got really mad about it and he was like ...Then when I came home, he said "She said ..." and then my daughter S---- whose Japanese has been better, she's like "Dad, no. She didn't say that. What she said was ..." but he had a really hard time letting go what he perceived to be what she said, and I think that happens to us a lot.

What we think we understand them to be saying and what they're probably actually saying, there's sometimes a mismatch and I think that sometimes, our dissatisfaction arises from those sorts misunderstandings.

...He has an impression of her as a person and this, I think he perceived what he thought such a person might say. (Cathy: 8)

This perception of being treated unfairly because you are not Japanese is one of the pitfalls to discussing discrimination in Japan. Those who do not speak the language rely on body language, their knowledge of the situation as well as a fundamentally different set of rules which could trigger a non-speaking LTW to react in an irrational way. LTWs also have a vast amount of experience in the country, but insufficient language skills can be the cause of ambiguous stress for some. The specifics of what was said in the story above were left out when quotes were being mentioned. As seen in other interview quotes, this is common. Bias towards an individual's physical appearance, body language and a vast group of variables can overwhelm what the truth actually is. Other excerpts from the interviews show where rational

thought is surpassed to express knowledge of legal rights and respect. One such story was when Theresa checked into a hotel during a conference.

In O--- we had a teachers association executive board meeting last weekend. We stayed at the YMCA Y---- Memorial welfare whole type of thing. I walked in and the guy asked me for my passport. I said, passport? I said, it's in I----. He said something about *koseki* and I couldn't remember what that meant. I said I have a *eijuken*. Oh. But I kept saying to him. He's going "passport". I was going *nande* nicely but saying *nande*. Fortunately I had enough information from Davido Arudo's website that I knew that(because) I live here, I don't have to carry my passport. I don't have to show my *gaijin* card unless it's a cop.... Finally they quit bothering me but they had already asked another person. They showed me his card that they had copied it you know... There was no way I was going to let them get away with this. I was there in February in the same place and nobody ever said anything. This time they're recording people. I don't know. You're not getting away with this. (Theresa: 5)

Many long-termers do not like to be mistaken as tourists. This is completely understandable. When entering hotels commonly used by tourist, such situations should be rationally expected. The irony is the base problem of overthinking on the Japanese side is rather humorous. If they just asked for ID, tourists would naturally hand over their passport, while an LTW may hand over a driver's license. If the staff sees the driver's license, they could just ask if the address on the card is their current address, which is a completely normal question anywhere in the world. On the foreign side, language skills could make a difference in this situation. According to Theresa's own statements, she has low language skills, which limits the ability to deflect this type of misunderstanding. She has a right to be upset being asked for her "gaijin card," which is not legally allowed except with police and other official government purposes. LTWs are also aware of the strict by the book way many Japanese employees will follow manuals in detail. Her question of "*nande*" or translated as "why" or "for what reason," would most likely be beyond the manual. In general, when entering situations not covered by the employee manual, trouble can be experienced. Language deficiency is especially problematic when an individual knows their legal rights but cannot express them in Japanese. Legal Japanese can even make those fluent in Japanese become language deficient in such situations. The Japanese person may only witness an angry person, which puts them on their guard and

less likely to be cooperative. Theresa mentioned that she was nicely saying “nande,” but only saying one word questions makes the situation difficult for the Japanese employee to proceed. Both parties lack the communicative skills to bridge the gap which can create a vacuum of misunderstanding.

There are many common language mistakes even by westerners who speak Japanese well. One respondent, Tim was asked by an older Japanese male stranger, “*nande koko ni iru?*” Which directly translated means, “Why are you here?”. Tim was offended by the question because it inferred, as a foreigner, he should not be there. While the direct translation could be taken as offensive, the term *nande* can mean “why” or “by what means.” An example would be “*nande koko ni kimashita ka?*” meaning “How did you get here?” which could also be seen as an offensive translation or even a microinsult (Sue et al 2007). The real meaning could be more accurately translated as “What brings you here?”, which could be classified as a cordial conversation opener to meeting a foreigner in a rural area that doesn’t normally encounter non-Japanese. The Japanese person who Tim was speaking of was also an older Japanese male, which means he used a very informal way to address the question. A similar situation came up in Dan’s interview. When he was at a meeting of a local business club, he was asked, “What are you doing here?” by a high ranking official. This was said in English, so the true intent of the official seems clear, but it is most likely a poorly used translation. Or was it meant to be an alienating statement? This is hard to determine, unless you watch the actions of the Japanese person in question. Their actions before, during, and after the statement will reflect their true feelings.

Dan also told one story of his experience as an officer of a local business club. Even though he has permanent residency and a strong foothold in the community with his business he was still rejected to fulfill a high level position:

I'm probably the only non-Japanese member of (club name)....In Japan, there might be others, but I'm pretty sure in I----- Anyway, there's an organization that the police have that's called the *Tomonokai*, and the *Tomonokai* is a group of people in the community

who communicate with the police about what's happening in the community, give the police support, comments. The police also talk to the people, the *Tomonokai* to reach out to the community. The club has historically had a member on the *Tomonokai*, and the person involved in deciding that chose me, to be club's representative. Got all the paperwork together, sent it in, and the police said no, you can't have a foreigner on the *Tomonokai*, and requested that I shred all the documents I had received.

...(this was) Two or three years ago....I also know someone who was on a similar body for the F----- police, who was a foreigner. So, it was definitely a situation of just the Y----- police at that time....I actually, because I knew that person, I got that person's certificate as a member. They were actually not in the *Tomonokai*, they were in one level up, at the professional level at F-----. I sent that information to a person in the club, who sent out to the Y----- police, but nothing ever came of it.

...That was very disappointing. It caused me to lose a good bit of trust in the Japanese, at least in the Y----- police...it was at the prefectural... Yeah. Somebody was not comfortable, and I was again, asked to shred the documents which I thought was interesting. (Dan: 4)

This is a clear example of systematically being limited to entering certain parts of the community. Not being allowed to participate in community clubs or groups just by the fact of being a foreigner would be disheartening to anyone who wishes to do so. The wall is clearly seen in this example and their ability to grow in that position is halted through an unsearchable regulation. His point of regional difference is an important one. Underdeveloped systems may connect all cultural disruptions with the Japanese in general, but it may just be a particular town, hotel, or group. Those with a wider view of the situation usually represent what they experience in this way. The interviews also revealed how the respondents experience positive discrimination which overshadows the other forms of discrimination. Steve put it this way:

I think first of all, the advantages I think outweigh the disadvantages. One of the things is the cultural errors are often forgiven, not always as I mentioned earlier these are kind of really specific things about Japanese historical things, if you make mistakes with that, that's not okay, but other things are pretty easily forgiven. Also given preferential treatment in places like restaurants and hot springs, and hotels and that sort of thing. (Steve: 5)

There is a deep history in Japan of discriminatory action at *onsens* (Komisarof 2012) and hotels, but again this is limited to specific places and not systematic within the whole country. Specific discriminatory incidents, while they need to be fought against, should not become a representation of the country as a whole. The commonality or frequency of such instances varies

from person to person among LTWs. The amounts of positive responses from the interviews were abundant and are detailed in the next section.

#### 4.3.2 Positive Discrimination

The amount of times respondents reversed the subject from discrimination to positive discrimination was so common it was decided to create a section just to cover their statements. It was apparent from early on in the interview process this subject would be touched on regularly starting with the first respondent. David responded this way when asked about if he experiences discrimination, he responded:

...in a positive way. That's the funny thing, it's reverse discrimination....Oh, totally. In certain situations, for example, people didn't used to sit down next to me on the buses and stuff and I used to be upset by that. I'm the gaijin and nobody wants to sit next to me. Then, I realized, 'what a minute, I like that space.' Now, actually, 'darn it, people are sitting next to me now!' They don't give me the space they used to. Dang it, I'm not gaijin-san anymore...

...They can tell you're safe, they sit next to you. Even girls sit next to me now. I was, 'oh, God. The days of being the odd commodity are over.' There was also discrimination where some restaurants wouldn't serve me.... In the old days, we're talking 25 years ago....I don't see any of what we call typical standard-fare discrimination. Banks will loan money to me. Businesses will deal with me, so no, not really....I don't attempt to be a *shain*. That's the difference. (David: 7)

David referenced to how nobody used to sit next to him on the bus. This was also referenced in an interview with Donald Keene, a well-known writer about Japan. It was also added as a question to this study's survey, which revealed a positively skewed reply.<sup>24</sup> The reason for this positive result is something to be debated, but it shows no doubt it occurs fairly regularly. David views the discrimination he has experienced as existing in the past but as a rarity in the present. Being denied service in a restaurant, as referred to by David, has been an example used to describe perceived discrimination in the past. It still exists today, but it is a rarity and not commonly observed and tends to pertain to areas populated or visited by military personnel. David also mentioned he isn't a *shain*, which means to be a company employee. He is implying company or organizational employees may have a different experience than he has had

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<sup>24</sup> Appendix pg. A-19: Q90

being self-employed. This difference was also observed during the interview process, but it should be noted that different organizations will have cultures unique to that entity.

Joseph, who is an Italian employed at a Japanese company, told a story of his pay being scrutinized by a senior engineer at his company. He stated:

When I first started this job that I have now at the very beginning. There was a pay level issue because I was hired as a manager and my pay grade would be ... I was discussing this pay grade with the former boss. Of course there was all the older people that worked with the boss for many years before. And the company before was privately owned then entered in a group, international. So the pay grade was adjusted to the standards of the bigger company. For some reason, there was one older engineer that got to know my pay grade, he was upset by that. Because he felt that he had many years of experience and the boss was not looking after him. Instead, he was giving money to the new comer. And that was bad. That was very bad. But that's not discrimination issue because of racial discrimination. It's like a position kind of conflict that I would say in any company. (Joseph: 3)

Joseph's experience is positive from a compensation point of view, but it creates stress within the working environment. Japanese companies are often hierarchies, which reward time spent at the company versus experience. Joseph described the shift from being Japanese owned to an internationally based company as the determinant of the decision to compensate him at a higher pay rate. The international company recognizes contract workers from overseas with higher pay grades and lower employment security. Domestic staffs are allowed higher security but a slightly lower pay grade. The shift to an international ownership often presents many challenges for Japanese run companies. These challenges go beyond language as the corporate culture changes. Even though Joseph's experience is economically positive, a latent result was how it socially disrupted the company environment. He said the feelings of discontent took time to blow over.

Roberto was quoted in Chapter 1 that he did not feel what he is experiencing in Japan is discrimination, but more a form of "positive discrimination." He felt he was being treated special in some ways. Even as an Asian Canadian, he said he experienced positive discrimination. Coming from Asian descent has been a source of many different experiences compared to other

western foreigners, but when it came to positive discrimination he feels he benefits. Ann's statements also agreed with Roberto's. She said:

Well you stand out more, that's for sure. I think there are, I'm sure any foreigner would attest to this that being a foreigner in Japan gives you some definite advantages and some things that are, quite frankly you wouldn't be able to appreciate or experience in your own home. At the same token with it, comes dissatisfaction.... (Ann: 1)

Ann includes "any foreigner" in her statement, but clearly means western. It is common for western foreigners to leave Asian and South American foreigners out of their assessments when speaking on this topic. This is not to say they are not aware of the difference, but it is often left out when talking about the pluses of western non-Japanese status, even if these pluses come with some "dissatisfaction." Barbara did bring the comparison of certain types of foreigners over others in her interview. She realized there was a separation or preference for certain types of teachers. She made her feelings about it clear in her statement:

...at work this really makes me mad. I experienced an advantage as a white foreigner. The YMCA dispatched me to some kindergarten. I found out later that the kindergarten had refused some American teacher, because she was Japanese-American. They really weren't that interested. For the dispatch jobs, I'm talking about the crap dispatch jobs to go to kindergarten jobs or board of Ed. This is what I hear about it in the union. "These people; they just want a white person there." How do I say? I have mixed feelings about that, because I want these foreigners to do well but I don't want people to pretend, "Oh, this person is white therefore they are a native speaker of English."

...It's quite embarrassing to admit. Sometimes we get away with certain behaviors, because we, "don't know"...This was years ago. I was using my cell phone in the designated, "Don't use your cell phone", seat. The conductor came up, and gave me words. I pretended not to understand English....Yes, and I don't understand the English language either, because I'm (ethnic name). I can lapse into (language) ...Which then gets also infuriating, because they have to guess what country I'm from. "Are you Russian, are you German?" (Barbara: 3)

The other American teacher who Barbara spoke of was only judged on her appearance rather than her skill as a teacher which is not uncommon in Japan. As Roberto stated, westerners of Asian descent will have different experiences. The case above is a clear example of how in some cases teachers are chosen by looks rather than skill. While being chosen over another teacher made Barbara upset, she then mentions how she uses her western status to "get away with certain behaviors" which she isn't necessarily proud of. She used the example of

speaking a language other than English to confuse Japanese as to where she is from. In Komisarof's (2012) interviews, the term *gaijin card* was mentioned. This is a technique used by some in the western foreign group which consciously utilizes their western status in a favorable, but one-way advantage. Many westerners are embarrassed to say they have used it. They know using such inherent privilege creates an unfavorable image of creating self-initiated positive discrimination. Theresa explained it this way:

I like Japan. I think because I am a foreigner here that I can get away with a little more sometimes. There's a certain point where if you've been here long enough and people know you, I think you can't kind of use that. There are times when you can just pretend to be stupid about something or ... (Theresa: 3)

She states the ability to use the *gaijin card* wears down with people she has known for a long time, but the ability to "pretend to be stupid" is still an option at times. Some respondents use this to not only receive benefits but also reject work they do not want to do. Lee mentioned he has witnessed other foreigners using this ability in his company:

I've certainly experienced this. I've experienced it myself, but I've also seen other foreigners experience this. For example, the particular foreigner in question was not able to read certain documents due to the *kanji* that was in there, due to the difficulty of the documents and, therefore, rather than require the participation of this individual and have them participate in the work that would be normally required of a Japanese person, they overlooked that and said, look, that's okay, they can't do the Japanese, so we won't require him to do this particular work, it's okay. So, in that sense. (Lee: 5)

This is a good example of the difference between western and other foreign groups. While the western foreigner may be seen by Japanese as unable to fulfill this request due to language ability, a Chinese or Korean would most likely be expected to perform those duties or lose their job. Many westerners will use the inability to perform on a literate level as a positive action to minimize work duties. This is arguably an option only available to westerners. Positive discrimination also seems to extend into the second generation. Cathy was asked if she thought her daughter's acceptance into one of the best schools in the area was partly due to her western status.

Absolutely, especially being a white foreigner. You ask a person of color the same question and you'll probably get a different answer. We have, among foreigners, a kind of

elevated status and I have opportunities here that I'm sure would never be available to me back in Canada, and that you get exceptions. Somebody will spend a little extra time with you at the counter to help you when you can't understand. One example might be for our kids, like when S---- was in 3rd grade, she had the teacher who was the person in charge of English at the elementary school, this is way back in elementary school, and I think the teacher was really glad to have an English speaker in the class and I think that she went easy on S----- in terms of grades. She was giving S----- really great grades which I don't think she earned, just because they're foreigners that they can even do as much as the Japanese as they can, it's spectacular, so it's an A. Fortunately, once they got on to junior high school, that was less a part of the equation. (Cathy: 5)

Cathy's thoughts on the advantages of being a white foreigner have been referred to by many of the respondents. This effect even seems to continue into the second generation, which would make an interesting topic of discussion in future work. Cathy alludes to that fact that Japanese have a lower standard for the children of LTWs. This is a double-edge sword. While this lower standard allows for the use of the gaijin card, the low expectations of western foreigner performance on the Japanese side can be discouraging over the long term. Being given high grades on performance, but in reality not having the skills to support such results may create deficiencies in certain academic or linguistic areas as time passes. Low expectation or stereotypical images of westerners can wear an individual down over time.

#### **4.3.3 Microaggressions**

Microaggressions are originally attributed to Dr. Chester Pierce in 1969 by Perez and Solorzano (2015), which added to the perspective of multiple works using critical race theory (CRT) through various systems, specifically education. Yosso et al (2009) used Latino students in their study to break microaggressions down into three groups: personal microaggressions, racial jokes, and institutional microaggressions. In general, microaggressions could be considered a result of the slow burn into a dissatisfying state for an individual resulting from multiple encounters of discrimination on the micro level. Visitors or those who stay for the short-term would most likely not notice microaggressive actions. Long-term adjustment for students overseas, as seen in the cultural fit model, is personality related (Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee 2002). Zimmerman also points towards personality and emotional stability to

reduce the chances of expats quitting their job due to cultural stresses (2008), such as microaggressions. Those who experience microaggressions in Japan are often those with years of experience in the country, but can be triggered by Japanese who treat them as someone with little to no knowledge of the country simply due to the fact they are not Japanese. According to the types in this study, reactions to microaggressions will differ. For those whom the term is applicable microaggressions could be described as the slow drip of water torture rather than a tidal wave of racial discrimination. It is unintended, but can be very stressful for those who are susceptible to them. The survey revealed a large proportion of respondents believed microaggressions exist in Japan and the trend continued when asked if they have experienced them. Women were particularly affected.<sup>25</sup>

Unlike the reality check which comes swiftly, microaggressions wear down an individual over many years and consist of tiny frustrations connected to improper and stereotypical labeling by host culture members. The feeling can be difficult to explain because to anyone who has not experienced them, the situation may seem rather unimportant and possibly even entertaining. While the intentions of the host culture member are not to be offensive, the non-Japanese, especially one who is invested in their life in the country and made efforts to adapt, may feel they have been *othered* by such a statement. The individual feels there is a line of difference being drawn between them and host culture members, which effectively leaves them with the feeling of being on the outside. One example is Hirowatari's (1998) phrase of *co-existent citizenship*. While co-existent citizenship is meant to portray a melting of ethnics into Japan, it actually separates legitimate citizens with the potential citizens of non-Japanese background.

Many of the respondents made it very clear in the comment section of the survey that they are not particularly offended by microaggressions, and some even expressed frustration the questions were even asked. One question could be where the line is drawn between those

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<sup>25</sup> Refer to Q85 and Q86 (Appendix pg. A-16) in the tables and charts section at the back of the paper to see the full result in cross tabulation. This was also reported in Chapter 3 in the cross tables report.

affected versus those who are not. The cultural fit model may hold some of those answers. Respondents showing adaptive personality traits are less likely to struggle with microaggressions. While some LTW surveyed feel discrimination has decreased over time<sup>26</sup>, microaggression did not. When performing the interviews, Byrne's (1971) concept of the attraction paradigm, which discusses how certain personalities or thought processes tend to attract certain outcomes, was often observed. Some have suggested the very idea of microaggressions can restrict growth. Kenneth R. Thomas, Ph.D., of the University of Wisconsin–Madison, was quoted by DeAngelis (2009: 4) as stating: "Implementing this theory would restrict rather than promote candid interaction between members of different racial groups." This was also mirrored in many of the comments offered at the end of the survey for this study.

Those affected by microaggressions may be stereotypically labeled as those who are professionally or personally unsuccessful in the Japanese cultural construct, but this was shown to not be true. Tom, who is not only successful at his university position, holds a Ph.D. and is considered an expert in Japanese history. He also speaks fluent Japanese and has a stable family life.<sup>27</sup> He also feels strongly about keeping his distance from becoming fully assimilated.

I don't know any *gaijin* who really has assimilated. There are a lot of them that say that they are, but I think they're fooling themselves. We get reminders through ... You may know the David Arudo<sup>28</sup> phrase which is now infamous, the microaggressions.

That's a little gentle, or sometimes not so gentle, nudge from our hosts, "Don't forget who you are. Good fences make good neighbors." I've always been extremely sensitive to that, maybe occasionally sometimes to a fault, but again, not as bad as David Arudo. Pretty early on I was like, "Okay, so those are the ground rules. I'll never fit in here completely. Now, knowing what I do know about the kind of stresses and stuff that the Japanese go through in their daily life, I'm not sure that I would want to be able to fit in here." Even if I could, which I can't, it looks like a pretty raw deal...(Tom: 4)

Tom has learned from experience how Japanese work responsibilities are much more involved than his own and even if given the opportunity, would prefer to opt out of such a

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<sup>26</sup> Appendix pg. A-16: Q84

<sup>27</sup> See profile 011 Tom (Appendix pg. A-21) in the profile section for more details.

<sup>28</sup> While David Arudo did make the phrase known in Japan, it was originally coined by Sue (2010) in America. David Arudo has always referenced Sue in his articles on the topic.

situation. He is comfortable in his position, but also when speaking with him, the separation he has created from the host culture is clearly observed. His ability to speak and teach using Japanese, puts him at a rather high level of cultural and communicative knowledge. His judgement can easily be taken as an educated one, not one of just a westerner complaining about their poor situation. Microaggressions are as he puts it "a little gentle, or sometimes not so gentle, nudge" from his Japanese hosts reminding him that he is different. Realistically he is of course different, but he feels all of his years of effort and hard work are being ignored when he is addressed in such a way. Tim also expressed in his interview he has ways of reacting to such situations, which were similar to Tom. Tim was asked if he experiences such bias when interacting with Japanese. Tim said:

I do. I do. Yeah, it does bother me when people look at my face and then go, "Where are you from?" I started saying, "I'm from (Japanese city name)." That's what I started saying. I'm from (Japanese prefecture name), I'm from Japan, because I've been here 15 years now, going on 16... You know I'm not going to get angry at them, because they don't know me...I guess it's understandable that they would look at a white face and go, "Oh, you're not Japanese." What bothers me is when they look at my daughters and they go, "You're *halfu*." I'm like, "Which part?" Top up? Top down? (Tim: 9)

Prior to this quote, Tim firmly stated Japan is definitely his home and his interview shows he has no regrets choosing to live in Japan. In the quote above, Tim shows his inner struggle with being reminded of his difference. He also understands the person making such a statement is just lacking knowledge about foreigners in general, so he consciously chooses not to get upset. This does still result with some displayed frustration in his voice when recalling the incident. When children enter the picture, many parents have to find a new way of dealing with this sort of distinction and *othering* made by host culture members. The link to non-Japanese blood is often treated as different. Even in the case of this author's daughter, upon leaving daycare, teachers would say "see you" to my daughter only. The teachers were corrected after noticing it was only said to my daughter. I asked the teachers for similar but not special treatment which they quickly understood and complied with.

The topic of *yobi sute* was written about in the Japan Times prior to this dissertation by Louise George Kittaka.<sup>29</sup> *Yobi sute* is when certain suffixes used to address respected individuals are not used. These suffixes are excluded which usually strictly defines relationships with the Japanese construct. The removal of such suffixes is allowed in informal cases but not in socially defined situations such as student teacher relationships. This is also a topic LTWs would feel more sensitive to, especially university teachers who should be addressed in a respectful way. Kittaka's article gets into the details of this cultural habit which views westerners to be addressed on a first name basis. Barbara sees this as a source of frustration at her job.

One of my favorites is at work by students, or people in the office. They imagine, "You're a white person so I have to call you by your first name." That is easily in my top three. The other one is that they think that it's okay to call me by my given name. Also it's not necessarily me personally, but you know the term, "*yobi sute*"? ...The way those rules are applied. It really, really bugs me too.

...They don't do that as much to each other...There were even cases when they are referring to foreign athletes we're not *Smith-senshu* we are *Tanaka-senshu*. They just refer to the foreign athletes by their long and weird family names with no *senshu* as the title. When you go to the store, I don't know what it's like in Kyushu, but here in O---- people can get a little bit weird. They see a white person they think, "Oh, no, I must speak English. Even if it is broken." They don't know I've been living here for twenty years, they don't know I'm smarter than I look and can actually use Japanese.

My husband, he tells me to calm down about it, and I should feel sorry for these people. They're ignorant or whatever. (Barbara: 2)

*Yobi sute* is a solid example how people experience being *othered* by Japanese. Barbara also makes note that she has seen examples of *yobi sute* on television in sports coverage. This can also be seen with many television talents as well, when even those who are half Japanese tend to use their foreign-sounding first name rather than their full name. i.e. Becky, Lola and Maggie. This is considered a selling point and also plays to the expectations of the audience. The addressing of famous Japanese talent is far different from the reality of the workplace and university setting, but this distinction is rarely made by the uninformed.

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<sup>29</sup> The Japan Times, How to address the foreign elephant in the room in Japanese?, June 29, 2016. <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2016/06/29/issues/address-foreign-elephant-room-japanese/>

Garry mentioned he feels discriminated against every day earlier in his interview. This predisposed way of thinking could contribute to sensitivity towards such things. He explains it this way:

I find it a bit annoying sometimes. But then I always realize, it happens so often, it's just something I have to accept. It's just one of those things, it happens on a daily basis. It's part of living here. You have to make a decision... Not only at work, but also in daily encounters. I was just at Starbucks. I ordered a drink and ... Sometimes I take a second to answer. And immediately she goes, "Ice, ice." (Garry: 5)

The immediate reaction for the counter worker was to think he does not understand what needs to be said. This is also a distinction many LTWs may fall under. If he were just visiting Japan or had only been here for a short time, this may have been quickly labeled as a funny incident. But to him it is one of the daily defining moments of his life. He sounded like he felt he was always being judged in interactions with Japanese. Dorothy also mentioned the consistency of such incidents in her life as well and how this affects her ability to assimilate. She says:

No I am totally not assimilated; I stand out like a sore thumb, when I try to be Japanese I really have to put an effort into it. It does not come naturally. I can do all the *keigo*, I can do all the politeness but it always feels very artificial to me and I'm always forgetting to do that, so my assimilation is about twenty percent....Another problem is that you are constantly reminded that you are not Japanese; how many times a week. I have lived here for twenty seven years, I can't tell you how many thousands of times I've been asked, "Where are you from?" You're constantly reminded that you are not one of us (them)...That shows a little bit of dissatisfaction with being here, but those kinds of *othering* questions,

...Yes those kinds of *othering* questions drive me crazy and I have certain responses that I give to that so again anyone who comes here has to be expected not just the first week, not just the first month but after twenty seven years to still be asked, "Where are you from," and assuming that you're not from here. I was asked that this morning...(Dorothy: 3)

Dorothy mentions the need to "try to be Japanese", which is often misunderstood as a necessity to assimilate in Japan. While being able to interact in a Japanese style is necessary, completely becoming Japanese, according to well-adjusted respondents, is most likely not. She also referred to *othering* to explain her experience, but her belief that becoming Japanese is necessary to assimilate is also a form of intra-group othering. This is similar to the term *intraethnic othering* used by Pyke and Dang (2003). Although she stated when she tries to be

Japanese it requires a lot of effort. She seems to believe other westerners have had to become Japanese to interact with the host culture fully. In this sense, she defines herself by not doing what other group members have supposedly done. Her evaluation of *othering* by Japanese is extremely valid and experienced by many of the respondents. When Japanese go overseas for long stays, they tend to value their own cultural system and stay within ethnic circles of comfort, so the position of a westerner in Japan is still difficult to perceive even for those Japanese who have overseas experience (Toyonaka 2006). In the end, it is how westerners react or act when such situations arise that separate them into one of the types in Chapter 5. Dan agrees microaggressions are present in his life in Japan. He explained it this way:

Oh definitely. I think they exist. Sometimes they're intentional, sometimes they're not. Technically, micro-aggression is supposed to be unintentional, but I think some... In (name of business club), there's one or two members who always make, ...kind of strange, random English comments. You can tell they're just kind of uncomfortable. Little things like that, or going to the store and asking for help, and the person at the counter calls up to the manager in the back, there's a foreigner here with a question.... I've lived in Y----- for 17 years and I'll be talking about places around the area and they're like, why do you know all of that? Because I've lived here longer than you have. It might be someone who's only lived in the area for five (years), you know.

... It really depends. If it's a younger person, not as much, because I know it's someone who doesn't necessarily have the experience to know better, and I use it as a teachable moment. Sometimes, it's like someone who should know better. Sometimes, it's a cross between the two. Like the gal at McDonald's who would always try to take my order in English. It's like, okay, she was trying to practice her English, she meant well. She was trying to do good service but, but it showed she saw me as foreigner first and a McDonald's customer second.

...It annoyed me, but I tried to be polite on that one. (Dan: 5)

Dan describes several different kinds of situations when microaggressions may arise. One is when he is in a familiar setting. The other is in a new setting with someone who barely knows him or does not know him at all. He mentions seeing it as a "teachable moment." He views the situation from the point of view of the person who does not know him, and does not take it personally. He also recognizes the flaw in their action but apparently keeps his opinion to himself. This is a very similar style to many Japanese who would exercise patience and most likely keep such feelings to themselves unless a situation arose to explain it properly. Patience was one attribute many respondents felt they had gained from living in Japan.

There should be no mistake that microaggressions exist, but they should be recognized for what they are a product of. Microaggressions are born from lack of information about other cultures. While society will evolve over time to adjust to this, the individual needs to recognize the current situation and accept it while simultaneously educating others whenever possible without promoting victimhood. The very essence of the types formed in this study wish to show microaggressions are experienced by those with certain personality types rather than a group as a whole as used in past studies like Yosso et al (2009). Cambell and Manning (2014) wrote about concerns of major shifts towards a culture of victimhood which will more likely stunt growth rather than promote it.

#### **4.4 Styles of belonging**

Before entering the full explanation of the typological results of the data in the next chapter, the two factors of life satisfaction (GLS) and cultural fit (CF) need to be clearly defined. This definition is beyond their statistical separations but how they function within the hybrid model. These two factors are separate from the catalyst explained in the previous chapter. GLS and CF are represented as scales connected to all respondents and lack the adoptability of the catalysts. For the purpose of this study life satisfaction leads to the assertion of personal satisfaction with the subjects current life. A similar definition has been used for quality of life study which is described as a minimal amount of conflict to improve the individual's life but without avoidance or isolation (Sirgy et al 1985). Whether this satisfaction extends from a connection to the community or the host culture or not is irrelevant in the LS scale or the GLS factor used for this study. Respondents were only asked to give their LS score in Japan without any distinction of it being connected to the culture or community. Other items used in the GLS factor were also aimed at just the individual's personal satisfaction. It is possible respondents thought this was not the case, but nothing was specified otherwise.

On the other hand, the items used in the CF composite inquired about a respondent's connections to the community through communication and cultural connectivity. These items all refer to interaction with the host culture or the community. In the case of communication, language was never specified. The choice to leave out language specificity was decided during the interviews, because some respondents showed high interactivity with their community, but admitted to low language ability. These individuals were able to communicate, albeit a simplified form which created a feeling of belonging or fitting in. They also exhibited a high level of patience and flexibility which is congruent with the qualities of the cultural fit items.

The creation of the types of westerners living in Japan is an attempt to observe globalization on the local level. Globalization takes on various meanings. Elliot and du Gay (2009: 57) suggest risks of globalization are "beyond the control of our national cultures, requiring us, as individuals, to adjust." Westerners in Japan have been covered in other research. Komisarof (2012) used Berry's acculturation model to explain the acculturation of westerners in Japan. On the surface this study has some similarities, but the goals are different. This study ventures in the topic of identity beyond the discussion of culture and into the social psychological realm of the self and the connections to what the individual values rather than just evaluating their lives in the construct of Japan. Whether they are connected to the foreign or Japanese community only puts them into a different classification based on the individual's philosophy. Komisarof interviewed famous personalities whom in many cases deserve books of their own. While knowledgeable about Japan, his choices were not a fair representation of the western foreign group. This study attempted to interview subjects who better reflect the socio-economic status of the group as a whole.

The flexibility of one's personality and their progressive adaptability to fill voids within the current system in attempts to make them valuable will attribute to an LTW's staying power, not necessarily the implementation of systematic changes and controls by the host culture. This study only presents the philosophies of respondents and does not attempt to

interpret their deep inherent stances, acting rather as a collection of westerners' reactions to their experiences with the constructs of Japan and the possible formation of an identity as defined by this study. Japan's high contextual culture makes it complex for westerners to enter, but overall uniqueness of Japan has been argued (Dale, 1986; Beffu, 2002; Burgess, 2004) and is also challenged in this study as well. The testimonies of respondents who have developed an identity in Japan often dispute the "uniqueness" and have found a home rather than enlightenment within its "unique" borders.

#### **4.4.1 Life satisfaction**

The life satisfaction score as reported in Chapter 3 averaged at 7.5 out of the high of 10, which would be considered fairly average within the borders of any country. But when results of other items were observed, a much more positive outcome arose. 90.2% of all respondents said they have benefited from living in Japan and 83.1% said they feel comfortable.<sup>30</sup> These are fairly higher results than the average sounding life satisfaction score. Benefiting in Japan could also be a result of professional success. Respondents like Tom who said he knows he would have trouble finding similar professional success in the States, but his overall satisfaction of living in Japan is slightly less than average. The terms "benefited" and "comfortable" are rather broad and encompass all things in their life and may not be connected to the host culture at all. Economics tends to be a general determinant of life satisfaction but social benefits can also still exist even without economic success. Respondent Steve stated directly the improvement of his life satisfaction would be determined by a better job and pay, but this was not the case with all respondents.

My life satisfaction has nothing to do with Japan. I have my own spiritual beliefs; please do not confuse that with religious beliefs...I chose to be happy and that has nothing to do with Japan...My satisfaction with my life has absolutely nothing to do with my being in Japan. I chose to be satisfied and to be happy. (Dorothy: 2)

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<sup>30</sup> Appendix pg. A-11: Q40; pg. A-13:Q63.

Dorothy has been in Japan for almost 30 years and arrived in Japan later in life.

Admittedly she said her Japanese ability could be better. Her stories did not seem to reflect a high level of Japanese. This is usually determined by the way she translated what had been said to her. I would sometimes follow up with a question of what Japanese was used in a conversation to create an accurate portrayal of the specifics of conversations. This was done with all respondents. Respondents who give near perfect paraphrased translations are considered high level. Those who give either partial answers or say they do not remember even when verbatim quotes are not necessary, could be considered to have low language ability. I would do this several times during interviews when language skill was in question to make an accurate assessment of their grasp of the language.

As Dorothy's statement shows, personal satisfaction can take place without high level Japanese skills. Her happiness is connected to her own goals which she generated herself and by this she rates her life satisfaction. Her philosophy aligns with past life satisfaction studies (Jussi 2011). She also arrived in Japan when she was in her 40s, so her life views were already solidified compared to her younger counterparts. She had witnessed the evolution of life in the States and had a strong reference to compare her life to before and after arriving in Japan. Reference groups in an expat's or immigrant's home country are an important factor of determining one's own satisfaction in another country (Gelatt 2013).

Dorothy said she is active in various clubs, where she is the only foreign member, but through her responses, it could be determined she had taken the role of the "gaijin" member rather than blending in. The opposite case would be Dan and Ann, who interact with their surroundings as more of a functional active member of their groups rather than just the "gaijin." Both are business owners and through their stories of their long-term connection to the Japanese community on a professional and personal level are stark differences from Dorothy's story. Their struggle to communicate is gone and they have smooth interactions with the host culture. This does not mean they do not have trouble, but they have developed the

tools to assess and cope with discrepancies within the Japanese cultural construct. Such problems are seen in the context of everyday trouble, not necessarily cultural trouble. Dan is a member of a well-known business networking club in his area and functions as a full member and has performed duties for the club as an officer which requires Japanese only. Ann has more than 30 years of experience and runs a business for which she does the sales herself, which requires a high form of not only Japanese but also inter-cultural communicative skills. She stated her views on the importance of language as a connector to the culture:

Well, independence apart from anything else. Having to be reliant upon other people's good graces or other people you know to help, other people to help you out, do all sorts of stuff. Independence would be a big thing. Meeting and interacting in a meaningful level with real Japanese people, if you know what I mean. Not the *gaijin* groupies, and the (Japanese) people who don't speak English. They haven't really been overseas, they don't know anything about the rest of the world. They are totally ensconced in their own. Those people you can't communicate with if you don't speak the language.

So, I find a lot of foreigners who have been here either for a very short time or who have been here for a long time and haven't really gotten anywhere with their Japanese. They have a bit of a skewed view on Japan. They just seem to see the surface and you get a lot of people making judgments. They look at an action or ... they make a judgment on it that is quite frankly wrong. They haven't got the advantage of talking to the people. (Ann: 2)

Many Japanese speaking westerners would not talk about the importance of Japanese skills in mixed company so not to offend anyone who does not speak the language. Ann mentions how the "real Japanese" who are not necessarily interested in foreigners or overseas are also a major step to understanding fully what is offered in Japan. Not having the ability to cross over that gap freely, puts an invisible veil up between the westerner and the "real Japanese" who often just blend into one another's background on either side of the spectrum. Dan had similar statements, mentioning how the majority of his connections would not be available to him without his language skills. His interactions in the business club as well as the procurement of contracts for his company are all performed by him and require high communicative skills as well. Both Ann and Dan contribute their satisfaction and connectivity to their surroundings with their language skills which are needed to socially understand the culture. Specific styles of social connectivity in Japan rely heavily on communicative language

skills, which develop as the language develops through non-Japanese influence, dialects, subcultures and gender (Gottlieb 2005). While positivity and negativity of the individual does add to the complexity of gaining an understanding of the host culture, without a general understanding or the ability to communicate, the mediation necessary to define life satisfaction would be more challenging to achieve (Oishi et al 2013). But the language used to create this understanding may not always be Japanese.

Satisfaction can find root in various places. The results are easily observed in the focus group when referring to the survey. 79% and 73.1% positively answered they consider where they live desirable and feel welcome there respectively.<sup>31</sup> Whether it requires being interwoven into the community, acting alongside it or completely separate seems to be irrelevant. In this case the results are what matters. These different approaches to satisfaction create a dilemma in separating it from the cultural fit (CF) model. Diener et al (2013) used life satisfaction (LS) scales to offer both positive and negative sides of the spectrum of satisfaction. This study only offered a single scale for LS but CF was split into negative and positive composites, labeled CF and FRUS when tested for correlation.

#### **4.4.2 Cultural fit**

Garry mentioned in his interview the importance of *kukiyomu* or “reading the air.” It is often referred to as *KY* in Japanese. The concept is basically the ability to be mindful of how your actions affect others without verbal communication within the Japanese construct. It would be considered common sense to some Japanese, but “common” does not always translate well over cultural boundaries. The avoidance of conflict often relies upon the roles of the actors involved. A simple example of this is the act of a manager asking an employee to do something. The employee will never refuse the request due to their role in that relationship. A westerner may hear the manager’s request as something to be determined or denied if they feel they are

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<sup>31</sup> Appendix pg. A-11:Q31 and Q32.

busy with something else. Another example could be when younger women are often expected to serve tea before a meeting starts to anyone visiting their office even if it is not specifically their job. Roles in Japan are defined early on in relationships, so an individual should know how to interact with others. Years of experience in the country should make individuals feel comfortable interacting with the host culture members in this way. However when asked if they feel a strong sense of difference with Japanese people, the majority of respondents answered in the middle with a very weak showing on the strongly agree or disagree sides.<sup>32</sup> Age, job titles, and economic status are all determinants in first exchanges. The exchanging of business cards in Japan is a specific ritual often used as a way to fulfill the need to know the other person's status in any situation. All of these actions would not necessarily be "common" to a westerner.

Intra-organizational relationships are naturally designed by the hierarchical sempai/kohai system. Once the status is determined, they will understand how to "read the air" around any specific individual. Garry's ability to do this is a learned ability due to the redefining of his own American "common sense." Years of access to the system has made him adept at it. The concept of cultural fit suggests that he has an inherent personality trait which makes it possible for him to relate to the situation rather than naturally reject the differences he experienced based on his own knowledge. He has established cultural competence (Johnson et al 2006) through utilizing his ability to be flexible. This flexibility or as the Japanese say, his ability to be *sunao* is crucial to his adaptation (O'Keefe 2015).

*Sunao* does not have a fair translation into English. When directly translated it means "naive" or to submit to a higher authority, which is one of the reasons many westerners do not like the word when they first hear it. But to the Japanese, it is considered part of a successful mind and the willingness to learn. The Japanese respect this trait and see it as an important part of a fellow worker's personality. Sometimes the ability to accept or fit into certain parts of

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<sup>32</sup> Appendix pg. A-13: Q59.

the culture can be just too much for some westerners. Theresa relays the story of a coworker's difficulty adjusting to her new surroundings:

I think some people adjust differently than others depending on their background maybe. I knew a woman from S---(name of school). She was in my class. She had been in the Peace Corps. Anyway, she just could not cope with it. She had to leave. I think it depends on where you are and what your situation and background are. When I grew up, six kids in the family, we always had to work. We delivered newspapers. We collected newspapers. I'm used to working. I'm used to accepting a lot of things in terms of not always having what you need or not being able to afford what you need. I have adjusted and I do things that way. I take care of myself in whatever way I need to and cope with it. (Theresa: 4)

The ability to "cope with" various amounts of work and being flexible for what needs to be done is a trait firmly in place before arriving on the shores of Japan. Not all jobs in Japan need such a work ethic, but if someone ends up in a situation requiring a westerner to match the Japanese work ethic, cultural boundaries will be tested. Joseph<sup>33</sup> also spoke of an Egyptian co-worker who was doing sales in a cell phone store with him. Joseph said the man was aggressive and used "strong sales talk" not applicable to Japanese customers, but eventually learned to use his style of sales in a way more effective by creating an original style which was then accepted by the Japanese staff and customers as well. Identity negotiation is a large part of this. Donald,<sup>34</sup> who has been in Japan for more than 40 years, stated through his experience he witnessed foreigners who he saw not "fitting in" and said "Japan was not the place for them." Many of the people Donald spoke of left Japan, but some to his amazement, even though filled with discontent, stayed in Japan for extended periods of time. Judi spoke of some of what she would consider overreactions of mismatched westerners within the Japanese construct:

I notice that with the mothers group I was involved in, I felt a lot of people were overly sensitive about what these people said or did and they didn't, they're just assuming that there was discrimination involved, but they don't really know. They never had a chance to question the person, so like the microaggression keyword that's going around recently...

The other day, somebody posted, it's either a movie or a video, about black men in America and try to break the stereotype image of them. The comment from someone, a foreigner living in Japan was "Just replace the word "black" with English teacher and we

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<sup>33</sup> Found in the transcripts of 014 Joseph on pg.4

<sup>34</sup> Found in the transcripts of 005 Donald on pg.5

can feel the same stereotype." I wrote back. ... "How can you even compare our situation with the way black people are treated in the United States?" ...It's totally different. We're put up on pedestals. I know a guy that left here who was so paranoid. Every time somebody laughs, he didn't speak Japanese, but it's like anytime someone laughs, they were laughing at him. (Judi: 5)

Judi brings up valid observations through *intragroup othering*. She spoke of the sensitivity some westerners have with cultural interactions or variances and how judgements of the host culture are made and then taken completely out of perspective, allowing subjectivity to rule. She also used an example of an unidentified man at the end of her statement. Her description of his "paranoid" reactions to Japanese laughing in his vicinity as being directed towards him, most likely shows the later stage of complete rejection of the host culture with high levels of anxiety. The control of anxiety and the management of uncertainty are often answered through effective communication (Gudykunst and Nishida 2001). The man Judi spoke of returned home but people like him who remain become what Cathy<sup>35</sup> referred to as "Japan bashers." 79.9% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that some western foreign resident do not have the personality to live comfortably in Japan.<sup>36</sup> Thai-Jung et al (2005) used the Big Five personality scale to determine a good fit for westerners into the Taiwanese culture. They found openness and extroversion did better than other traits. Petokorpi and Froese (2012) using a Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) (Van der Zee et al 2001), found different personality traits are needed for the Japanese context ranging from open mindedness, interactive adjustment, emotional stability, and cultural empathy.

This is not to say those who have successfully built a life in Japan conform to the social norms of Japan. They actually create new norms which are acceptable in their living environment in Japan whether that community is Japanese, internationally-based or a mix of

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<sup>35</sup> Found in the transcripts of 016 Cathy on pg.11

<sup>36</sup> Appendix pg. A-12: Q43.

both. Judi also tries to separate herself from those who she feels are appropriating parts of Japanese culture more than necessary:

I also remember thinking sometimes when people would say, "You're so Japanese," ... I sometimes was off-put by that a little bit. I didn't want to be considered like trying to be Japanese. Sometimes, you see the foreigners who will dress in a kimono and go out shopping or something. They're overdoing, in my opinion, the Japanese thing, like trying to over assimilate in a way....

She mentioned she does not like being told she is like a Japanese person. Women showed a stronger result than men when being told they are more Japanese than a Japanese person.<sup>37</sup> She goes on to explain she does not dislike Japanese things, she just wishes to live her life her way. She is connected to many online groups which are ideally supposed to have these same goals but she describes it this way:

People would post problems or just ideas or what to do with their kids or language ideas that help with bilingualism, but it's slowly evolved into this griping session about husbands and in-laws. A lot of the discontent seems to be more in the countryside with a bit younger mothers. They have salary men husband. I think they feel trapped. It's like they don't work and they're with their child all day with nothing to do and their husband's gone all the time. Actually, in Tokyo, too, a friend of mine, who is about ten years younger than me, she complained because she never saw her husband. She actually left (Japan). She had ended up getting divorced and leaving. Other people too ...

Just to compare, I'm in a Tokyo Mothers Group on Facebook and their group is a bit smaller and it seems, I hate to say, a little more educated. They are. They're just more civil and there isn't the complaining that goes on with the national group. A lot of it, I'd boil it down to the complaints or about their attitude. (Judi: 3)

Judi first addresses how she sees the appropriation of Japanese culture unappealing to her. This type of intragroup othering is common and often used by successfully integrated people to distance themselves from the stereotypes of other LTW. In many ways, this is more in line with true modern Japan. The average Japanese person is not very interested in wearing a *kimono* or a *hakama*, so in many ways she is being Japanese. There is a beauty in traditional Japanese arts and customs which may be helpful for those who take part in them. But it does not seem to be a necessary step towards successful living within the Japanese community.

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<sup>37</sup> Appendix pg. A-14: Q71: 28.1% of women answered strongly agree while only 18% of men did.

Community groups and events would be more likely to hold weight and could be potentially troublesome for many foreigners who have a different lifestyle than many Japanese. This is most evident when children are involved and the parents are expected to be a part of PTA or the *kodomokai*. This is very dependent on the individual. In earlier research, one subject interviewed wanted nothing to do with the *kodomokai* (O'Keefe 2015). But Cathy<sup>38</sup> confessed that all of her Japanese friends emerged from her experience at the *kodomokai* and displayed her ability to be flexible rather than ignore the call to be a part of the highly systematic Japanese style group. One difference between Cathy and another person interviewed in earlier research taken from O'Keefe (2013) was Cathy's language skills did not seem as high, while the woman in prior research has very high literacy in Japanese. In the earlier case, she was able to linguistically negotiate out of joining the *kodomokai* because she had clear goals about what she wanted to do with her children outside the Japanese system. Cathy speaks Japanese, but in her own admittance not at the level needed to do such negotiation. She also admittedly used the "gaijin card" from time to time.

Yeah, I certainly played the *gaijin* card, the working *gaijin* mother card, like you got to be the *tannin* and I'm like "You know what? I can be in one *kondankai* a year, this one, and so you draw my name out of the hat, go ahead, but that doesn't mean I'm going to be able to come." Actually, that whole system, I had some cultural battles with. (Cathy: 7)

Her statement gives some examples of code switching.<sup>39</sup> Even though she had a fairly positive experience within the PTA and the *kodomokai*, she added she still experienced some "cultural battles," which she balanced out using her social status as a *gaijin* and a working mother. This seemed to be with the approval and understanding of the other mothers. Cathy describes herself as flexible and less likely to "freak out" about things compared to her Canadian husband. This sort of flexibility appeared in several of the interviews but was best described by Judi:

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<sup>38</sup> Found in the transcripts of 016 Cathy on pg.9

<sup>39</sup> Code-switching is a linguistic term used to describe a speaker alternating between two or more languages. Multilinguals will often use vocabulary or elements of two or multiple languages when speaking with each other.

...the person's personality, being flexible. For me, ...I want to do it on my terms. You mentioned earlier about finding the things you like and disregarding the things you don't or ignoring the things you don't. I think that's really true and I've done that.

The things I love about Japan have been great. The things that I'm either oblivious to, sometimes I think I am oblivious to the things that other people complain about, that I hear them complain and I'll be like, "I never notice that." Maybe it's my personality rather than a cultural difference... Yeah, I think it has a lot to do with personality. (Judi: 6)

She gives weight to the idea that her personality is a major part of her ability to adjust to her surroundings. That does seem to be the trend among respondents. She states she may be "oblivious" to the problems others complain about, but attributes this to her own personality. This is all part of what the "fit" in cultural fit means. It is the idea that something is natural about the "fit" rather than only a learned response or ability. Things may be learned, but without the "fit," the application may be difficult for more than others. This is often shown in the building of friendships. This next quote shows how the friendship catalyst mentioned in the previous chapter is applied with the "fit."

You've got to have Japanese friends, and you have to have something in common with them and you have to have a long history. The long history part takes time. People famously say that Japanese is in-group, out-group but that's not all of it. That's a certain part of it, and that's true in most cultures. There's also this senpai-kohai relationship and if you don't grow up in that hierarchy, especially high school and university, they don't know how to deal with you, because you're not their senpai. You're just another person.

I can't say I deliberately joined martial arts to get that sense, because I was just interested in the techniques, but when you do that and you begin to go up the ranks, they have no choice but to go, "Oh, you're my senpai. You're my senior." I've got a fourth degree black belt in (martial art name), and I'm a teacher now. I'm expected to teach. In the beginning the kids were like, "You're not a Japanese person." Then I'm lucky, because it's a teacher. My teacher says to the younger kids, "He's your senpai, do what he says." I kind of got into the system that way. With that group of people, I'm very, very comfortable.

It's a challenge at the workplace because I was hired because I'm not Japanese. Even with a doctorate degree, my colleagues sometimes have difficulty with me. Am I your senpai? They're 50, I'm 43, they don't really know if I'm the sempai or kohai thing at all, because I didn't go to a Japanese university, I didn't go to the high school and I think that's a lot. That's kind of how do you deal with somebody inside the group situation is challenging in Japan. (Tim: 4)

Tim mentions the commonality of interests is a key to creating a relationship with Japanese nationals. Tim has found his spot practicing a martial art within the Japanese system in which he has created his own status to help fit into the hierarchy, although, as he explained, his position at work is not as easily defined. Mediating and understanding one's role is a crucial piece to expatriate effectiveness (Shay and Tracey 2009). Tim portrays a conscious effort to find a place interwoven with the host culture rather than stay on the outer limits. This will most likely develop over time. Tim mentioned he had only started his current position several years before this interview. It is possible after time passes, his surroundings may become as comfortable as he experiences in his martial art dojo. In a previous study of mine, male respondents had mentioned how they do not know of any western male foreigners with male Japanese friends (O'Keefe 2015). One particular respondent in that study stressed how it was impossible to make friends with Japanese men for him. He also stated he had very low language skills which would make it a challenge to bridge the gap to find a commonality with many Japanese male counterparts.

The sempai/kohai system is something westerners struggle with in general. Many Japanese are hesitant to include them into the system because there is confusion about their status within the social structure. Many other foreign groups may find themselves included in the hierarchical system, but often at a low level. If age, rather than status was used it may be possible for them to enter the system. The problem with this choice is westerners in general respect age, but may not validate someone who has a high-level position only due to age without being accompanied by competence. Western males tend to have an alpha male style of thinking and will often speak of their recent accomplishments to garner favor in a system rather than stating educational or job titles as the Japanese would do in a first meeting. These complexities emitting from the context of culture can make relationship creation difficult, which is why this research often defers to the micro-level of individual personality. Tom explains who he thinks "fits" into the Japanese model:

I think that most of the lifers tend to lean towards the introvert side. I think one reason why Japan would feel attractive to a person like that is that, and also because we don't commit to those deeply intertwined Japanese relationships, people are going to respect your space here a lot. They're not going to get in your face very much. If you want to be left alone, they'll leave you alone. That's comfortable. Another type would, I guess you could say, would be kind of romantic type disillusioned by the money grabbing, rat race stuff. This, again, would be especially an American context. Yeah, also maybe sort of eccentric people who they know that they're really not going to fit in anywhere that they live, so they might as well be in a clean, and comfortable, and safe place. Yeah, in general yeah, they tend to be rather sensitive, introverted, probably more on the more intelligent as opposed to the less intelligent side.

Yeah, don't be a hustling go-getter. That might work in some very specific milieus or venues in Japan like Tokyo business or something like that, but in general, coming into the scene as a macho alpha male kind of American, you're not going to do well here. You have to learn to really reel that stuff in. (Tom: 8)

While Tom explains who he thinks "fits" in Japan, this is far from the cultural fit model, but rather describes the *satisfied but separated* type Chapter 5. This is using the unobtrusiveness of Japanese society to be basically left alone. This is separation rather than fitting in. Tom's explanation started out as a broad description of "lifers" in Japan but soon includes himself in that mix. He has stated in other sections his high level of awareness of the necessary commitment in relationships in Japan and chooses not to make them if possible. His is not a language problem, it is a choice made from personal experience. Language is not always needed to form relationships in Japan. Communication in the early stages of a subject's stay is often done through doing rather than saying. Mark, who now currently speaks Japanese, talked about how he communicated in a simplified manner with Japanese friends when he first arrived in Japan.

When I first came here, I grew up in California, so I was into skateboarding, surfing and then occasional snowboarding trips during the winter time but coming to Japan, in his area, there's no skateboard, there's no surfing. The closest ski resort is about three hours away, so my brother-in-law, he actually introduced me to mountain biking. With that at hand, I incidentally made a bunch of friends, a big bunch of mountain bikers and they're all Japanese, so it's really helped my Japanese as well as make me feel very welcome here in this country.

I have another friend who's been here for about the same amount of time I have, but he's never really broken out and made Japanese friends, so I think when I talk to him,

he feels like he's never really fit into Japan. Other than with his family and his wife and stuff. With a hobby or interests, it naturally goes to play, so even if I didn't understand Japanese, it's like, "Dude climb the mountain", oh yeah, "let's do this jump." It's easily translated into a nonverbal situation, but you can still have fun together. Growing within that group, I've made a lot of very close personal friends over the years. (Mark: 2)

While a hobby or interest is important, the argument for interests which are rooted in social communication may not always fall into this pattern. If someone likes to have drinks with friends and talk about their lives, conversations without the commonality of advanced language skills would not allow for the free flow of ideas and diminish the interactions redeeming quality to the participants. Rodriguez et al (2008) found participating in groups without reason or goals will not produce satisfaction, but also mentioned more research is needed on this theory. In the cases of Mark and Tim, the actions performed together acted as their communication. The physical body is social in its essence and is a key to entering the constructs of any environment (Shilling 2012). Goffman's micro-sociological study on social consciousness as pertaining to human interaction as an important part of its development, argues it is developed through social rather than linguistic means (1986). Social activities like mountain biking or martial arts began as action based communication, but for both Tim and Mark, these interests became part of their linguistic advancement as time went by. This brings the discussion back to personality and the need to feed it with preferable and fulfilling social connections. Yoon et al (2012) says that levels of acculturation are observed in social connectedness in the ethnic or mainstream (host) culture. One goal of this study is to show the connectedness is found with the ethnic, national or host culture whether that be separately or all of them together will rely on which typological classification they fall under.

It was easy to notice when interviewing Mark that he was an extremely friendly optimistic person who prized relationships above many things. He attributed this to his family back home who are Italian Americans and also family-orientated. His past history with his family in the States, plus his personality is key to his ability to be successful in building a

network of friends in Japan. His language skills also developed over the years along with the relationships he built. Mark also displays the commitment due to his connections with a consistent group of interest-based friends. Roberto has also observed this in the people around him as well.

You look at the people or some of the people that are attracted to living in Japan, especially the people who just come here short term ... The people who have been here long term, they have had that sense of commitment. They've taken root in the community, as you're probably going to find in your data. A lot of the people who come here short term, especially the people that I met in the mid 90s, these are the people who would have stayed only about 3 or 4 years. Short term, real short termers. These were sort of like the wuuw kind of quasi neo hippy types from the mid 90s. What they would do is they're just kids looking to go for a vacation and not really thinking about work and just sort of ... they're almost like hippies just sort of going from this place to another place.

These are not the best of us. I sometimes tell my students, do remember that a lot of the people you have here, you see them as native speakers and oh, they're experts in the language. I've got to tell you, most of them are not.....Most of them are just here because they're looking for a quick job. They're hired by their company. You've got to go right down, you look at this by person by person by person. A good number of the people that I met here don't impress me. However, in terms of the mix between cultural and case-by-case situation, I think the heavy lean is the cultural. If there are problems between this person and this country, I would probably say that's ... probably a great bit of it is cultural, but why wasn't it solved? Could have been personality clashes too. (Roberto: 5)

Roberto views on having a “commitment” to living in Japan and “taken root in the community” as synonymous. This is one essential concept this study agrees with. The question is which community: Japanese, international or mixed? He describes short-termers as those who have been in the country for 3 to 4 years. This would normally be considered a fairly long stay, but when compared to the experiences of those living in the country for more than 10 years, there are stark differences once true life patterns form such as taxes, future planning, or family life. He transitions into a description of native English speaking foreigners given “expert” status simply because they are native speakers. He feels those relying solely on this ability do not represent “the best of us” and he demands more active connections with the community. His statements can also be used as an example of intragroup othering. He clearly defines what he thinks is a type of foreigner he does not wish to be associated with. He believes people should be evaluated on a case by case basis rather than on their innate ability to speak English.

Roberto's development took place over years of a period of trial and error in the host culture.

Other respondents had almost an immediate connection with the country when they first arrived. When asked about how important it is to commit to Japan, Edward, from France, replied this way:

I think definitely, you need to, uh, it's not...you just don't live in Japan by accident, I think. At one time, you make the choice, and the willingness to live here, it's a commitment ...it's definitely, yeah, you have to make that conscience decision of actually living here.... I automatically fell in love with the country. (Edward: 6)

Edward's almost immediate decision to stay in Japan when he first arrived may be a part of his ability to adapt and find an identity in Japan. While it still took time for him to enter the community, his early conscious decision to stay made the process easier for him. The results of the commitment develop over time and are rooted in social connections which expand and grow out of initial commitments.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

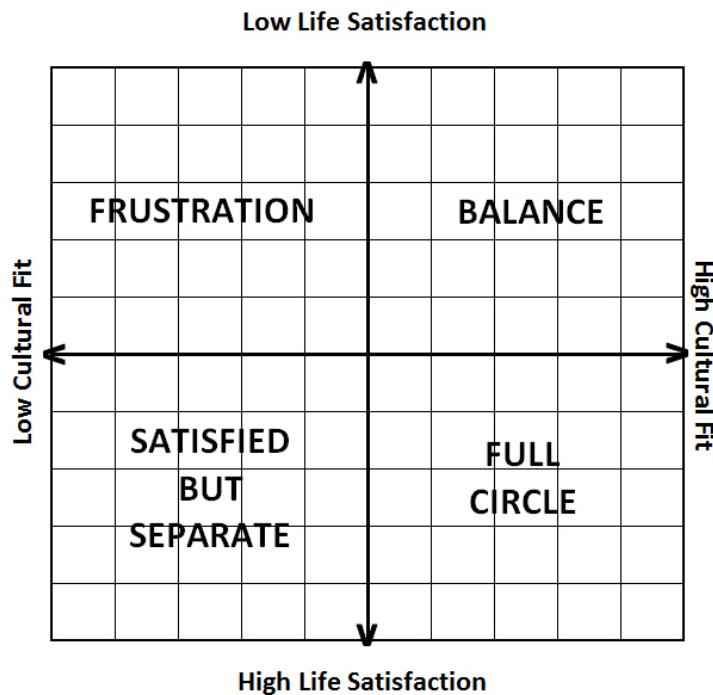
This chapter has explained the significance of various catalysts which generate both positive and negative changes in the lives of LTW. The results lead to examples of hybridity due to the flexibility and the originality of the respondent's integrative styles. There are clear empirical examples used in this chapter of those who have worked at becoming connected to the community and succeeded. This is also followed by others who have also tried but decided to maintain a working distance from the host culture through personally mediating their relationships and commitments. These parts of the hybrid model will be utilized in Chapter 5 as pieces to forming the final typological results of this study.

## **Chapter 5: Four types of long-term westerners in Japan**

### **5.1 Hybrid Identities**

This chapter will explain the construction of the four types of long term westerners (LTW) in Japan using this study's original empirical data and other related literature reviewed in the previous chapters. The catalysts included in the hybrid model have been thoroughly discussed in Chapter 4. This section will discuss the model as a whole and what it represents and what it does not. While the model is constructed from various concepts generated from identity, life satisfaction and acculturation theory, it should not be mistaken with studies similar to Oberg's (1960) culture shock or other universally applied chronologically staged theories. A study by Ward et al (2001) broke down criteria into groups (sojourners, international students, international business people, immigrants and refugees) which would most likely have varying experiences even within the same host culture. This still didn't allow for depth of understanding within each of these groups. Western foreign residents develop over the long term in specific ways accompanied by various historical patterns which lead to the concluding types. This study focuses on LTW after their 10<sup>th</sup> year in Japan, so many of the developmental stages of adaptation have been completed. This is not to say that the types offered here are finalized. Certain types are still fluid and may gravitate from one type to another. The types in this research are specifically formed in a quadrant which allows the depth necessary to categorize what has been achieved for each individual and how they fit into a specific quadrant at the time data was procured (Figure 4-1). Rather than being located with a specific type, they could be near the border of two types or deeply into one specific type. This allows for flexibility and limits unfair labeling as seen in prior studies (Berry et al, 2006; Portes and Rumbaut, 2006). The grid within the types used in this study implement a combination of the catalysts detailed in Chapter 4 to determine how a respondent is placed in the typological matrix. The nature of the empirical data makes the quadrants Japan specific.

**Figure 4-1: Typological grid image of LTW in Japan.**



The types discussed here would most likely not be applicable to other countries freely without testing. LTWs living in Japan can recognize a pattern they may apply to their own experience, which may possibly allow individuals to see what factors promote progress and which promote separation, marginalization or even ostracism from the host culture. Whether negative or positive, the weight and importance of the empirical data will become evident and hopefully open up a window to the development of various integrative styles of LTWs in Japan.

The concept of hybrid identity or first generation ethnic identity within a host culture has been used in various fields (Ting-Toomey et al 2000; Jung 2004; Kim 2008; Leavy 2008; Lee 2008; Smith and Leavy 2008; Kamada 2010) with different focus groups. The theory has also been applied in the United States to Latina/o-white hybrid individuals (Moreman 2011). The definition of hybrid identity can become diluted while passing through different studies, becoming blurred over time. To clarify goals of this paper, this study observes the

hybrid model as seen in Chapter 1.<sup>1</sup> Erikson's (1980) definition of identity as the existence of a self-sameness between an individual and the community and will be applied as the foundation when using that terminology. Some of the concepts of hybridity are also taken from Homi Bhabha's "The Location of Culture".

The importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original movements from which the third emerge, rather hybridity...is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge....The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation. (1994:211)

Using Erikson's definition of identity combined with Bhabha's "third space" theory as the partial framework along with this study's empirical research findings, the creation of the types concluded in this study will emerge. Past studies have used chronological stages (Pederson 1994), including this researchers master's dissertation in which a semi-chronological system was applied. This was found it to be less determinative than the typological quadrant approach. Marcia's four types create a clear image of various forms of identity (1966), which this study used as criteria for the different types as well. Each type in this study is determined by the presence of or lack of the several catalysts explained in the previous chapter. This is a more realistic approach than trying to determine which order people from different ethnic, racial or religious backgrounds develop in. Individuals also come from various economic and historical backgrounds, so even within the same group classification it would be difficult to control for progress through stages.

Smith and Leavy's Hybrid Identities (2008) offered a compilation of academic work specifically on this topic. The works cover mostly immigrants from different backgrounds entering a host culture. The hybrid model is in essence a partial identification with the host culture (Song 2004). Terms from the sociological lexicon such as *double consciousness* (Gilroy 1993) and *twoness* (Lemert 1994:389-90) display the split or shift between two cultures. Both of these concepts were utilized to promote and observe racial and social justice (Blau and Brown

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<sup>1</sup> Found in Chapter 1: Figure 1-1: Hybrid model

2001). While these are important studies, they differ from this study because of their basis in conflict theory. The research performed for this dissertation takes a social psychological approach using part of symbolic interactionism. Bhabha's (1994) third space theory seems to be the most flexible when observing cultural mixing. He observed a combining of cultures in a more complex way than previously used binary opposed theories in western philosophy, i.e. civilized/savage, educated/ignorant, and centered/marginalized. This study hopes to create singular types to explain the cultures that have swirled together. A simplified image of past studies are like the red and white in a candy cane, while this study hopes to mix red and blue to make purple.

Jung's (2004) work focused on the purpose of identifying foreigners in Japan with hybrid identities, which could act as one answer to Japan's shrinking population problem. Foreigners with a hybrid identity will value the importance of occupying the new space between their own national identity and the Japanese one. This contextual understanding makes them more likely to protect and preserve Japanese culture while also administering change in necessary areas which may have fallen behind the international community. Westerners have an in-the-middle perspective on Japan which could be very beneficial to the country and to the individuals. Respondent Tim states:

There are cultural differences, but there are individual differences too. It's an advantage for us in a way not being Japanese. We have that kind of window of opportunity to explain more. Middle ground, yeah, I'm not expected to be a Japanese person because I can't. I'm expected to understand Japanese culture which I try, but even then I don't like saying this is Japanese and this is non-Japanese, because everywhere is different no matter where you go.... ...it's an opportunity for me as an outsider. I have this outsider-insider perspective. I think being in the middle is strength. (Tim: 8)

Until this point this paper has covered in detail all the deciding variables contributing to the typological results of this study. This chapter aims to apply these finding to each type. The four types are: *frustration, balance, satisfied but separated* and *full circle*. The types are a result of various approaches that westerners take to develop their life in Japan. The transition

from being a newbie to becoming an effective interacting member in the host culture is filled with complexities and in the case of Japanese unwritten rules which can only be learned through mentors or mistakes. The difference is somewhat explained by David when he speaks of a newbie he knows.

Well, I'm dealing with one of those today. The guy's not from America, he's from the U.K. He doesn't understand who his real friends are in this society. If you meet people from the U.K. or America and they come here, they think they have to fend for themselves...They don't understand that you've got to build a team, you've got to get people who will vouch for you to get in. It's disappointing for me that some guys just don't get it and they cancel out and they don't respect your time. That to me is, 'wow, I guess I've jumped sides. I'm now on the Japanese side,' because I can imagine Japanese friends seeing that same disappointment in me when I first got here... (David: 6)

The development of people like the newbie described by David is paramount to the findings of this study. Even if David tried to teach using his experience, the subtle nature of the information will not always clearly transmit its importance. There are subtleties when dealing in the Japanese context most inexperienced westerners would not notice or give any weight to. The definition of the situation needs certain cultural subtleties to be understood which takes years to build up. The grid within the types is set up to give clear examples of the process David hoped to explain. Three out of the four of the types lead functional lives with distinct approaches to their connectivity to a community. Both styles of belonging, life satisfaction and cultural fit, are used for all four types at various levels. They are represented as scales reflecting an individual's experience up until the time of this study and therefore are subject to change. Life satisfaction can stem from both professional and personal experiences which will be unique to each actor involved and in flux throughout their life in Japan. Cultural fit has been mainly described as a natural trait which is ubiquitous in the individuals it is observed. The "fit" doesn't mean an out of the box ability to enter the host culture in a seamless fashion; rather it offers the necessary foundation to grow within the culture.

On the other hand, the catalysts<sup>2</sup> are either existent albeit in different forms, or completely cease to be. While using the catalysts, this study applies all the collected data and attempts to identify manifest and latent functions of the subjects' actions for each quadrant. This is to investigate the consciously performed social behaviors and their objective consequences (Merton 1967). These actions are found in the application of the catalysts as to be explained for each of the types. Other studies have focus more on conflict theory applied to foreigners living arrangements in Japan (Ohbuchi and Asai 2011). In the case of the LTW group and the elevated status given to them by the Japanese, understanding their function in society may be the most beneficial.

## 5.2 Frustration

The discussion of the types begins with *frustration*. Interview quotes were collected in abundance and represent the different daily and systematic stress certain LTWs confront. The frustrated group is the most distant of all the groups from identity achievement and is the least connected to the Japanese or international communities. It can be said the respondents have a specific understanding of the culture after their years of experience living in Japan. This type is more of a reflection of not being able to find their place within the workings of their surrounding compounded by a small sphere of social access. The feeling of being excluded from Japanese people in general was expressed by 18.2% of respondents<sup>3</sup> which may hamper effective host culture based group interaction. This type often has negative views of Japan, and some could be labeled as the “Japan Bashers,” as taken from Cathy’s interview earlier in this paper. Daniel Wenger wrote of the *ironic process theory*, which when simplified, means suppressed thoughts will eventually come to the surface. This is also known as the “white bear

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<sup>2</sup> The catalysts include: family, friends, groups affiliations, language ability and perceived forms of discrimination including microaggressions.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix pg. A-15: Q77. This is a combined result of agree and strongly agree.

phenomenon.”<sup>4</sup> Suppressed negative feelings towards the host culture which are ignored due to early professional or personal success will arise later in a subjects stay. Suppression of inconsistencies and incompatibilities should be addressed consciously before major commitments such as marriage or professional growth occur. The frustration found in work environments was the most common form of frustration which scored 27.2%.<sup>5</sup> This is higher than scores for items focused on frustration within personal relationships and community connectivity which both resulted with fewer than 10%.<sup>6</sup>

The frustrated type is in a state of diffusion due to their lack of choices which result in their minimal network and lack of social connectedness. Some express stress when asked about their future in Japan.<sup>7</sup> They tend to exhibit, but not exclusively, a variation of some sort of ethnocentric behavior. 23.7% of respondents still feel a strong difference with the Japanese even after years of living in the country.<sup>8</sup> If they could find a job offering a lifestyle equal to their job in Japan outside of the country, they would be more likely to accept it. This does not imply they are not skilled in the Japanese language or are not stably employed. Their actions display cognitive dissonance in their dislike for the country and the culture while continuing to advance their career within the construct they are unsatisfied with. It is a philosophy fulfilled by criticism of Japan and in some cases disdain for the differences they witness in their lives in the country compared to what they remember of their own country or beliefs. They have come to the conclusion they will never fit into society because they feel they are not accepted by it, therefore they do not wish to accept it in return. This causes a mental stalemate for the individual. 49.2% disagree or strongly disagree that they could be accepted by the Japanese community.<sup>9</sup> This makes this feeling a very important factor to face and resolve for anyone

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<sup>4</sup> Originally taken from Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* 1863.

<sup>5</sup> Appendix pg. A-12: Q49. Combined score from the agree and strongly agree results.

<sup>6</sup> Appendix pg. A-12: Q48&Q50. These results are found in the tables and charts appendix.

<sup>7</sup> Appendix pg. A-11: Q38. A combination of the agree and strongly agree choices resulted in 31.5%.

<sup>8</sup> Appendix pg. A-13: Q59. This is a combined score from the agree and strongly agree results.

<sup>9</sup> Appendix pg. A-11: Q36. These results can be found in the tables and charts appendix.

planning on living in Japan. Also the feeling of being “stuck” in Japan resulted in a small group of 16.5% of survey respondents.<sup>10</sup> The frustration type has formed an “L” rather than the classic “W” or “U” forms of integration.<sup>11</sup> They feel stuck and/or stressed about their future within the borders of Japan. The frustrated type tends to feed their frustration through academic studies of the negative aspects of Japan, albeit true history and cultural, to a fault and have an unbalanced view of the country. Studies on the Nihonjinron have detailed research on the depths of which the outdated philosophy penetrates the politics of even present day Japan (Befu 2001). Although these are legitimate studies, it is only an academic look at the society. The frustrated types explained here should not be confused with foreign residents who have legitimate fact based criticisms of Japan's policies towards foreign residents or in other areas of public life. This distinction will be left up to experts in the field of human rights.

From a visual point of view, there is a fine line between one criticizing the place they love to improve it versus just searching for anything negative about the culture or people. “Bashers” often will criticize those who do not acknowledge the frustrating differences within the culture and label such LTW as “apologists” for Japan. While apologists do exist, all the facts should be entertained and deductively concluded through fair debate. The frustrated types may rely on ampliative arguments rather than deducted ones. The difference between pessimism and realism is a realist will always submit to the possibilities of different than expected outcomes, while a pessimist will always speak as if the outcome is decided by an invisible law which in many cases is not provable. One’s series of unfortunate personal experiences can blind many to the truth of the wider pool of knowledge on a particular subject. The frustrated type often has a shrinking social sphere and limited connection a community compared to other types and will have scored low on the cultural fit items. Loneliness was

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<sup>10</sup> Appendix pg. A-12: Q47. This is a combined score from the agree and strongly agree results.

<sup>11</sup> Guy and Patton (1996) used “W” and “U” shaped patterns to explain integration styles.

expressed by 15% of survey respondents showing females score slightly higher.<sup>12</sup> The negotiation needed to advance (Ting-Toomey 1988) to other types has halted. Connections to Japanese-based groups and lack of friendships within the Japanese community have also been observed. A low life satisfaction score is often observed with this type.

### **5.2.1 Observing the frustrated**

Many of the examples of the frustration group come from the observations made by the respondents rather than the respondents themselves. One challenge this study had was to procure interviews with truly frustrated people. Several potential respondents cancelled after stating they either did not have anything positive to say or felt nothing they said would be helpful to this research. These sentiments were felt after having little information about what the research goals were and exhibited a pessimistic predetermined view of the topic. Carlo could be considered an expert in observing examples of the frustrated. He owns several bars, some of which focus on foreign customers. He stated:

In my business I will meet people that are lost, that have not been successful in assimilating here, who have not found their niche, who have not found their road, who have maybe had and lost in business, who have failed or see themselves failing. Of course, foreigners always have the option of leaving to somewhere; supposedly we do...Supposedly we do. Those people who find themselves frustrated like that, yes, I see them, and often they get into trouble. (Carlo: 4)

As Carlo stated, the reasons for subjects being “frustrated” vary from person to person. The option to go “somewhere” as Carlo said is only supposed and the thought of starting all over again in your own country or another one can be too much for some individuals to bear. In previous interview quotes the phrase “one foot out the door” was used to describe the feeling of no commitment. The respondents stated they needed to discard this feeling to gain more control in their lives. Lack of control in their lives was a major source of stress. It can take some people years to recognize it and when they do, turning it around is a daunting task. Ann

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<sup>12</sup> Appendix pg. A-11: Q35.

had an anecdote of the types of men she has met in Japan who have realized the very same situation Carlo spoke of.

Obviously there are the people that go home, but the ones that stay they generally fall into two categories. The guys that have found their niche. Whatever that may be, career niche usually. They nearly always ... often times will be married with kids. They may or may not speak Japanese, but then that's okay because a lot of Japanese women do speak English and are willing to take a husband who doesn't speak their language. A lot of these guys are actually I feel quite capable and probably would have done probably easily just as well in their own countries, both in love and career. Then there's the other type of guy who, you know, he's the type of guy that never really learned much Japanese so he doesn't understand the Japanese. The irritations of life just get insurmountable but on the other hand often times I think they're quite ... they just live this limbo life, the easy life. So, they turn around they're forty years old they've got a job in an industry they don't like, they've got no career to go home to and so I think that there is any number of guys like that; who miss the boat on going home.

Because they never sat down long enough to think about it. They didn't intend to stay. They just ended up staying and they missed the boat. There's a stage I think, you've got to be looking at around about thirty or what have you, where the guys, young guys that are here at some point need to say to themselves either I make a go of it over here and get my Japanese and and get the job I want to do in twenty two years from now. Or I go home and get a career back there. Some of them don't, you know, but I know a lot of really really fabulous guys here. Who I've said found their own niche. So, there's those two varieties in men. It was only around about four or five years ago that I actually started going out and meeting foreigners. (Ann: 6)

This is a rather simple split into only two types: those who can and those who cannot.

This is most likely applicable to women as well who have possibly stayed too long as Ann mentions in another part of her interview. She noted a difference in language ability between men and women who marry Japanese nationals. Language ability is expected from western women while it is not from western men. These expectations lead women to be more likely to be exposed to stress after cultural mishaps<sup>13</sup>. Ann says the men who have not done well are the ones who "never sat down long enough to think about" what their lives will be like if they remain in Japan. Japanese culture and the people do not often criticize others openly and tend to praise others for even the smallest of tasks. This especially can be applied to a LTW who still holds "guest" status. It can be a very easy environment to live in, but it promotes the "illusion of control" which Daniel Wegner (2002) also referred to as "the mind's best trick." The

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<sup>13</sup>Appendix pg. A-13: Q58.

environment does not promote change or challenge individuals in the western sense, but instead promotes harmony and stability. Recognized or not, westerners have a greater sense of agency when living in Japan compared to the living up to social norms from where they grew up. The norms where they grew up were enforced in those areas and deviation from them would be sanctioned by other community members. The harmony and stability that Japanese culture offers makes westerners feel they have achieved a superior social position, while in reality it is just the illusion of it. If they build up their skills or invest in a commitment to act as a catalyst for growth they are more likely to extend this sense of agency, but this is not always the case. As the illusion dissipates over the years, negative assimilation (Chiswick and Miller 2012) is often observed in the western experience in Japan. Communicative competence or lack of has also been discovered to lead to certain comfort levels within specific contexts (Redmond 2000) which could add or subtract from assimilation achievement. Studies have shown the social capital of westerners is found in what they brought with them when arriving in Japan and the experience gained in the country does not always translate into increased earnings. (Takenaka et al 2015).

### **5.2.2 No credit given**

It is the constant struggle for many westerners to have to explain their base knowledge of Japan because they will most likely not be expected to know anything about the host culture. The term “gaijin card” has been brought up in some earlier comments, but there is also a situation that could be called the “Japanese card.” This is when a Japanese person believes they are more knowledgeable than a non-Japanese in a specific area solely because they are Japanese. Carlo has dealt with this many times in his business:

Just because you're Japanese does not mean you know anything about Japanese hospitality, that comes through experience, which I have close to thirty years of, so do not address me like that. You have to correct them (Japanese people), because it's so easy for them to think that just because they're Japanese they know more about any particular subject.

Yes, I call them out. Strictly because you're Japanese you cannot say that you have more experience than I do or strictly because I'm a foreigner you cannot say I have less experience in that field. Really you have to count the experience. We're in a constant battle to stay alive....To stay alive is hard....One should also recognize the fact that if my business fails, I lose my visa, I'm (always) in jeopardy of losing my visa. (Carlo: 3-4)

Carlo feels very strongly about being taken seriously by the Japanese he works with. His state of mind is shown just by his choice of words and phrases. He says "we're in a constant battle to stay alive" and "to stay alive is hard". Self-employed foreigners need to have resilience to such stress or face frustration as always being on the outside. Stress is often caused by a lack of or seemingly non-existent locus of control, while this stress is based in cultural triggers, personality can be an accurate predictor of the development of such feelings (Padilla et al 1985). C.W. Mills wrote "contemporary man's self-conscious view of himself as at least an outsider, if not a permanent stranger, rests upon an absorbed realization of social relativity and the transformative power of history" (1959: 7) to which they belong to. While the struggle with the culture is understandable, the answer is found in how individuals transform themselves over time rather than how the culture opens up and finally accepts them.

Being judged in a stereotypical way could be expected in all cultures, but the endless open barrage of stereotypes can create a withdrawal from situations causing opportunities to be lost.

I get stress from the people who don't know me, that I have to reintroduce myself again and again. I've been here 23 years. You came yesterday? I'm like no, I've been here for 23 years. Can you speak Japanese? I'm speaking Japanese right now for God's sakes.

That kind of conversation, that gives me stress. Every once in awhile I meet people who don't do that. They've never met me before, and they can just speak to me in Japanese and treat me like a normal person, and I really, really appreciate that. It's not common unfortunately. I kind of got to the point where, if I don't have to leave the house, I don't leave the house. If I have something to do, Kendo, work or something, I want to go shopping, I have something specific. Somebody's visiting me from another country. I have some reason to go outside, I will. If I don't have, I'm perfectly happy to stay home. I just don't want to put up with the crowds or the people or the nonsense. (Chris: 5)

Consciously separating themselves from the culture is a choice which is also part of the *satisfied but separated* quadrant described later in this chapter. It is the basis of the style of

separation which are different. If the subject was frustrated, they feel they are forced to stay home because of something they find oppressive about the culture. On the other hand, are they just choosing to stay separated out of their own comfort? If their autonomy has been limited by the culture, negative emotions may be the result (Rodriguez et al, 2008; Deci and Ryan, 1995). Autonomy of movement is one of the best predictors of social and psychological well-being (Sheldon et al 2001). If the individual has a sense that they are under a daily attack, stress levels could be unhealthy. Anxiety creates negative predictions of an individual's effectiveness while confidence in one's role will have a positive outcome (Gudykunst and Nishida 2001).

### **5.2.3 Being labeled**

As Chris said above, the stress or anxiety caused by having to “reintroduce” himself every time he meets new people is a frustrating situation. An extension to this frustration is stereotypical labeling by host culture members for LTWs who teach. One of these labels is being called an “English teacher.” There are varying degrees of teaching. Many LTWs have attained a master’s or doctorate degree in various fields allowing them to move on from teaching English conversation to teaching more complex subjects in culture, literature, and business. Some LTWs teach in Japanese to Japanese students which is a skill that requires years of experience and training. If they are labeled as an “English Teacher”, they feel their hard work and accomplishments are being ignored and pushed into an easily understandable package for certain host culture members who make no distinction between newbies and well-established LTWs. LTWs may have university positions or be overseas trainers in companies which deal with English, but require far beyond the skills of a newbie English teacher. Garry, who works in one of the more internationally-focused Japanese companies, explains a frustrating situation he just recently had on the day of the interview.

I got one today. Drove me crazy. One of my coworkers decided to join our ride, and I introduced him as my co-worker. He gave a laugh and he goes, "He's the English teacher." I was like "Yeah, thank you very much. I work in the human resources

department of our company, and yes, I am English support staff, so I do a lot of training in the company." But it's obvious, I always get that.

A lot of the people ... I have another guy that works in the same company do the same thing. He says, "You're the English teacher." And yeah, I work in the human resources department, and one of my main jobs is training people in English. But I do other work as well. I do a lot of work which isn't training people in English.

I'm an employee in the same company, I have to go to the same meetings you do, I'm a human resources member...I'm a staff member in the human resources department. And part of that is training. But I have other jobs I have to do that aren't related to English. But it was obvious ... (Garry: 3-4)

The frustration Garry feels is shown in the repetition of some words in his quote. This is common in his life. The repetition of labels that remove his efforts from the equation may seem innocuous to an outside observer, but repetition of such comments test his patience daily. This could be considered a classic example of a microaggression in Japan.<sup>14</sup> The inability for some English speaking Japanese to know what to say in such a situation, should also be taken into account. Their statement is proof that there is a lack of communicative competence rather than disrespect to Garry. The constant showering of such situations can create a Pavlovian effect. Some westerners may react before a trigger event even occurs. They have become socially conditioned to expect something to be said to them, even if it has not been. This could make social encounters with new host culture members stressful. Other respondents described daily stress events such as being approached by "English bandits." An "English bandit" is a phrase Barbara used to describe a Japanese person who solely wants to practice their English and tries to strike up a conversation at an improper time.<sup>15</sup> She mentioned it was not a problem until after years of being in Japan. The reactions she has to it vary on the timing of the approach. It was also observed those respondents who spoke English as a second language tended not to be as bothered as much by this, but this is a rather subjective observation made from the few respondents interviewed.

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<sup>14</sup> Japan Times, Just Be Cause, Debito Arudo: Yes, I can use chopsticks: the everyday 'microaggressions' that grind us down.  
<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2012/05/01/issues/yes-i-can-use-chopsticks-the-everyday-microaggressions-that-grind-us-down/#.V7JvZPl95rR>

<sup>15</sup> Found in the transcripts of 019 Barbara on pg.4

These daily stresses have the potential to build into a more chronic form, resulting in marginalization from society in general and lower the chances of successful integration. Multi-cultural societies such as the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom are even facing difficulties of foreign groups coming from higher context cultures. Even though these countries have shown more openness on average, the clash between low and high context cultures can make an individual less likely to integrate into the host culture, making an identity connection all the more implausible. The high context host culture of Japan has always been a challenge to enter and anyone who chooses to live in Japan long-term needs to accept facts of difference. Tim explains how it affects him and his family:

I don't think it's possible for non-Japanese ever be assimilated 100%. I strongly feel that way. We are isolated. We are set aside especially if you physically look different. That's why there's so much in the media about white people have blonde hair and big noses kind of nonsense, because it's obvious you're obviously different. Even I've got two daughters, my wife's Japanese, and the first time we brought them to the nursery school, one of the kids pointed and said, "Are you a foreigner?" *gaijin, gaijin ka?* My daughter said, "What's a *gaijin*?" She was four years old, and there's always going to be that sense of you're different...That's part of Japanese culture I think. I'm not dissatisfied. There have been studies done, management studies, business studies, why Japanese businesses find it hard to globalize, internationalize it's because this sense of *otherism*. They cannot fully accept a non-Japanese person even someone who's grown up in the country because of this kind of closing ranks idea. You're not us, you're not us, you're not us. It's ingrained into the Japanese culture. (Tim: 3)

Tim's strong feelings towards never being able to assimilate are paradoxical. Being inherently seen as different could be enough for many to not fit into such surroundings. He seems to take it as fact and accepts it, which is a trait for other types discussed in this chapter. What needs to be seen is the acceptance necessary on a deeper family level. Even when his daughter who did not know what "gaijin" meant, was subject to the "otherism" he described, takes a special type of preparation to live alongside such a constant line being drawn between "us" and "them." This is chronic to the system. Tim expresses this frustration when he repeats "You're not us" three times in succession. Garry is aware he will always be an "outsider," but he weighs it against the good experiences he has in Japan and says it balances out. The possibility of chronic stress is a danger for those who do not fit into the culture. If a subject did

not feel there was any positive attributes to the culture, they could suffer a marginalized social position. Social interaction becomes rare or within a small social sphere locking them into a narrow selection of choices.

#### **5.2.4 Language gap**

Stress originating from communicative situations was commonly brought up by all respondents at some level. Dorothy spoke of communication troubles she had early in her stay which she said to be the cause of losing two jobs.

Well I think it's more the language thing....I think I was too American because I had my ideas which were I still think correct ideas of how the program should be run and they had other ideas and I think they felt I was abrasive. In the end I was let go and I think it's mainly because the staff couldn't deal with someone as strong as I am. One of the stupidest things I did before I came to Japan is I took assertiveness training.(she then laughed)...

Yeah, so I think that was one of the worst situations and my next job where it was an American program, but under a Japanese company I also had difficulties. The boss could not ... Not my boss, not my direct boss but the owner of the Japanese program or the bosses there could not speak a word of English. We had a lot of misunderstanding and it was not because of my being American but because of the language and also because I am a very assertive person. When I think something is right I know how to word it when I'm in English, I don't know how to word it with someone who doesn't speak English. (Dorothy: 4)

In any mix of international or multilingual staff, challenges need to be recognized and not ignored. These situations have the capability to be beneficial and have the potential to promote high levels of trust, but all language and cultural challenges must be addressed to see positive results (Henderson 2005). Dorothy brings up several factors which are telling as to whether a fit has been made or not. She says early in her statement that she was “too American” for the Japanese staff, but later she said this was not the problem. She perceived language to be the problem. The owner of the American school did not speak English, which she said attributed to her trouble. She used words like “abrasive,” “strong,” and “assertive” to describe herself which are all qualities accepted in the States but most likely Japanese find them to be upsetting and would rather remove people like that from their system. Her actions are a type of manifest dysfunction where she knowingly disrupts the norm, which results in

her getting fired. Living in Japan does not require high level Japanese skills but an LTW should recognize that Japanese people should not be responsible for bridging the language gap. One interesting observation could be made. If Dorothy's Japanese language skills were better, would she speak using her Americanisms? Or would learning the language create a more culturally balanced style of communication?

Family offers a different level of understanding and compromise that goes beyond what is needed at work. Married individuals need to confront each other on a deep emotional level to decode and understand the separation of their partner's personality and cultural foundation if they hope to succeed as a couple and a family.

I think a lot of people tend to blame cultural difference immediately and I have on occasion. It's hard to resist when you go, "Oh, this is a miscommunication. It's because you're Japanese and I'm American." Even if that's not the case. It's very hard especially when dealing with my wife. It's very hard to understand okay, is this because you're Japanese? Is this because my Japanese language usage was not proper? Was it because you're a woman and I'm a man? Was is because you're just who you are or is it just because you're tired?... A combination? It's really, really hard to say, "Yes, this is definitely because you grew up here." It's very hard to recall a specific situation in which just because it happens on a daily basis. I think most of the culture differences that are clear in my mind right now is child raising... (Tim: 6)

Tim leaves details of any example up in the air, but his statement sums up what many of the other respondents attempted to say as well. How do you identify from culture, language, gender or personality differences? This is a question which begs to be answered. The difference in uncontrollable variables such as national culture vs. local culture, varying levels of language skill, gender roles over cultural and regional boundaries as well as the endless amount of personal history involved make this an almost impossible task. Tim seems to take these differences as they come and deal with them in turn, but admittedly has the most trouble when it comes to how to raise their children.

Mixed children are subject to various adjustments and may experience discrimination or benefits from their "*halfu*" status in Japan. Sometimes the non-Japanese parents are up for their biggest challenge. A parent, who has not established an identity within the Japanese host

culture, will run into many provocations to their own core beliefs. It should be known that the nationality of the non-Japanese side may define levels of discrimination more than the label itself. But that would require specific research, such as done in Kamada's (2010) book on hybrid identities of adolescent '*halfu*'<sup>16</sup> girls and being half in Japan, to understand the complexities of the matter from a gender perspective. Judi gave an example in her interview of one parent who was trying to negotiate labels for their children:

I know of people who go through stages too like when they have kids, they will hate that term *halfu* and they're like, "Oh no, he's double," and they make a huge deal out of it, but after five, six years, then it's no big deal anymore. I don't think I was so sensitive to that, although somebody had said, someone gave me a lecture about that like, "Not, not." She wasn't being mean, actually. She's like, "He's not half. He's double." That was the first time I heard that. I'm like, "That's cool. Double," but it never caught on. I never continued using that. (Judi: 7)

Language negotiation occurs often with foreigners in Japan. This can be seen in the "*gaijin*" vs "*gaikokujin*" debate.<sup>17</sup> It can be a struggle for more than others. Judi told a story of a friend of hers:

...yesterday, I had lunch with my foreign friend who's been here twenty years too. She gets really pissed off as people assume she only speaks English. She'll get angry with them. (Judi: 7)

According to Judi, her friend has a high level of Japanese language skill. Her reactions to such situations may be due to the amount of effort she has put into studying and learning the language which will still often go unnoticed. This can also be a source of frustration for many, which quashes the belief fluency will bring less frustration. It will help some, but most likely those who already have the "fit" already wired to their personality. Other respondents told stories of their language skills being ignored:

Not as much now but yeah, before it used to be a lot. That can be a very uncomfortable thing where people will not speak to you directly. They'll speak to your wife to speak to you. Even though you're speaking Japanese to them they won't accept; in their mind the initial response is this person's a foreigner. He doesn't speak Japanese so I'll talk to his wife and they don't listen to you.

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<sup>16</sup> *Halfu* refers to being half Japanese and half non-Japanese.

<sup>17</sup> *Gaikokujin* was determined to be the polite form rather than just *gaijin*, but many long termers have stated the intonation and usage is the problem not the word itself.

The words will just go right through their head and they won't listen that you're speaking Japanese and won't look at you in the eye. They won't speak to you directly. I'm sure you know the feeling. That's very frustrating when people just don't listen.  
(Anthony: 4)

Mark made a similar comment to Anthony during his interview. They feel they are being ignored and any language ability they have has been circumvented by the person whom they are conversing with. This type of incident does not happen to them as much now as their language skills and ability have improved. Both Mark and Anthony have a friendliness about them that would not put them into the frustrated type, but their observations could easily be the source of trouble for others. Many of the respondents whose quotes are used in this section would not be placed in the frustrated quadrant. Rather the points they speak of are important feelings which need to be addressed and ironed out to promote a more stable life.

### **5.3 Balance**

The balance type requires negotiation of cultural orders and understanding the definition of situations. The balance can be viewed as the positive or proactive side of the frustrated type. While the content is somewhat different, the styles of the negative and positive factors are similar to the PANAS scales used in Watson et al (1988). It will invariably differ from individual to individual. This section also uses the quantitatively generated cultural fit (CF) factor created in O'Keefe (2016) as a piece to defining the balance type. Ong et al's study on immigrants in the United States researched the negotiations needed to become a "culture citizen" of the country (1996). Expatriates who are open to the host culture also need to integrate using newly learned behavior, norms and by adjusting the definition of the roles (Church 1982). The interwovenness of hundreds of daily arbitrations is the foundation of one's self-formed hybrid connection within the Japanese construct. George et al (1998) states three points of negotiation: cross-cultural differences, contextual factors and individual differences. This negotiation materializes in the balance which out of the four types is the most transitory, but the transition is not time specific. Like the frustration type, it is also applicable to those

who have lived in Japan for less than 10 years which goes beyond the criteria used in this study. Those in this type are in transit to build a social psychological familiarity with their new environment (Black 1988). In essence it acts as a moratorium, a time of searching and deciding the area of comfort. A subject could quickly move through this quadrant onto another or spend years experimenting different angles of cultural acceptable areas. The flexibility of the individual is tested in the balance type. Manifest functions such as learning the language, starting a family, or joining a host community connected group all give the individual cultural feedback needed to decide how much they wish to integrate. Without the conscious commitment, only shallow relationships with host culture members can be created offering very little feedback needed to develop.

*Shakojirei* is a term meaning “just being polite.” It is often applied to a situation where politeness is used to maintain a harmonious atmosphere while simultaneously keeping their distance from someone who is not a member of their inner circle. Feedback is rarely given in such relationships. In general, Japanese prefer a hierarchical context to give anyone feedback. It can cause a very enigmatic feeling for some westerners who believe they have made a friend, but in reality the Japanese person was only being polite. This concept of distance must not be taken out of context and be deemed that a Japanese person who is being polite secretly dislikes an individual. It is just a cultural habit of filtration into ones inner sphere of activity. Situations like this require negotiation and decisions to be made within the balance to define it from both cultural standpoints. Whether this is done fairly with both their own culture and the host culture in mind is dependent on the individual. This will eventually decide if they move to the satisfied but separate type or the full circle which requires more bicultural fairness. Without this balanced view, they will end up frustrated. The term balance has several inferences that can be made. It is the fair balance between the two cultures. Balance also implies some degree of difficulty, which means they could lose their balance and fall into periods of diffusion which makes it an unstable type. It could also be said the future of an

individual is still in the balance of being determined. The first step is to consciously begin the journey, but according to some respondents they know people who never even started:

It's different than attitude, ...I have several friends, foreigners, here. Most of them are Americans, sometimes they don't make the effort, and if you decide to live here you have to make the effort to integrate yourself in a society. If you don't make that effort, you will never be integrated into a society. (Edward: 3)

The Americans who Edward is referring to could be rather new to Japan. Edward is French but is employed on an American base, so many of the Americans he speaks of are from there. As mentioned of earlier, Americans on the base tend to live in a bubble, although the Americans who Edward speaks of are the ones who have stayed after their service ended. The "effort" Edward is talking about is the conscious and deliberate first step needed to enter into the balance quadrant. This is the beginning of the journey through cultural patterns and personal theories which may transform some from "outsiders" into "insiders" (Kim 2001).

The balance acts as an experimental transitory quadrant and the willingness to learn about the host culture will be observable. According to Schwartz et al (2006), the process of acculturation changes identity of an individual, but then has the ability to maintain it after a transition period similar to the balance type in this study. The navigation through different styles of entry to become an "insider" often takes form in intragroup othering. They decide what they do not want to become rather than what they want to become. As mentioned earlier, this is very common and can be observed in the respondent's quotes. One example is Tim's observation when he goes out with Japanese friends:

There's also because the older guys can't speak Japanese, it limits their social context. Every time I've gone out with my Japanese friends, there's always a group of three or four 55 year old white guys in the bar who can't speak Japanese except some kind of *katagoto* type stuff they learned while drinking. All they do is drink, and a lot of these guys got divorced. They had family problems, they don't have any Japanese friends, and they don't have anywhere to go. They can't go back home wherever home is. I really feel like if you want to call it a lost, they are lost a lot of these guys. I feel sorry for them, but it's probably just too late. I don't know. I don't know maybe it isn't too late, but they might feel that. (Tim: 4)

His observation of the “older guys” not being integrated and living on the fringe of the culture with minimal involvement is a fair example of intragroup othering. He says they only speak *katagoto*<sup>18</sup> and makes many generalizations about their marital situations and lifestyle choices. The other side of this is younger westerners are learning Japanese faster and earlier than ever before due to a boom overseas from the popularity of *anime*<sup>19</sup>. This is supported by new software and smartphone applications which makes learning language more accessible than ever before. Tim makes it clear he does not understand how such people stay in the country and he may classify them as frustrated, but there is a possibility they could be classified as satisfied but separated, which is explained in a later section. Tim mentions they may have been divorced. While divorce is a difficult life event, satisfaction with life is not necessarily damaged permanently. Some westerners may prefer a shared social sphere with other westerners while others may prefer the company of Japanese or both. While Tim mentions he feels sorry for them, his statement may be about self-definition rather than the three “old guys.”

This leads us to the different approaches westerners have taken to create an identity. The self-defining qualities of the balance challenges people to face life changes that will affect their satisfaction within the host culture. Some choose to compromise while others choose to separate themselves from such cultural inhibitors. The challenges of language negotiation as well as maintaining parts of their own national identity are also explained in the following sections.

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<sup>18</sup> *Katagoto* means broken language. I.e. He speaks broken Japanese.

<sup>19</sup> *Anime* is the shortened word for Japanese animation.

### 5.3.1 Compromise

Integrative styles vary greatly. Some say to just “ride it”<sup>20</sup> and to take things as they come, while others have a more managed approach where they interject ideas they feel need to be addressed before they become stressors:

I usually deal with my problems personally. When I was a kid if something came up I was never the kind of person to actually talk about my problems with somebody. I would just face it and look for a solution. To where other kids they'd like to cry and whine about everything. Just taking that as my personality if you will, living in Japan, if anything has ever bothered me or had a problem with it, I confronted it straight there. At the time of the problem and I'm very straight forward even though that's not Japanese customs, if there is something I don't like or don't agree with, I'll ask questions as politely as I can. Just try to get a real understanding or reasoning and I don't like things to go over my head as well. (Mark: 6)

Mark’s example shows his personality fits into the construct of his current situation because he does not like to complain, although, the definition of “complain” is somewhat different than the western one. Mark realizes the difference by stating he will confront anyone “politely” when he has a problem or does not understand something. He wants to be informed and seemingly prefers interdependence rather than being too dependent on Japanese around him. The word “politely” takes on a different meaning when translated from the lexicon of Japanese to English. This would also include tone of voice, eye contact, and sensibility of the argument along with the hierarchical role of the people involved. Personality tweaks are often made by LTWs to arbitrate such situations. Anthony gave some examples how his personality has changed.

I always had the feeling this is me and that's the way it is. If they accept that, that's fine but then as you've been here longer and longer you tweak your personality a little bit. You take the good points and the bad points and the points you want and the points you don't want and that becomes the new you for that culture.

You change your personality. Different languages you change the way you speak and the things you say in different languages. You're more humble in one language than in another language. You change your personality to fit that, but hopefully most people don't do it 100%. I would think you would want to keep some of your old personality. (Anthony: 5)

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<sup>20</sup> Found in the transcripts of 016 Cathy on pg.7

This example shows protection of the self while he adjusts his personality to “fit” into the cultural or linguistic situation he finds himself in. He starts his statement with his feeling of “this is me and that’s the way it is” and finishes with the hopes to keep some of his “old personality.” Many westerners stated they have become more patient from living in Japan.<sup>21</sup> These personality tweaks are addressed in the balance quadrant. The key is applying your level of “fit.” How flexible is someone willing to be to adjust themselves? What percentage should one aim for when doing this? Lee mentioned how this is reflected in how he rates his assimilation into the culture:

I definitely wouldn't say 100%. Frankly speaking, I don't think that in this current era, in general, foreigners are considered as equals or assimilated in Japanese society by Japanese people. I just don't think that's possible, but having said that, as far as is possible, I think that, well, if you could put it on a scale if you will, I've assimilated closer to say 80% or something like this. (Lee: 2)

The common reference to the impossibility of 100% assimilation is a statement worth mentioning. If a westerner wishes to graduate from the balance successfully they must realize the fact they will never fit in 100%, which can be hard for some individuals to swallow. Lee is not compromising his existence as a human being in Japan; instead he states the opportunities he receives because of this distance. He makes statements on feelings of being *othered* by Japanese because he is different, but that is because he is and accepts that reality.

There is one unique example during the interviews that demonstrates the flexibility some westerners display in their actions. Judi totally reversed her traditional role with her Japanese husband's. She is the earner while her husband takes care of the house and works part-time. She says this has given her a whole new perspective of gender roles.

Also, I can see this from the man's point of view because I'm the breadwinner and my husband is helping a lot at home and working part-time. These women who complain, their husbands are working and bringing in the salary for them, and then they wonder why their husband isn't doing laundry. I just couldn't understand that request even.

I remember I haven't been to the supermarket in ages, like five years, and I was buying *nabe* ingredients, only for *nabe*, I was going to surprise my husband, it took me one hour

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<sup>21</sup> Appendix pg. A-11: Q41. 70.2% combined agreed and strongly agree. For agree women 38% which was 10.8% higher than men.

to go through a supermarket to get ingredients for *nabe* because I was out of practice. I can totally relate to the Japanese husbands who don't want to go to the supermarket or they're not ready to help or they're tired.

Anyway, I think that type of person can feel like they don't belong here or they're not sure what they should do or they don't know how to change their situation. One woman I talked to, rare case for someone who actually takes the advice. I told her, "Just do your own effort one hundred percent. Just focus on what you're doing and eventually, your husband's going to follow." She did that and she said it really worked, it changed. He started to realize, "Wow, she is making such a big effort, so I have to make an effort too," and it seemed to help her. (Judi: 3-4)

Judi's transformative role reversal can be witnessed in other western cultures,<sup>22</sup> but rarely in Japan. She also said the experience has made her see the world from a working man's eyes. Her ability to perform in traditional female roles has been impeded as shown in her story in the supermarket and replaced by her professional role as the "breadwinner." Her inability to function in the traditional female role is a latent function of her career and how her marriage is structured. While she may be in an uncommon situation, this is a perfect example of the flexibility needed to successfully move from the balance into the full circle. The advice she gives to her friend also shows her understanding of how self-initiation is an important part of improving a situation. On the other hand, systemic change requires time or legal intervention which could corrupt the system over time. Those who rely on the hopes of systemic change will be faced with disappointment and frustration. One should act on what they can control, while keeping the longer goal of systemic change in mind and helping through personal action.

### 5.3.2 The middle ground

The middle ground should not be misconstrued as sacrifices of the self to gain favor. This would actually go against the hybrid identity model which seeks self-sameness or mutual acceptance, not the sacrifice of one for the other. When performed well, it will be seen as a win-win situation. The comfortable mutual establishment of a middle ground is necessary for, as Lee puts it, survival:

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<sup>22</sup> Maya Rhodan, Sept. 18, 2013, Study: 'House Husbands' More Common Than Ever <http://nation.time.com/2013/09/18/study-house-husbands-more-common-than-ever/>

I think having multiple skills in any job or any situation is usually an advantage. In the case of foreigners in (another) country, I think the only option if one wants to survive is to find middle ground and you have to have an innate way of assimilating. As I say, having multiple skills is obviously advantageous in any situation most of the time and in Daniel's Kahl's case<sup>23</sup>, obviously he has the best of both worlds, but again, it's sort of like a Jack-of-all-trades, master-of-none, situation really isn't it? You get by and, as a result of your multiple skills, you do have some success, and obviously there's varying levels of that success, but Jack of all trades, master of none, is perhaps how I might sum some of that up... (Lee: 3)

The complexity of the middle ground, as Lee tries to explain, is an interwoven set of skills and personal attributes which externalize into their own definition of the middle ground. It forms into a dactylogram of longtime efforts. One example of this lengthy process is displayed when Edward illustrates his interaction with the Japanese coordination and execution of an "emergency preparedness day." Edward works as a firefighter at an American base and is knowledgeable about the steps to take during an emergency. He openly explains his journey through the Japanese system of leadership and event coordination:

Their system and the leadership, and I couldn't understand it and it took me years to actually understand it. Now I'm okay, because I fully understand it, but sometimes it tends to be over complicated. For instance I go sometimes to the S---- prefecture emergency preparedness meeting. So there is a governor, there is everybody and they simulate exercise, and for me it would be easier to simplify it and reduce the amount of people. They just tend to over complicate it and putting a lot of people in the structures...and not, uh, just follow the orders basically. Not putting, not giving the opportunity for initiative or things like that... (Edward: 4)

He then explains his view on the difference in leadership styles.

Okay, being French, working on a US military base with Japanese, I see three different ways of thinking, and being, the line of work I am, the leadership is a crucial thing. And I would probably say westerners like, okay, European and American, tend to have a leadership, of actually a leader who will create leaders. Japanese, more in leaders create followers. I don't know if you can understand what I am trying to say. (Edward: 5)

Edward is not an English native speaker and may have some linguistic barriers when explaining the complexity of the difference in leadership roles. But I think he laid it out in a simple and easy to understand concept. Westerners tend to define Japanese systems as overly complex and inefficient. This is one reason respondents like Theresa try to remain separate

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<sup>23</sup> This is a reference to an interview with Daniel Kahl from Komisarof's (2012) *At Home Abroad: The Contemporary Western Experience in Japan*

from such systems. This also applies to work situations as well. Never-ending meetings without any apparent agenda are also a common complaint of the Japanese work environment. Tim has done a lot to integrate into the Japanese work environment. He has learned the language and attained a PhD, but admittedly realizes expectations are different for western workers:

There are cultural differences, but there are individual differences too. It's an advantage for us in a way not being Japanese. We have that kind of window of opportunity to explain more. Middle ground, yeah, I'm not expected to be a Japanese person because I can't. I'm expected to understand Japanese culture which I try, but even then I don't like saying this is Japanese and this is non-Japanese, because everywhere is different no matter where you go. (Tim: 8)

Tim's experience is revealed in the final sentence of his comment when he explains he does not try to draw the "us" and "them" line by labeling things "Japanese" or "non-Japanese" and acknowledges the differences "no matter where you go." Tim's self-defined concept of the middle ground is one example how to balance out the relationship between the cultures. He knows if he is over-reliant on Japanese forgiveness, it may be beneficial in the short run, but over time the dependence becomes a hole difficult to escape for anyone who wishes to advance within the contrasted system. The flip side of that would be if one tries too hard to keep up with the Japanese, too many core feelings may need to be ignored, leading to frustration or even complete withdrawal from the cultural situations. Carlo has taken these differences head on and offers his take on compromise or lack thereof when he finds a need to express himself.

...Japan, I think, gets through the day on trying to achieve or maintain sameness and stifle, to a certain degree, originality and maverick-ism, if you will. We get through the day with originality and creativity and those things, if they're put in the same room, are going to knock heads a little bit.

If they're both respected by both parties to try to achieve whatever the goal may be at that time, then both parties have something to contribute to the task and that is a positive for everything, I think.

Even recently I was in a meeting with two Japanese bar owners, restaurant owners, as myself, and we were discussing an event that all three were invited to participate in; put up a booth, sell beer, do this and that. Their approach to the event, *naiyo*<sup>24</sup>, the event profile that we were given, was these are the rules and they told me, "These are the rules

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<sup>24</sup> *Naiyo* means contents. In this case: the contents of the event.

we've been issued and these are what we have to follow because the organizer of the event said these are the rules and we have to" and I totally rejected all that.

I said, "No, these are the guidelines we've been given and the event people are not experts in this field, in restaurateuring and all that stuff, even in event production, so our job, as experts in this field, are to examine these things and give them our best recommendations. If we agree with this it's cool, if we don't agree we should tell them why, but we should question all this stuff because questioning it now is the time to question it." Once the event is on and going, there's no questioning it, you have to roll with what's been decided. I was trying to convey that to them and that took a little bit of time. I don't think I did it successfully anyway.

Having sensed his comment as something that many Japanese may see as less than tactful, he replied:

I do, but I also realize sometimes that it's to my advantage to not be tactful sometimes and bark at them because I have that luxury to do so, being a foreigner. (Carlo: 3)

At the time of this interview, Carlo had been in Japan for more than 25 years and is very knowledgeable about the style of the Japanese service industry. He professed his Japanese level is fairly low for someone who has been in the country for so long, but culturally he is implanted in the community as much as any Japanese restaurant owner. He chooses his style of communication consciously to “not be tactful sometimes and bark at them (Japanese)”. He knows when he is going over the line and says he has the “luxury” to do so “being a foreigner.” In this case, he means being a western foreigner. This consciousness extends from their experience. This is what distinguishes newer arrivals compared to LTWs. LTWs recognize when they are advancing beyond the boundaries of the formally acceptable with the intention to create an advantage within the situation and promote the need to seek compromise with host culture members. To make a lighthearted comparison, it could be equated to juggling chainsaws. The danger is apparent but if done properly it will entertain those involved. Carlo’s style is most definitely a personalized one.

### **5.3.3 Language and relationship negotiations**

Carlo’s unique style of negotiating relationships to his advantage by using his “gaijinness” is only one example of the various forms of negotiation westerners need to understand to exit from the balance quadrant. Using “gaijinness” has a flip side. It can also be

troublesome to an individual if a situation is not understood. After agreeing to the advantages of being a western foreigner, Anthony gave one example of a relationship that became a bit problematic:

There's a lot of advantages I'm sure. As you said, one thing people like giving you gifts or taking you places and you do get treated to a lot of different things. People want to share that Japanese custom, not just giving gifts and things, but sharing in their customs with you because you're a foreigner and because if you're a Caucasian foreigner you stick out more.

That's their image of foreigners more than a Chinese image of foreigners or Korean image of foreigners, is European or American type and Caucasian style Americans. It's very easy to make friends like that because people want to have that kind of friend.

There's some difficulties to it too. There's people that want to, when I first came here I had people who wanted to be my friend not because they liked me but because they wanted to show off that they had a foreign friend.

I have this one experience where I met this guy on the bus. I invited him to my house...

... and he wanted to learn English but he didn't want to take a lesson from me. I was a teacher so this is how I made my living. He wanted to learn English so he would come to my house and I think he was a little bit just uncomfortable with, he's not a very good communicator in general I think.

He would come to my house with a notebook and start asking me questions about English. I said, "If you want to be my friend that's fine, but I'm not going to sit here and teach you English for free when this is my job. This is how I make money." It was kind of uncomfortable and felt very strange. He just wanted a foreign friend.

Well after I told him I didn't want to, and I think he was a little shocked that I was so abrupt in telling him that I didn't want to just teach him English without ... I have a class and if you want to sit ... I might ask him the occasional question but for him to whip out a notebook and start asking me questions was beyond what I wanted to do.

Actually he came in here (Anthony's restaurant) a little while ago and talked to me again. He was still a little strange but yeah, I mean as you know there are people that just want a foreign friend. It's like having a Mercedes or something. It's a status symbol.

You have the good and the bad. There's people that want to be your friend because you're a foreigner ... (I) don't really like that kind of attitude. (Anthony: 3)

This story is a common one. It is similar to a comment made in the previous section, when Japanese, like the person who Anthony refers to were called "English bandits" by Barbara. In most cases the Japanese person is just trying to learn English, westerners will react differently to such situations. Some see it as troublesome while others see it as an opportunity. How the individual reacts will determine their placement in one of the other types. Anthony was not complaining as much as explaining a truth of life in Japan. He admittedly uses his difference to his advantage when he is promoting his restaurant and food products. He was quoted in Chapter 3 on his method when selling in department stores. Anthony

understands creating a system mutually respected by the host culture's system while implementing parts of his own style. If his style is accepted by his Japanese customers, it will lead to more success. This hybrid technique was described by all self-employed respondents, although with great variance. Self-employed LTWs tend to have a different set of unwritten rules to deal with than those who work in a Japanese organization.

As stated by Edward, it takes time to understand the cultural styles in Japan and then to seamlessly integrate it into your actions and speech. While the Tokyo area and other metropolitan settings may allow for English being used in business, outside of that setting Japanese skills are often required. There is a constant battle bilingual (Japanese/English) westerners face in the balance quadrant. There is a struggle of which language to use when interacting with Japanese which can create confusion in relationships. The struggle dissipates over the years after being conciliated in the balance quadrant. Tim explains his approach:

Even in my current workplace where everyone in my department is bilingual, because that's kind of our focus, we want to raise bilingual students. I deliberately start, when I am engaging someone in conversation in Japanese, I deliberately start it in Japanese. In a way, it's because I'm kind of a control freak I have to admit, but I want to show them, "Hey, I can speak your language to a certain degree," and then after we talk of it, they can kind of judge my ability and if they want to switch to English that's fine. If they talk to me in English, I'll talk to them in English but if they stay in Japanese, I'm happy to stay in Japanese.... That kind of language negotiation and identity negotiation is needed. When I meet total strangers, especially with my kids, it can be challenging because they don't know me. At least my colleagues know me... (Tim: 4)

Tim's explanation of his personal style of language interaction is flexible to allow both languages. He leaves the door open for those who want to use English. Some westerners like Carlo or Anthony may prefer English while others like Roberto or Lee may prefer only Japanese. The styles vary and have been adjusted to fit their needs and goals. Knowing when to use Japanese versus English has benefits. Donald talked of feeling well-treated by the immigration bureau when applying for a new visa back in the 1980's. It was a time when visas were not so easily given out. As he said, to use a mix of as much Japanese as possible and to be

"cooperative rather than getting angry at them like most people do<sup>25</sup>" was an important part of adjusting to the situation. But understanding Japanese is not the only skill needed. Understanding when to use it and how to balance it within the framework of the parties involved is also necessary. As shown in the frustration quadrant with Judi's friend who is fluent in Japanese but still gets frustrated when someone assumes she only speaks English. This is one type of issue in need of attention to move to one of the more stable types. The fallacy that becoming literate in the language or living in Japan for a long time will change the attitudes of Japanese can be hard for some LTW to accept. Others find ways to accept how Japanese react to a westerner's existence without much trouble at all. The cultural fit of the individual is apparent in such situations. What is natural for some westerners seems like an insurmountable barrier for others. Garry has found it is about being flexible in the moment, which requires the language being used to be decided in the moment. He explains:

It's always a mix. I made a running group. And they can speak a little bit of English. And usually they speak Japanese. But sometimes I speak English too. I think it's give and take. I think of my co-workers now. We work in a company that the official language is English. So it's a give and take thing. I have to go maybe eight steps to do my best to assimilate to life in Japan, so I do that. But I draw a line, I have my own personal line, where I expect for them also to understand that I'm American, and to try ... I understand that I'm here, so I have more of a responsibility to blend in and to harmonize myself with life in Japan. But at the same time, it's a give and take thing. (Garry: 4-5)

The phrase "give and take" appears three times in his statement. The amount he gives is also regulated by his own "personal line" that he has created. He wants them to know he is American and does not intend to try and be "Japanese," but he tries to "harmonize" himself within the group. The harmonization he speaks of is a part of the Japanese style of relationship building which requires a mosaic of understanding. This is also a step towards achieving a self-sameness with the group which requires the "give and take" Garry speaks of.

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<sup>25</sup> Found in the transcripts of 005 Donald on pg.2-3

### **5.3.4 Maintaining national identity**

Garry's "personal line" is a protective method to maintain his own cultural identity (Berry et al 2006). One question would be if this line moves over time as he becomes more comfortable with the social norms of the host culture. He was asked what he thought of Daniel Kahl's quote from *At Home Abroad* (Komisarof 2012). He answered:

I agree with him. It's a balance. I think it's a give and take thing, with all your relationships. We are different. I'm still American, even though I've been here 17 years. Some of my thinking is completely Japanese. I've become, in many ways, my thinking has become like Japanese. But still, there's so many other times when I'm really, truly at my core, American. Things I'll do are things that an American would do. So I have both. (Garry: 4)

This duality of personal culture is simultaneous for some types, while separate for others. A greater reliance on the host culture will promote a stronger psychological and sociocultural relationship between the cultures (Ward et al 1997), but a separation from the host culture lessens the chance of becoming a culturally balanced individual. The switching back and forth appears in interactions with host culture members as well as other foreigners he is in contact with. Some of his "thinking has become completely Japanese." He has given certain parts of himself "completely," but not everything. He has a "line" and allows "give and take," which allows him to be flexible. He is not the only one who commented on maintaining nationality.

Ann stated:

I think, as a foreigner, have I assimilated well into Japanese society, am I comfortable living here and what have you? Absolutely yes. Have I lost my own heritage, certainly not. I still consider myself, first and foremost an Australian and then a gaijin and whatever. (Ann: 3)

Throughout her interview Ann proved to be one of the most forthcoming respondents. A study performed by Smith (2006) on African Americans in the United States found their ethnic identity could be observed in a multidimensional fashion. Westerners in Japan, according to respondents' answers, seem to have a stronger connection to a national identity than an ethnic one. Both Garry and Ann speak and interact with Japanese at a fairly high level both linguistically and culturally. They have made great efforts to do so over the years. In past

research, one respondent interviewed believed he would need to give up being American to do what Ann and Garry have done (O'Keefe 2013). They have shown, in their cases, this is not true. This is not due to language skill alone, but also part of the fit they have cultivated over the years (O'Keefe 2016). Mark also mentioned how he maintains his American side, but also stated living in the countryside leaves him few options, but to integrate more than he may actually wish to. He states:

I keep my heritage of living in America very strong with me. A lot of my personal views and opinions on life come from how I was raised and the family I grew up in. Having that niche with your family is very important and for myself, I found other niches living here in Japan aside from my English teaching, my students and my family. I found little niches with photography and videography, mountain biking and camping and with this as a basis, or a niche, it's helped me say settled, or grounded here in Japan. It's given me a positive outlook into putting my efforts towards when I'm not working or spending time with my family.

When I'm not teaching English and I'm in a completely Japanese environment, I think I become almost 100% Japanese more than I am American because I don't want to be an outcast. I also want to humble myself to be able to accept what the Japanese people are doing. In many cases could be totally different than something that we would do in America, even a conversation topic could be totally different than what we would talk about. (Mark: 5)

Even though Mark is living in the countryside away from foreign influence, he stated first that he keeps his "heritage of living in America very strong" with him. He said this influences his action and interactions with the Japanese community he lives in. After stating that, he goes on to explain the negotiations he has gone through over the years to become who he is now. Finding "niches" helps him blend in with some purpose and keeps him "grounded" in Japan comfortably. His "personal lines" are different from Garry or Ann, but they are present. The maintaining of his "heritage" and how he interacts so not to be "an outcast," requires self-confidence supported by a cultural fit. If an individual is in the balance quadrant, they need have a wider realization that Japan is not all the same. The city versus the country holds different challenges. Even the Osaka or Tokyo metropolitan areas would have stark contrast to one another, where a different definition of cultural fit would need to be incorporated. The personality needed to live comfortable in one part of Japan may not even apply to another.

### **5.3.5 Racial groups**

The physical location of an individual in Japan will display unique obstacles. The ethnic background of an individual would also change interactive experiences in Japan. This study was only able to interview two non-white westerners, but both gave valuable information and insight into what the differences are. The result of having only two non-whites who were interviewed was mostly due to the voluntary nature of the search for respondents. If they fit the criteria, they were accepted in the study. This approach would statistically lessen the chance of finding westerners from non-Caucasian groups. The information gathered from the two non-white respondents may be an interesting lead into more research on non-white westerners in Japan. Carlo explained his experience like this:

Another issue that I don't know if you've touched on or experienced this is the Caucasian Japanese experience and the non-Caucasian experience, that's very different too; very, very different.

Coming from the United States, my ethnic background is Latino, but I very easily fall into the black American category as well; if you wanted to kind of group us. Definitely I do not fall into the Caucasian experience. Now in America, the Latin experience and the black American experience is not that different or at least it's very similar in the fact that we feel to some extent disenfranchised by the government or by the system, if you will. Interestingly enough though, because we go through that experience in America, we have experienced that disenfranchisement, so we come to Japan and there's similar disenfranchising parallels to America.

This is not our country, the system is not made for us in mind to succeed, but we're used to kind of that because we've experienced it in America. Perhaps the Caucasian experience, male Caucasian experience, can be very different than that. They're coming from, using America as an example, they're coming from a country whose system is designed to help them succeed or with their success in mind at least, and they feel that in that culture. Once they arrive in a country like this, a foreign country, not only Japan, a foreign country, and they experience this disenfranchisement, it's shocking. I've seen that shock to the extent that they simply leave Japan. The female Caucasian experience...

Now the female experience is different and a whole different direction, but speaking of the male experience, yes, the male Caucasian experience here, they are shocked that they're not treated as they are used to back home. The minorities in America that may have experienced this in Japan here, we're not that shocked by it and we kind of bounce it off a little better... (Carlo: 4-5)

As Carlo says he would label himself as "Black American" even though his ethnicity is Latino. He explains how he feels in some ways that "Black Americans" are prepared for the "disenfranchisement" they will experience in Japan, because they were exposed to it in the

United States as well. Meanwhile, he has seen some Caucasians leave Japan because they cannot deal with the unequal treatment. Despite his observation, as other respondents displayed, it seems he has witnessed those without a "fit." Words like "struggle" or "conflict" often appear throughout Carlo's interview. These are elements which need solutions when working through the balance quadrant. In contrast, Roberto has a different story being from Asian descent. He explains:

... I think, if anything, I'm more on the positive side of things. I've not just found a niche that's comfortable that, you know, I'll just stay here and defend myself. I can do what I want when I want, and I can venture out where I like, and I'm not just stuck in a little cubbyhole. Well, again, as some of my students or some of my friends will say, "So, - ---, you've been in Japan a long time." "Yeah, I've been in Japan." "How long?" "Well, 23 years. 24 years." "Wow, I guess you really like Japan!" Which to me is an odd question. I mean, how can you even ask that? Of course I like Japan. If I didn't like Japan, I'd leave.

To me, a lot of people who find that niche, you have to come to some kind of compromise with your presence here or you will leave. You just won't be happy..... I don't see it about being in the middle. You simply are a foreigner. Being a foreigner has its own power. Again, my example of the tall, blue-eyed, blonde guy or the chick with the incredible bod or whatever, if they speak Japanese really well, if they have even the slightest modicum of stage presence, you think about the equivalent kind of Japanese girl or Japanese guy, they probably wouldn't have that job just because of the same skill level. The *gaijin* has it because they're a foreigner. That's the power. Again, that's the positive discrimination...(Roberto: 6)

Roberto begins by saying he tries to remain on the positive side of things, but also notes the importance of having a niche as many of the respondents mentioned throughout this balance section. He explains the niche as willingness to compromise. He also stresses understanding the power of being a foreigner, which through duality means understanding the areas foreigners do not have power. He also uses intragroup othering to imagine western foreigners who he feels do well partially because of their looks. He uses the blond, blue eyed non-Asian looking features as an example. He explains Japanese workers with similar skill sets will not receive jobs due to these physical differences. There is an irony in his statement. In a roundabout way he is saying he does not get this treatment being of Asian descent without such physical features. With this said, Roberto seems to be well planted in his community,

which was confirmed multiple times in his interview. His established role was achieved through years of trial and error.

#### **5.4 Satisfied but separated**

In a realistic view, all the types in this chapter deal with some form of separation, but this group's separation is found in the creation of a dominant co-culture within the host culture. As found in the interviews, they tend to use the English language or their foreign status as a tool of mastering and redefining relationships to fit their style. Simply put, their community has a high ratio of foreign influence which may or may not interact with the Japanese regularly. Connections to the host culture would most likely be filtered through culturally mixed innocuous environments. Their identity is connected to the international community in Japan rather than purely with the host culture. They proactively stay clear of specific situations they would deem as stressful or that require responsibility within a Japanese based group. This is a conscious willful separation and not forced and marginalized like the frustrated type. Some immigrants in countries like the United States find themselves struggling with identity within the host culture and tend to separate themselves from it, but with the risk of becoming marginalized (Weiner and Richards 2008). Westerners in Japan have the choice of being more flexible with their identity within the host culture which has low expectations in their ability to be a part of society. The "struggle" isn't the same as more marginalized immigrants in the United States but rather a preference to consciously separate themselves from areas of the culture which do not fit into their life plan. This separation may be based in ethnocentric some thought or just rather a choice to shape their lives to promote mental stability and higher satisfaction within the individual's chosen lifestyle. Selective acculturation has been used to describe such a situation (Gibson, 1988; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). This decision of selective separation is made for various reasons. Some respondents see

the fact they will never be accepted as a reason to harmoniously separate from various aspects of life in Japan to minimize such conflict.

Those who are satisfied but separate can masterfully stay clear of cultural landmines and are very aware of culturally defined situations while maintaining a high level of life satisfaction. They have most likely gone through a moratorium observed in this study as the balance and have tested how far they wish to commit themselves to various situations. As said earlier, foreign or internationally based groups tend to be the choice for many within this type set, although some seem to have belonged to Japanese groups during their transition from the balance. They have found a comfortable place there, but steer clear of new exposure to certain cultural opportunities dealing with Japanese environments due to the mental stress of having to start from zero again and reintroduce who they are. They have personal traits that allow them to create a locus of control that benefits their preferred lifestyle and reduces stressors (Padilla et al 1985). Even though they have a personality, which is flexible enough to become satisfied in Japan, compared to the full circle, the satisfied but separated type would be considered lower on the cultural fit scale due to their choice of separating from the host culture. The adjustments they have made to their life could be considered deviant from normal social activity, but their choice puts them in quite a comfortable situation without disrupting the harmony of the host culture. They have decided to live a life only within arm's length of the culture instead of being openly connected to it. They choose to live parallel to society rather than getting tangled up in what they see as the confines or limitations often observed in host culture controlled settings.

In some cases, respondents may have returned to almost an extended honeymoon state where they enjoy the agency their difference and separation allows them. They may use the gaijin card, but not in an abusive way. Rather they use it to tactfully deflect specific parts of the culture they feel they may not fit into.

### **5.4.1 Permanent visitor**

The prompting of separation from parts of society is often caused by the constant reminder to some westerners they will never fit in. This feeling is stronger for some than others. For example while the balance type is trying to figure out how to approach this conundrum, the satisfied but separated types have decided to keep their distance when they can. They may use their “gaijinness” as a tool to do so. There is one thing that is clear, they feel they will never fully assimilate in a satisfying way or even integrate themselves into a Japanese community fully. Assimilation is defined, in the case of this study, as allowing or enforcing cultural change in the individual, which will inherently make them abandon their own culture (Berry et al 2006). Cathy described her situation like this:

No. I am not assimilated. We are foreigners. We're on the outside. Language keeps me there. Lack of language ability keeps me there...There are certainly people who want to be, non-Japanese who wish to assimilated, but then you get into the area of whether the society accepts you as being assimilated, and that is much more difficult and it's something over which we don't have much control.

One of my colleagues in K----- has the best Japanese that I've heard from a foreign person and the Japanese people around me say that it's freakish. He's more Japanese than the Japanese type of thing, but would I say he's assimilated? He's fully integrated into society and fully acculturated as you say, but assimilated? He sticks out like a sore thumb, so no, and not just because of how he looks but because of who he is, but in terms of work, he is regarded as an equal among the university faculty, fully able to take on whatever responsibilities are given to him. I suppose it depends on the context. (Cathy: 2)

Later in her interview she talks about the concept of home:

...it's a bit confusing though, because when we say "Yeah, well it's time to go home," because when we're here, we're like "Oh, we're going to go home for the summer," and when we're in Canada, "Well, we're going to go home soon." We've become two. (Cathy: 7)

These two passages together show the paradox of knowing she will never be 100% a part of the country she lives in and has also separated from her own country's culture norm. The concept of “home” is blurred and becomes redefined in an enigmatic way. This could be an attempt not to betray either who they have become or the place where they left before coming to Japan. The redefining of “home” has been observed in other foreign groups in Japan (Yamakawa 2003). It could be said her home is where she stands. She also mentions language,

which is also commonly thought of as the great connector, but in her opinion even her co-worker who is a highly skilled Japanese speaker is not completely assimilated. Functionality and ability to fit within the system are one aspect of assimilation but total acceptance from the host culture would be difficult from her experiences.

There were also other examples of how some respondents were committed to their job, but not necessarily to the host culture outside of their professional construct. The feeling of being permanently on the outside of the culture offered a strong reaction when one respondent was asked if he feels assimilated to the community, he responded:

No, no, no, permanent visitor. Yeah, America's home, always will be. I'm never going back. It's pretty grim, but it's the truth.

He was asked if his stress was generated from being in Japan:

...The existence in Japan, the difference, the time before the physical ugliness of the infrastructure and that kind of stuff, and the differences in the structure of the self, and the borders, and the ground rules from human relations. All of it adds up to a constant dull roar of cultural stress. (Tom: 5)

Tom is successful in his job and he teaches at a university using Japanese. While his fluency in the language is possibly as high as Cathy's co-worker, the reactions to the culture are quite different. Tom was kind enough to share his raw feelings in an interview but as other respondents like Tom also said, they would mostly likely not express these feelings outside of an anonymous interview. As a researcher I am thankful for such openness. Garry was asked the same question as Cathy and Tom. Garry reveals the process he went through overtime:

No. And never will be. No. I think what happens when you first get here, my first two years I thought, if I learned enough Japanese, and acted Japanese enough, that I would be accepted. And that I could become like a Japanese. I had this idea. And through conversations with my friends, I quickly realized that was never going to be a possibility. (Garry: 2-3)

There is a cliché that many westerners hear when they come to Japan that they will never fit in no matter how hard they try. Westerners who come to Japan are looking for adventure and to do something new and challenging. What could be more challenging than disproving such a cliché? Some take up the challenge while others heed the warning. The reality

of this endeavor is that it takes some experience over time to truly understand the depths of the challenge. Can one be satisfied in such a situation? There may be some who have succeeded on some level, but for those who realize the cliché is applicable to them after efforts to disprove it, it can be a blow to their cultural stability. They can only accept it or not. It is like getting caught in a rain shower without an umbrella. Those who cannot accept it get wet and enter the frustrated state, but those who can just enjoy getting wet, will most likely raise their satisfaction. We can only adapt to the weather not change it.

#### **5.4.2 The chosen separation**

LTWs learn through experience where to direct their attention and where not to. In the previous chapter, Theresa explains how she is careful about which groups she joins and consciously evaluates relationships before she commits. Later in her interview she clarified her reasoning:

I think I could probably say that with my school and I've met different people that really like me and think I'm a good teacher, I think I found sort of a middle ground to some extent. I've been really happy with the teacher's association. I would have to say if it were not for the teacher's association I might not be here because I've met a lot of different people. (Theresa: 3-4)

I don't get involved in stuff partly because of language and partly because I don't want to be expected to be there all the time...And also because to be honest with you although it might not seem like it, I am basically shy. (Theresa: 6)

These are two different passages but interconnected through a common theme of connectedness and her conscious choices and reasons why she commits to the teacher's association versus other host culture based groups. The expectations of some Japanese groups can be time intensive which Theresa recognizes as a cultural landmine. As mentioned earlier in statements by Edward and Ann, a westerner views time management efficiency differently. The pace in Japan is often slower and requires more time together as a group instead of relying on individuals to act alone. This slow pace may affect the self-efficacy of westerners working in a Japanese organization. While training can assist organizational integration, the individual must first have the ability to adjust to accept the cultural divergences required to enter the

new system completely (Osman and Rockstuhl 2009). The depths of change required to perform this task lead many just to separate from the system completely. The level of support in the form of intra-organizational socialization is also a factor needed to be considered (Palthe 2004).

Theresa said she considered the teacher's association "family." This is an indicator or catalyst for a higher level of satisfaction. Family is a construct of trust which can be gained through marriage as well as deep relationships with a group. The group she has chosen does not need Japanese skills and is primarily an English language based group, which is one reason she feels comfortable. She also mentions in the last passage that she is "shy." Like she said, she did not seem shy at all, but other respondents displayed this trait. They change when they need to but it is challenging for them. They could be classified as ambiverts.

Chris was quoted in Chapter 3 about his strong connections with his martial arts group. In that atmosphere he is at home, but he also mentioned he preferred not to go into situations he had to explain who he is "from zero." The passage explained his experience with some of the mothers at one of his children's events who had questioned his choice of lunch. He perceived his choice to make sandwiches instead of a bento was being questioned by the other parents. The event defined how he chooses to stay away from school activities, but he did say he would go to his son's school to teach the martial art he studies. This puts him in a role and an environment he feels most confident. This is an example of a defining moment that sets guidelines for westerners in the satisfied but separated type. These defining moments have been classified as reality checks in past research (O'Keefe 2013). Reality checks are solid examples that become a defining moment and affect how individuals choose to interact or separate from the host culture. Feelings of perceived discrimination are sometimes felt just through the atmosphere of an event, but a reality check is a specific incident which can be clearly retold in detail. In the case of Chris' story, there are possibly other respondents who displaying stronger CF may not be bothered by such incidences, but rather let them happen and move on.

### 5.4.3 Utilizing difference

Chris did not like to be seen as different and displayed stress when it is pointed out to him. This seemed to be common with those who feel their efforts to fit in, which can be exhibited by starting a family or learning the language or culture, are not being acknowledged. There are others who just are not bothered, but rather use their difference. Anthony explains the way he views other westerners:

I've never thought why hasn't this person ever learned Japanese? They are saying they don't understand anything because they just stay in their own little world. They would probably be doing the same thing back home in their own little world in a different kind of group. It's just that here it's a Japanese group and an English group. At home it might be a guy's group and an intellectual group. It's kind of the same probably.  
(Anthony: 2)

He continues later in his interview:

...there's definitely niches here in Japan so I always tell people you can come from a foreign country and you come here and you have a certain dream of something you've always wanted to do and it's really easy to realize that dream here because you are a foreigner and you can do stuff that you would never, ever be able to do back home.

You can come here and you can do that. You can become, people become a model where they would never ever be able to be a model back home. Like me, you can open up a restaurant. You can be fairly successful or a little bit successful, make a living out of it which you probably would never be able to do back home. Or become a DJ, or there's so many jobs like that I see people coming here. It's something that they always wanted to do and that's why they've stayed here for a long time.

They were able to realize that dream because they were a foreigner; where they can't do it as well as somebody else but because they can do something a little bit different than everybody else that they were able to realize their dreams. (Anthony: 4)

When Anthony is speaking of foreigners, he means westerners. He explains how westerners are able to do activities in Japan that they could not do at home. He ends his statement saying that even if they cannot do whatever they do as well as someone else (meaning Japanese), a "foreigner" can still add something to make it a little different than everybody (meaning Japanese), which adds enough value for them to succeed. Anthony uses "somebody" and "everybody" to describe Japanese people instead of the "us" and "them" labels. This reveals a higher understanding of his integrated state. He deals with different customers

every day in his community, which is different from a teacher or a company worker who may use Japanese every day, but most often with the same staff or co-workers.

Anthony also brought up how “foreigners” can realize their dream. There was a saying during the bubble years that different Asian groups came for the Japan dream. This obviously is filled with irony due to all the historical problems Japan has had with other Asian countries, but there are also cases of this in the western community. While the interviews gave examples of respondents feeling very satisfied with their lives, the question of how this was attained is found in the paradigm they create within the community and the society as a whole. Judi said she has accomplished her goals and feels comfortable in Japan. She also sees herself as free from certain stresses she would have in the States. She explains:

...I enjoy the freedom of being a foreigner and doing my own thing. Some people get stuck here and I don't see any way or they don't see any way to change things or move on. I feel like I can make my own way here. Teaching too, teaching is a very highly respectable job, respected by people. I can make a livable wage. I can't imagine living at this standard of living in the United States. The times I've gone back and just to see what housing costs, especially being a teacher with a foreign husband too, paying for healthcare...I can't. I just can't imagine going back. I think that people who are more proactive, well, I'm talking about myself now, but people who are more proactive and pro-oriented or take action-type people, I think, are more successful and more happy here. (Judi: 9)

Judi demonstrates an increased sensation of agency living in Japan. Her separation is found by using her difference in a positive way while also being “proactive.” She says she can do what she wants, but this should not be taken literally. Throughout her interview she exhibits signs of cultural fit. She has learned from her mistakes and does not dwell on failures. In the pre-interview questionnaire she gives herself modest language scores. She has learned to use her cross-cultural skills to promote freedom from some cultural rules in a mutually acceptable style. This is to supplement language gaps, which at times does not allow the transference of information beyond its simplest forms between two parties. The freedom to be who you wish to be was also expressed by David in Chapter 2.

David was very open about how he feels in that quote. He expressed his sense of freedom and the importance of telling his children to be who they are. David is married to a non-Japanese spouse, so their household culture does not have a member of the host culture living with them. The importance placed on “be who you are” holds a lot of weight from his perspective. In this author’s opinion and 19 years of experience living in Japan, there are westerners who have experienced the complete opposite to Judi and David’s statements. While respondents who were interviewed expressed some cultural clashes, few had complete dissatisfaction with their life in Japan. David’s statement, like Judi’s, are good examples of having a satisfied life. David mentioned how he doesn’t have to “pull the party line.” Many westerns, if they were in their own country might be subject to certain social norms and would be often held in check by others in their community, which may limit their true abilities. This construct is eliminated after entering Japan for respondents like Judi and David and it has positively affected their lives. This same sense of freedom could theoretically result in negative or various types of culturally deviant behavior. David also mentioned he is not judged for his religious views, which was reinforced in the survey finding. 92.4% of survey respondents said they had little to no religious conflicts<sup>26</sup>. Of course, if their religion had inherent cultural disparities this answer may be different as found in some Muslim residents in Japan.

#### **5.4.4 Extended honeymoon**

The choice to “be yourself” is challenged after years of contact with the host culture. The realization of lacking the perfect “fit” triggers adaptive adjustments to the culture. Those who do not adapt well are found in the frustration quadrant. The satisfied but separated are very adaptive and create new personalized styles of integration as shown in the statements above. Those who lack the “fit” choose the self over finding their place in the host culture based community. In many ways their lives consist of many compromises between what they wish to

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<sup>26</sup> Appendix pg. A-11: Q34. The result above is a combined number of the strongly disagree and disagree scores which were 65.8% and 26.6% respectively.

participate in and what they prefer to separate themselves from. Their experience from the beginning of their stay is based on differences in the *other*, so they have adjusted their interactive style to avoid or limit contact to it. This creates a constant struggle. But ironically this struggle can create satisfaction when positive results are observed by the individual. Some statements made could be observed as an extension of the honeymoon period where the feelings of difference which created stimulation to the western visitor are preserved. The honeymoon period is a position at the center of attention. The earlier years of living in Japan were described by Dorothy like this:

I was overwhelmed by the politeness, how cultural people were, how much they welcomed me. That was at the beginning, I was new and I was new to them and I was treated very much like a guest, I would say almost like a queen...(Dorothy: 1)

The image of a queen is a very centralized feeling. The type of attention being described here is not normally felt in people's lives, but admittedly, Dorothy was explaining her first five years. As mentioned earlier, many LTWs moved away from explaining their earlier feelings about the country, especially when the term *honeymoon* was used. Dorothy even tried to recover after making her statement by explaining what her second sojourn to Japan was like.

She states:

...Or even when I returned. No I didn't really experience that honeymoon period that a lot of people are talking about and so I didn't have the huge drop off that some people have. I was a teacher in the United States, a high school, junior high school teacher and I decided I wanted to live in another culture. (Dorothy: 1)

Her original comments of saying she felt like a "queen" were quickly rescinded. Her second description mentioned she did not have the big drop-off that "a lot of people" (westerners) feel. The honeymoon period is not associated with a "drop-off", but rather a period of elation and adventure. She used intragroup othering to separate herself from her original statement which clearly realized being treated as a "queen" to define the feeling of honeymoon-like state. Dorothy's statement explained the honeymoon experience of many years ago, but when the honeymoon topic arose with Carlo he said:

That's the funny question, I saw that in your interview (questions), I don't think I ever did and that's kind of funny. I guess I am still on a honeymoon. (Carlo: 2)

Carlo's statement, like Dorothy, pulls away from the honeymoon concept, but he does it in the opposite order than she does. He said it in a joking way that he is "still on a honeymoon." One of the key attributes of the honeymoon period is the separation between the host and culture accompanied by an adventurous fun atmosphere. Carlo was also quoted in Chapter 2 as saying he gets asked the same questions all the time and is sometimes treated like he just got off the plane yesterday. He turns this into a defiant positive outcome by stating this gives him the freedom at times just to pretend he knows nothing. Carlo's actions exhibited a clear separation from the host culture. He revealed a large amount of conflict in many of his statements. His strong survival-focused personality mixed with a friendly openness creates a unique energy-filled lifestyle. His interview was interwoven with a lexicon of struggle and challenges, but always with positive and at times defiant twists. In the end, he tries to keep his mind young and in the moment, so maintaining freshness with his host culture interactions may be the root of his jestful answer above.

## 5.5 Full circle

There is a T.S. Elliot maxim taken from his poem "Little Gidding" that acts as an illustration of the overall sense of what the full circle type represents. He said:

"We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time. Exploring where you are and how you fit there is all part of knowing yourself."

Even when having the natural ability to "fit" into the culture, it does not mean adjustments are not made. There is a journey that LTWs must go through. The length of this period of exploring varies, but it must take place. In the end, they become a self-conscious version of themselves. Consciousness, resources, and commitment are three qualities needed to be accepted in a group (Lois 1999). The existence of these traits within this type is noticed by westerners who seamlessly interact with the culture and community, which is part of a full

identity achievement. There are no cultural breaks as observed in the satisfied but separated type. FC just fit into their surroundings. They will separate themselves from certain situations, but this decision is not motivated by cultural separation. They are like a shiny link in a chain rather than an observable padlock. The shiny link is noticeably different but it fits without disturbing the flow of the chain itself. One of the comments received at the end of the survey displayed an understanding of this by stating: "Many of these questions would apply to living in one's own country." The observation that many of the questions are similar to problems or questions which could possibly be used anywhere and for any country is the full circle type visualized in a simplified way. "After all, we are every one of us, inhabitants of a universe where everything turns in circles" (Kundera 1978: 66). The cultural distance and highly contextual nature of Japan compared to western countries is ripe for being observed for its differences rather than its similarities. In the end, strong ethnic and national identities have shown to result in the highest achievements in well-being, satisfaction and cultural adaption (Phinney et al 2001).

While this study was able to show cultural fit as being more congruent to life satisfaction rather than language ability, the full circle would be difficult to achieve for those lacking Japanese language ability. Autonomy within the culture and community are a key point to this type. While the satisfied but separated type may have masterfully entered an interwoven functional relationship parallel to the host culture, they still remain willfully disconnected from parts of it due to lack of cultural fit. This should not be misconstrued that full circle types become Japanese. Rather they have created a rhythm of connectedness, which allows them to take part in any and all situations that are presented to them if they choose to. Due to their high cultural fit, they are less vulnerable to cultural stress than the other types. They do not have the need to "de-robe" (Neckerman, Carter and Lee 1999: 954) which may apply to other types, but there was evidence from this study's qualitative data showing examples of certain

westerners, as in the case of Anthony, feeling more comfortable in a Japanese setting over a western one.

Berry et al's (2006) study on acculturation and adaption used several factors when determining how immigrant youth settled and formed an identity. The presence of a combination of psychological and sociocultural adapted forms had the best integrative profiles. Whether consciously or unconsciously subjects labeled as the full circle would encompass this. There exists a sort of understanding between the two parties which could be seen as a mutual realization which equates to system justification (Jost et al 2004) allowing the westerner to operate within the system without disturbing it. Operation within the host culture's system requires the understanding of direct vs. indirect and emotional expressiveness vs. emotionally restrained patterns to be effective in their role (Hammer 2005). The interview quotes below will offer insight into the mind and thought processes of the full circle type, but these quotes are not suggesting respondents quoted are actually in the full circle type. The quotes are representative as statements to help crystalize the image of the type itself. They illustrate the reasons why LTWs have stayed, allowing us to understand the uncompromised middle and how eventually their life passes beyond the culture until they are just living normalized lives within the construct of the host culture.

### **5.5.1 Who stays?**

Some questions this study has asked from the start are: Why do westerners remain in Japan? What is the attraction? What makes someone originally from a low context culture decide to live in a culture of higher context? Respondents gave weight to various attributes like introverted or possible ambiverted types.<sup>27</sup> Extroverts were rarely given reference. Respondents also mentioned that openness and flexibility are necessary when interacting with cultural differences in the host cultural. These are not very surprising, but what does come as a

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<sup>27</sup> ambivert: a person who has a balance of extrovert and introvert features in their personality.

surprise is the meaning of words like “home” and “nationality.” Seeing themselves as a “gaijin” as a label they wear, they let it melt into who they are instead of separating from it. They have learned to communicate their ideas from the middle not the outside, but from a distinct ambassador-like position which they have built over time. This is all included in the full circle of just seeing people as people and nothing else. While this sounds simple in concept, there is a learning curve and a journey that needs to be taken to arrive at this point. Theresa was asked to give an explanation of who she thought stays in the country. She simply stated:

...somebody who ends up feeling more comfortable here than in their home country or likes Japan better in terms of customs, food, whatever. (Theresa: 5)

Just the thought of feeling more comfortable in another country aside from your own may offend some people who think it is not being faithful to who they are, but those who stay for the long-term see it just the opposite. Not staying may be against who they have become, but whether they are happy with their choice will be displayed over time. Theresa’s statement is straight and easily applicable to all the types except those who are in the frustration quadrant. The quote offers somewhat of a guideline for those thinking of staying in the country for the long-term. The argument for those in the full circle is they tend to exhibit a high cultural fit, while other types are either lower on the “fit” scale or still adjusting to their surroundings. Dan gives a slightly different view expanding on Theresa’s statement. He says this about people who stay for the long term:

...Someone looking for a challenge or who maybe feels they don't fit in their home culture. ...I think there are some people who just want to go abroad, they want a challenge. They get to Japan, they're here for a while, and they realize, Oh I like it, or it works well for me, or they meet someone. Then I think there are a lot of people too, who they just don't feel like a good fit in their home culture, and they're trying to get away. I think some people are probably a combination of both. I have one of my teachers from Britain who just has no wish to ever go back. The only reason he does is so that his parents can meet his daughter. His wife likes going back, but he doesn't. (Dan: 7)

Like all the respondents, Dan was given some of the basic lines of questioning before the interview and he had an interesting answer prepared. He gave two distinct qualities of LTWs and then expanded on both. He describes them as “someone looking for a challenge or who

maybe feels they don't fit in their home culture. Those looking for a challenge may fit most of the types at some point in time, but those who do not "fit" in their own country is an interesting observation. There is a term in Japanese called *hiki-komori*, which was a phrase coined by Tamaki Saito, a psychologist in Japan, to describe a Japanese person of any age who will not leave their own house or room. It basically means being a "shut in" for psychological reasons, but in the case of young people it has become a social problem affecting 541,000 people who are 15 to 39 years of age as of 2016<sup>28</sup>. A term derived from this has been used sporadically on the internet to describe a variance of this problem known as *soto komori*. It is used for those who do not fit into their own culture and choose to move overseas. Originally the term was used for Japanese moving to Thailand or other Asian countries to escape what they feel are the restrictive culture norms in Japan. The irony is, as Dan put it, some westerners live in Japan for the very same reason. They isolate themselves in the noninvasive culture of Japan and distance themselves from their own co-culture. While other studies may view these types as assimilated, this study would place them in the satisfied but separated quadrant, their separation being from their own culture rather than the host culture of Japan. While the full circle type may be strongly connected to the host culture in their daily life they would not separate themselves from encounters with other westerners or from their own culture. They recognize the value in their foreign connections, which allows them to contribute originality within the sphere of the host culture. As Mark explains:

I truthfully believe that if you're going to move to any country away from your own personal country, it takes a person who has interest in culture and wanting to understand a different way of life without trying to look back on what they thought as normal and trying to make that a standard in the new place because when you go to a new place or a new country you have to realize there are things that are very un-normal or natural from where you come from. You have to either accept that or have a lot of trouble I would say.

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<sup>28</sup> Half a million young people in Japan barely leave their homes taken from the Independent on September 30, 2016. Written by Harriet Agerholm.  
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/young-people-japan-hikikomori-anxiety-a7329396.html>

What I mean about that is, if you're in a situation and you don't agree with something, you can speak out and tell everyone how you feel, but I've noticed that when you share your opinion or you have a very strong bias to one sort of way of thinking, Japanese people tend to look down. They don't give you eye contact, and they totally avoid the situation. When any of my students or any of my friends don't like what I'm saying, they just ignore me. (Laughter) It takes someone with tough skin to live here for twenty years I would have to say. (Mark: 7)

Mark explains those who decide to live in Japan need a “tough skin” to live comfortably.

There is a crucial need to understand the norm in Japan is different while adopting it as one's own norm. While the concept is very easy to grasp, one's own cultural foundations may become an obstacle when executing a change in behavior. Every integrative decision made pulls the subject away from who they wish to be. But in reality, the full circle types understand this is like taking a journey away from home. You can always return home, but the experience received from the journey can morph the meaning of home into a new and possibly better understanding, increasing its value. Mark even explains he still tries to go against the grain sometimes, but when he detours from the culturally acceptable line his Japanese friends, family or group display adverse reactions. These reactions are subtle and often silent, but Mark understands how to “read the air.”<sup>29</sup> He does not take it personally if they do not wish to listen to his opinions. Many Japanese may express confusion in their life and request counsel from a friend or family member, but complaints or strong opinions without real answers rarely receive input from a Japanese counterpart. They do not know how to react to a complaint which cannot be solved. But for the westerner, a complaint is only a release of stress and may not require special attention. They just want someone to listen. Japanese rarely wish to enter conversations which are emotionally charged with bias. Even with this suppression of communicative style, Mark still very much enjoys his life in Japan, which creates a paradox when thinking of the concept of “home.” He explains:

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<sup>29</sup> This quote was found in Garry's interview when he spoke of the Japanese term *kukiyomu* translated to “reading the air”. This is an important skill many foreigners gain through years of experience living in Japan.

I've been here for fourteen going on fifteen years now. With that much time and effort put into living here and making a home for myself, yeah, I consider Japan very much my home. It would be difficult to leave Japan even though I'd like to go back to California someday, but there is just so much here, that if I did leave I would miss just as much as I miss California as I do now. (Mark: 5)

The difficulty as to how to explain the term "home" arose in other interviews as well. But in other realities this problem would exist, even when one moved to a new place within their own country's borders, and should not be a mark against whether or not a subject has found their "fit" in Japan. One way to view this is Mark's existence in the middle of the two cultures. He does not choose either side, he tries to maintain both simultaneously. This belonging to the center should not be confused with those sitting "on the fence" as mentioned earlier in both Cathy and Ann's interviews, but rather a comfortable yet torn feeling between both. Possibly in their mind they wish they could make their own country with the best of each side, but instead they create their own middle space by constructing a personal version of just that.

### **5.5.2 In the middle**

Existing in the middle between two cultures is by no means a new concept, but is rarely used to describe subjects coming from higher socio-economic backgrounds. The term *expatriate* is often used to describe such groups. As economies like Japan and China have grown and become major players in the international job market, high socio-economic immigrants started to stay longer in these countries. In some cases, they have made it their permanent home. Especially in the case of a westerner entering an Asian country, the importance of finding the workable middle is a challenge. It has been written that some choose to separate themselves from the middle and perform a sort of selective acculturation (Portes and Rumbaut 2001), which also occurs in other ethnic groups.

Full and complete assimilation into the Japanese construct could be deemed very rare from the westerner perspective. Full assimilation by some groups in countries like the United States or the United Kingdom would not be easily observable in Japan. Selective acculturation is even observable in the highly functional full circle type, but it is their functionality in the

middle of the two cultures that creates what they are. Several of the respondents give various accounts of how they see themselves in the middle. Ann was quoted earlier when she explained how she considers herself “assimilated” in Japan while maintaining her nationality. One of the greatest fears of respondents residing outside the full circle quadrant is they will lose some part of themselves which will be irreplaceable and subsequently forgotten. As a result they will lose who they were before they arrived in Japan. This in turn will morph them into something they do not wish to be. Ann proved multiple times in her interview she is very capable within any cultural situation. As a business owner, she is mindful of the culture, yet understands how her own abilities as an Australian are beneficial to her life in Japan. The true depth of this is hidden in the simplicity of her statement, but the proof is in the daily interactions she makes for her business. She states:

I think most foreigners would experience that situation where a certain aspect of Japanese society on comparison with the same aspect in your own society is more favorable, and there will be other aspects of, you know, community life what have you, where you would prefer your own home country's way of doing things. So, nearly about every foreigner you talk to that in Japan talks about how wonderful it is that people are polite and nice and don't scream and carry on and you know, crime rates are low and things like that. I think we all feel like that we're a little bit of this and a little bit of that, and personally ... first of all I use Japanese not just in my social life but I also use it at work with clients.

And staff members, and so particularly with the clients, I can't just be a *gaijin* speaking Japanese. I have to be ... I'm not a Japanese speaking Japanese, but I'm a *gaijin* speaking Japanese with a cultural awareness or sort of taking up on the Japanese cultural values at the same time. So I think that foreigners, many foreigners, myself certainly switch backwards and forwards between the different identities according to time and sort of purpose and what have you. I don't actually find it terribly difficult to be really honest with you but... (Ann: 3)

Ann gives some interesting details to what it is like to “switch backward and forward” between the cultures. She explains when she uses Japanese with clients, she cannot be a “*gaijin*” speaking Japanese. She also realizes she will not be recognized as a Japanese, so she has to be a “*gaijin* speaking Japanese with a cultural awareness” and using “cultural values” simultaneously which Japanese people will feel comfortable with. The subtleness required in serving Japanese clients is an art form in itself and requires years of experience, but Ann

states at the end of her quote that she does not “find it terribly difficult.” It has become second nature to her.

Ann was not the only person to describe life in Japan as being in the middle of the two cultures. Donald, who at the time of this interview had almost 40 years of experience living in Japan, explained his situation like this:

I know of a lot of people who have been here for a long, long time and those people, most of them, all of the people that I am really friendly with are definitely not Japanese. If you did something, put a mask on them or something so they'd look Japanese, you would not mistake them for Japanese but they had very productive, useful lives. They are happy here.

Most of the people that I know have no desire to leave. I've met people who wanted to leave. Most of them have, but the long time people....Getting up over 20, 30 years, those people have found a position that's between the 2 cultures and very comfortable for them. The same thing with me. There is definitely a niche that you can find where you're comfortable and where you can do at least some of the things that you would like to do...(Donald: 3)

Donald paints us a picture of other westerners around him. His realization of being different from Japanese is clear, but he is only pointing out the difference as it exists not in any negative or separated way. He has seen colleagues perform well and lead productive lives with no desire to leave Japan. Their accomplishments after years in Japan create a strong bond with the country and the culture. Similar to Ann, Donald also mentioned at another point in his interview that he still maintains his Americanness. He even joked and said his wife says he is the most American person she knows even after living in America for several years together. With this said, Donald views himself as “between the two cultures.” His description of his “niche” gives insight to the personalization of the interconnectedness he experiences daily. This feeling would be difficult to maintain over time if Donald had not cultivated a “fit” with the culture. He spoke of the necessity for exercising great patience. The passage below gives an example of this and is a continuation of the statement above:

For example, at work I learned almost immediately something that none of the other teachers at that school ever learned and that was that it took 5 years to get a new, strange, unheard of idea accepted and what you did was, you talked about it for a year or 2, then you dropped it, and then you'd mention it again without pushing it. The first time you pushed it a little bit.

"I think this is good, we should do this, we should do this." Then you drop it and then you just bring it up a couple of times and then you wait a little bit and all of a sudden the boss is talking about it and you tell the boss, "Oh, that's a great idea. We should do that." If you do it right, you can get your ideas in and the interesting thing is you don't get any direct credit for it but all the Japanese know where it came from and so that you get indirect credit. (Donald: 3)

Donald's example is taken from where he worked. Different work cultures will exist for different organizations, so while his explanation is applicable to his working environment it may not be transferrable to others in Japan. The Japanese work culture is infamous for its resistance to change, and ideas rarely come from the lower ranks. The patience he says he needed has been observed and mentioned earlier in this paper. The example of Donald's patience, being consciously implemented over years, is something many new arrivals may find frustrating and pointless. Westerners working in universities may find this frustrating but it is most likely more palatable compared to westerners working in an even more restrictive Japanese company environment. The ability to become an official employee or chance of becoming promoted is much slower than many western countries. Those interviewed who worked at a Japanese company gave signs they do not intend to stay at their current employer in the future.

### **5.5.3 Beyond physical presence**

Respondents who viewed their life from a macro perspective rather than only seeing themselves inside Japan find themselves in a comfortable living situation. They have exited the paradigm of living abroad and just live as if they were anywhere else. There were several times in the interviews when respondents made a point without being asked that they do not view their lives in Japan as anything different or special. They have stepped away from the stereotypes of Japan and view their life as their norm. Dorothy spoke of this feeling early in her interview. It was something she wanted to make sure she got on the record. She said she chooses to be happy and stated it has nothing to do with being in Japan or anywhere else.

Japan is just where she works. Other respondents made similar observations. Chris spoke on how he views his life in Japan:

I think very few people have an idea about what life is really like here. The stupid media (in the States), and the news programs and they just give BS clichés and stuff like that. What I share is more real, and I think a lot of people sincerely appreciate that. In return, I appreciate their appreciations. It works both ways....The worst thing that I really don't care for is this mysticism; like Japan is special or practicing a martial art is special. There's some, everybody's got ESP, some spider man sense.

I'm like, dude they're people, just like you and me. There's nothing special. Some people say, how can you live in Tokyo? I'm like, how can you live in London, how do you live in New York? It's just a big city. That's always been my take. It's just a big city. Too many people, too expensive, and polluted, but it's never really mattered to me that I'm physically in Japan. It wasn't like I had this fascination marrying a Japanese woman. (Chris: 8)

While in other statements Chris had expressed some frustration with certain cultural aspects, his foundation is displayed in the statement above. The frustrations do not overrule the feelings he is stating above. Problems are problems to him, not cultural abysses of difference in need of deep introspective thought. Due to the portrayal of Japan in the western media, breaking through the stereotypical Japan can take years of in country experience (Willis and Shigematsu 2008). As he said “it’s never really mattered to me that I’m physically in Japan.” This feeling was not shared by many of the survey respondents. Only 11.2% choose “Agree” or “Strongly Agree,” while 63.1%<sup>30</sup> answered they do not have this feeling. Lee shared something similar to Chris’ statement, when discussing the differences between his own country and living in Japan:

I've long thought this when people ask me similar questions, friends and whatnot when we've had these sorts of discussions, one phrase I always put out there is that “people are people”. It doesn't matter what country or what culture you're from, at the of the day essentially people want the same thing. Obviously, there's various shades about how we go about getting what we want and going after that happiness that we're all after in life. So, as you say, sure, after you've gotten your job, after you've gotten your savings, you've gotten your house, you've gotten your kids, while that's ultimately, in most countries

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<sup>30</sup> Appendix pg. A-13: Q56. 11.2% (agree: 9.2%, strongly agree: 2%); 63.1% (Strongly disagree: 19.7%, Disagree: 43.4%)

I think,...So, in that sense, when you break it down so simply, I don't think there's much difference. There's not any need to sort of spend so much time ironing out the cultural differences. (Lee: 5)

Lee gave a bare bones statement saying that in the end “people are people.” This is a good example of the natural feeling of the “fit.” Those without the “fit” would see Lee’s statement as almost utopian and while appearing to be common sense, it may be seen by other respondents as lacking depth in its simplicity. The four typological quadrants attempt to clarify these various degrees of thought.

#### **5.5.4 Extraordinary life**

To expand on his own statement above, Lee also sees the uniqueness in his situation. He understands how different subjects will be affected differently. He explains some of the qualities of LTWs like this:

I think people who have an open mind and are willing to accept cultural differences are initially candidates. I mean, I think that goes without saying, but then those same people I would argue need to be unique again in that they must be willing to give up, so to speak, the typical path of life that most of their countrymen and countrywomen, if you will, are following in their home country. So, an open mind and the willingness to literally give up the path that most people take. Those are reasonably unique qualities. Finally, as I mentioned in a previous question, is that in general I think that aggressive and headstrong foreigners living long term in Japan are few and far between. (Lee: 7)

According to Lee an “open mind” is one of the starter attributes needed to have a successful long relationship with Japan. This is similar to the flexibility attribute found in past studies on cultural integration (Peltokorpi et al 2014). Lee also brings up another “unique” attribute needed to fit into the Japanese construct. He mentions the willingness to give up the “typical path” of people in one’s home country. This shows his awareness that his first statement needs to be clarified, that while “people are people,” a transition or moratorium does take place which in the case of this research would be labeled as the balance type. On the other hand, he states headstrong LTWs are a rare sight. In fact, individuals with attributes such as willingness to give up certain beliefs, as well as those who are more tolerant do well over a long term stay in a foreign country (Triandis, 1995; Tsai-Jung Huang et al, 2005). While

extroversion is often noted as a factor for success overseas (Shaffer et al 2006), the opposite has been found in Japan. Introversion and those who are less talkative and outgoing do better in the “vertical collective societies and in-group” bound countries like Japan (Peltokorpi and Froese 2012: 297). This research concurs with such findings. Carlo summed up the sacrifice of leaving your own country by saying:

I tend to say that the people who stay home are a little better than us. Yeah, we're the adventurers, we're dissatisfied with things, we're escaping from something, we're looking for something, looking for ourselves, and we leave. We leave, and that's heavy, because you don't just leave your country, you leave people, you leave family, you leave friends. You leave and you create distance, so the kind of people that travel and stay here, we're a brave people, resilient, dissatisfied, and flexible. We're very flexible.

I still feel I can pack up and go be flexible enough to live in another culture. At my age I prefer not to learn another language. Okay, move to India and learn Hindu. Okay, let's not do that. Yeah, the kind of people that stay or keep traveling for twenty years or go away and become an expat for twenty years, we're flexible people, we're adventure seekers. I came up with and it's kind of part of my mission statement for life, is that I always start it with ... I have a few points in it, but I always start it with, I'm going to live my extraordinary life.

I realized it when I went to China, when I was traveling through mainland China, the things that I was doing, I was immediately comparing them to what my friends back home are probably doing right now and what I'm doing; I'm walking the Great Wall and I'm backpacking and catching a boat right off the beach to travel into Shanghai next and go. That's an extraordinary experience; particularly compared to what my friends and family were doing back home and I liked it. I liked that my life was being shaped by extraordinary things and I promised to continue living an extraordinary life. (Carlo: 8)

Carlo attaches an emotional feeling to his separation from his home in America, but his commitment to his life has been in many ways extraordinary. He used the word “flexible” four times in this quote as well as “extraordinary” three times. He used a mix of opposing words such as dissatisfied, adventure, escaping and resilient. Carlo’s life’s image appears to find order in a sort of chaotic language in a struggle with himself. His mission statement to lead an extraordinary life contrasts his lifestyle with Chris’ statement on how he just lives his life as he would in any other big city. But both of these respondents live their lives without obstacles and contribute to the community in unique ways. One major contrast is Chris never mentioned leaving Japan in his current life plan, but Carlo did mention that he has the energy to pack up and move if need be. This statement shows his flexibility but also a sort of insecurity with his

current situation. His statement is one of a person much younger than himself. Feeling younger than their age appeared several times with respondents. David was the first to bring up his philosophy on age as he was quoted in Chapter 1.

David, like other respondents with a high understanding of life overseas, did not specifically mention Japan in his quote, but instead he used “another country”. His “elixir of life” concept is observable within only certain types of LTW. The frustration type, although a subjective observation, may actually have the opposite effects and cause aging through isolation and the sense of being marginalized. David’s concept could be plotted between the satisfied but separate and the full circle types. “The elixir of life” exists for both of these types but the difference would be in its application within the typological space.

The full circle type is summed up as becoming one with the community or society in Japan. The micro choices between two cultures dissipate into a simultaneous choice of both together. The adoption of them creates a life of normalcy. Normal is defined as being able to live freely without cultural restrictions or barriers and void of cultural avoidance without disrupting the surrounding atmosphere of the host culture.

## **5.6 Chapter summary**

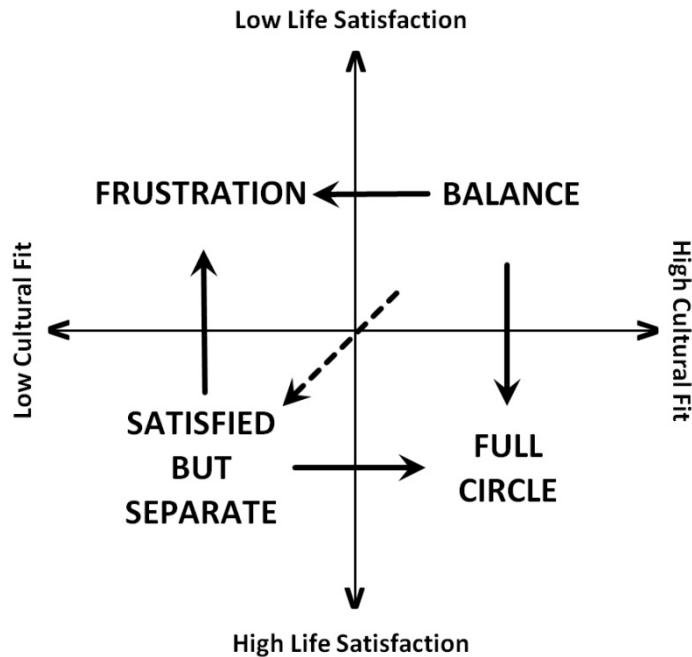
This chapter has offered a look into the framework of the four types this study has produced. From both the interviews and the survey, relevant data has been discovered to support this process. A crucial point to be remembered is these types are not applicable to newbie western foreigners who have been living in Japan shorter than the applied criteria. The concept is that after 10 years of living in Japan westerners will find themselves within these specific types. There are also gradations that should be kept in mind.<sup>31</sup> Some westerners will find themselves in a quadrant within one of the types with a tendency to be close to the border of another type. For example, Tom who would be placed in the satisfied but separated type may

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<sup>31</sup> Found at the beginning of this chapter: Figure 4-1

also be closer to the border of the frustrated group, while Judi would be in the full circle slightly located near the satisfied but separated due to her open use of the “gaijin card.” Then there are those who completely fit into a specific type. Carlo is satisfied but separated. His style is based on being a foreigner, which is his strength and even though his life as a business challenges constantly, he is fulfilled with his position. The full circle would be occupied by Ann and Dan, who seemingly have few to no barriers in their lives and would be good models for this type. While I subjectively apply the types to several of the respondents, I will remind the reader that the types are states in which inherent change would natural (**Figure 4-2**). Gravitating from one type to another is possible. The frustration and full circle may be more solidified to their position, while the satisfied but separate and the balance are more likely to be influx.

**Figure 4-2: Typological mobility image of LTW in Japan.**



The frustrated type maintains a low cultural fit and personally feels they have received very little from living in Japan and would leave if given the opportunity. They still experience an identity crisis. They feel they are not seen as whom they are and feel they are incorrectly

labeled by host culture members as shown in the testimony above. In many cases, their window of opportunity to leave the country has closed after being out of their own country's job market for a long period of time creating a void of decision.

The balanced type, as mentioned before, is in a moratorium. They maintain a willingness to explore with hopes to integrate into the host culture, but find they fluctuate in their feelings during the negotiating periods. They are challenged regularly to create their own place within their communal surroundings. Theoretically, this type is the most transitional and those in it will eventually gravitate to another type.

The satisfied but separated type show they have enough flexibility to live in Japan, but also choose to avoid linguistic or cultural environments which will cause them stress. This avoidance displays a low cultural fit unlike the full circle types. In sync with the full circle, satisfied but separated types also enjoy a high life satisfaction. The difference is found in their core identity which is connected to more internationally based groups. Japanese who speak English or are normally a part of such an international environment are often found mixed within these groups. Even though this type is considered satisfied, there are studies showing separation from the host culture by first generation migrants can have a negative downward assimilation effect on the second generation (Portes et al 2005).

The last of the four types draws a picture of subjects acquiring full agency within the cultural bounds. No restraints are felt. The flexibility to move in and out of the two cultures without stress shows high communicative skills and cultural fit resulting in high satisfaction. They still maintain their own nationality which acts as proof that even those who have deeply integrated into the Japanese host culture most likely will never achieve the full assimilation as seen in past immigration studies in other countries like the United States or the United Kingdom.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

### **6.1 Methodological limitations**

Before this dissertation comes to its conclusion, both the methodological limitations and points of discussion should be covered. First and foremost, the sample used in this study is not truly randomized. Although the large majority of respondents had no direct connection to the researcher, there are many incidences of respondents being two or three separations away from the researcher. This procedure was painstakingly followed. Some surveys were tested with acquaintances. Those forms were not used in the final sample. Another difficulty is a clear definition of the criteria. All the possible combinations of respondents' situations and the various ways they have been connected to Japan throughout their life were difficult to include. Someone who has lived on an American base when they were a child, but then returned 15 years later to become a teacher is one example of how this study's criteria was vulnerable to various interpretations. There are also limitations with race and gender. African Americans or Asians who grew up in Australia will often have very different experiences than Caucasians from the same country. In these cases, more specific studies should be done to clarify those differences. While gender resulted in a split in some of the results of the survey, LGBT genders were not covered. This could also be a topic for future researchers. Even the breakdown of ethnic groups within the white classification is a difficult task. WASP whites have a culturally different history than ethnic whites. Some examples of this are those who are British answered they are Scottish, Welsh, English or Irish (Northern Ireland) for nationality or an Italian or Greek American versus a WASP American. These differences in cultural backgrounds will result for various anomalies in the findings of this study.

Moving beyond the criteria, the interviews proved to be an interesting source of information, but at the same time, as a researcher, I realized the tripartite division (Goodman 2002) of responses was difficult to recognize at times due to my own inexperience as an interviewer. People state their case in an interview as they wish it to be perceived but it is up to the researcher to observe what is

really going on. Out of the 25 people interviewed, some were frank, while others contradicted themselves at times. This can be observed throughout the interviews. For example: “I can speak Japanese without any trouble” but later in the interview talks about trouble with the language even in simple situations. These contradictions are difficult to catch the first time around, but are easier to spot once the transcripts were reviewed several times. The limitation of such a process is based on the researcher, so these can be very subjective observations. Such limitations could possibly be overridden through a strict quantitative approach such as research performed by Praag and Ferrer-i-Carbonell (2008) in their study on life satisfaction. They attempted to eliminate error and past biased hypothesizing through large randomized samples. The quantitative data collected for this study would be considered small and not random, so this should be taken into account when observing the results.

## **6.2 Discussion**

More so than the limitations of this study, the expansion from this study holds numerous possibilities. In general this research is not focused on the Japanese host culture. It is rather how westerners react and adapt within the Japanese construct and cultural context over the long-term. Therefore the focus on the navigation through the host culture rather than the intricate detailed parts of the host culture is important to recognize. The typological classification of the different styles of connections within the current system is the primary goal of this study. The types will be summarized later in this conclusion. It must be realized to reach this final conclusion many other interesting topics and research possibilities needed to be circumvented. This avoidance was not rooted in disinterest but rather an understanding that the proper research needed to cover such topics would require more time and pages. Topics such as “third culture kids” (Dewaele et al 2009), which found second generation immigrant children score high on cultural empathy and open mindedness, but lower on emotional stability. Testing such a theory in the Japanese construct

would have been interesting and possibly a good source of information for many LTWs who have or plan to have a family in Japan.

Raising children often arose in the interviews and was also inquired about in three of the survey items. When it appeared in the interviews the focus was kept on how the situation related to the respondent. One would be how Chris felt when dealing with other parents at school gatherings and his decision to remain separated from such situations whenever possible. These types of examples were allowed but if respondents wanted to talk about how to raise bilingual or bicultural children in detail, the topic was often changed. This was a choice made to stay on topic, even though such topics are of great interest to many LTW, such topics do not serve a purpose in this study.

The education system in Japan is another topic which could be taken on as a deep research theme. It was limited to only comments on how subjects functioned within the system rather than discussing the intricacies of the system. There was one four part survey item which asked respondents to rate the Japanese school system. The purpose of such a question is meant to observe their satisfaction with the education system from beginning to end. This item displayed a clear drop in confidence as the system progresses into the university level which got the lowest scores. This is a clear sign a decision should be made whether or not western parents will send their children overseas for university or remain within the domestic system.

The most commonly talked about topics was children of international marriage. The term “half” was mentioned in this paper and covered slightly, but it wasn’t covered nearly as much as it deserves. While performing this research, many informal discussions took place with children of various ages who are “half”. The most common response is by those who have been brought up in the Japanese school system is they just feel Japanese and do not really see themselves as anything else. One theory may find the root of conflict is with the parents who are most likely coming from a multicultural society, and are used to hyphenated nationalities. They are not willing to submit to the fact their child identifies solely with their Japanese side. This does not mean the children

disavow their parents' nationality, but they view it in a different way their parents wish them to. This is only a theory but would make for an interesting research question.

It was natural for many of the respondents to bring up the topic of international marriage. The criteria of this study naturally finds many couples who have been married for well over a decade. While admittedly some mentioned they had some bumps at the beginning of their relationships, whether those bumps were cultural or personality linked is hard to determine without research. Marriage would be seen differently by the different types as concluded by this study. Divorce rates and living conditions of international marriages were also not covered in this study due to the depth of the topic. Divorce among international marriages alone is such a vast topic covering various nationalities with various rates and reasons of divorce. Couples who divorce with children discover problems and a different view of visitation rights within Japanese society. All of these points make for an enormous and emotional task to take on for any researcher, but it would be beneficial to research relationship patterns to discover which are more likely to divorce. Internationally, marriage can be seen as a dream or ideal for some Japanese, but the reality must be understood which makes this topic ripe for research.

In Ann's interview, followed by the support of others mentioned western women are less likely to get married to a Japanese national if they do not speak Japanese. This is connected to the role expectations of most Japanese men, who view the wife as the social connector for the family at school and within the neighborhood community. This was also reflected in the numbers of female respondents on the survey who seems to be experience higher levels of stress than males. As mentioned earlier, sex was shown to play a role in various differences, but so did age. Westerners entering Japan who are more than 40 years of age tend to be less likely to learn the language and rely more on the social and professional skills they have acquired in their home country to find work. They already come with an established background of experience which benefits them in some areas, but limits them in areas such as language and cultural flexibility. These are subjective,

but consistent observations from this research. Both of these topics would also make interesting hypotheses for future research.

### **6.2.1 Typological conclusion**

This research all started with a simple idea to retrace my great grandfather and grandfather's integrative patterns as they entered a new country with a different language and culture. While the comparison stops at this simple juncture, this could be viewed as a future seed for research. As westerners began to be more accurately classified as group, many commonly accepted concepts of adaptation began to seem more bias than accurate. Economically westerners tend to have an advantage over other foreign groups, but the psychological and sociocultural hurdle is where the questions are found. This paper theorizes there are various types of LTW which form identities within the host culture using hybrid styles to seamlessly navigate through their daily interactions. The four types of identity status for westerners in Japan: *frustration, balance, satisfied but separated* and *full circle* are not solid labels but rather exist on a fluid grid within each type to adjust for the flexible nature of various life styles. Due to the historical and cultural differences of various respondents, the complexity of the interwovenness of identity must be recognized as a never-ending work in progress (Hall and Du Gay 1996). Berger and Luckmann's (1967) social construction of reality and how it is always in flux. The typological results in this study allow for such flexibility and slight movement within each type as well as moving over to a different type all together. This flexibility is crucial to the reliability of the types, but is still susceptible to bias.

The empirical approach to find what was needed to form the types was done both through the collection of qualitative and quantitative data. Both forms of data offer valuable information which lead to many new discoveries on a micro level as well as elements which helped with the construction of a foundation needed to test identity from various angles.

### **6.2.3 Observations generated from the interviews**

Interview quotes will be inserted to conclude and summarize observations made throughout this dissertation. While the quotes may be new, the concepts are the same as shown through this paper. This research can confirm and solidly agree with Komisarof's statement, "To write an exhaustive list of points that one need to adhere to in Japan, or a foolproof 'recipe for belonging', is probably impossible (2012: p.205)." Identifying caveats to chip away at the large barriers is the most effective way to proceed with such research. Baby steps rather than large leaps are required, which is a process only achieved through patience and consistent research. As shown through this study, 100% assimilation is nearly impossible as it is seen as unnecessary by LTWs and the host culture members but hybrid styles of integration are possible. Understanding the relevance of even mini-victories is important. As Tim explains:

There's always going to be a certain degree. I think I'm never going to get over this feeling of difference. As an outsider, I'll be outside the system to some degree. It's kind of a weird feeling, because starting in two weeks I will be the *hancho* in my neighborhood. They're totally cool with it. I'm like, "I'm not Japanese." They're like, "Well, you live here. You're fine. You're our *hancho* now." Again, we have a nice neighborhood. We moved into the area, they deliberately made five new houses, we bought one. The guy who built them deliberately aimed it at families that had one or two kids, because they wanted to have more kids in the area. The older people were like, "Thank God, you moved in. Now it's not just a bunch of retirees." They were worried the community would collapse. Again, we're very lucky to be in this area. There's always a tiny bit of dissatisfaction, but I'm generally very satisfied with my situation. (Tim: 10)

General stable satisfaction within your community makes westerners feel at home and in Tim's case very needed. There were other testimonials, like Theresa's, who said they felt ignored by their neighbors. Low satisfaction within your community creates a communication breakdown as well as involuntary separation resulting in an environment less likely to promote the self-sameness with a host-culture group needed to form an identity.

Other finds over the past several years of research have shown some evidence of correlation of the importance of cultural fit over language skills. Past studies of expatriates in Japan have shown how language is an important piece to successfully adjust to life in Japan (Peltokorpi 2008). O'Keefe (2016) has shown this to only be partially true in its quantitative study. This dissertation

also has evidence within the qualitative work that high level language ability does not always promote high culturally integrative success. This was shown in the case of Tom, who although professionally successful, would rather remain separated from host culture situations whenever possible. He described his situation like this:

I don't know if I ever had that in the first place when I was in America. I've always been a bit of an eccentric, a bit of a loner, a high functioning...introvert, so I've never really felt that I belonged in anywhere that I've ever lived in my life. I've always felt one or two steps removed from the things ..... That sort of relayed to what I was saying earlier about how Japan gave me a very visceral and very sensation and vivid picture, of what I said before, the "phoniness" of social interactions. In order to maintain your status, and in order to not be run out of town on a rail or lynched, you can't always say what you want to say or what you're thinking. You definitely can't do that. You always have to have some consciousness of your position, your situation, your status vis-a-vis other people. More or less, you say the things that are going to let you navigate with as little trouble as possible and hopefully get you some good things. (Tom: 4)

In Tom's case, his high level language skills may be his best tool of navigation away from the situations he would prefer not to be a part of. He knows he cannot be the brash American, but must sustain his position while defining himself. Burke et al (2009) concluded communicating in the host language with host nationals resulted in a slight advantage when integrating but does not eliminate frustration or willful separation. The one attribute which arose time and again was the state of the original mindset, stability, and flexibility of the individual's personality from the beginning of their life in Japan. This seems to affect the depth of their integration. Although, this is one of the seeds, it does not place individuals into the fully integrated types such as full circle or the satisfied but separate. They rather start in the balance, because they still need to define many cultural situations found in life in Japan. Joseph's attitude reflects this:

Japan as a country is not that different from any ... if you are any foreigner; it's not that different from the others. So I think the first thing you need is a necessity to go overseas, to live overseas, that means that the life you will get overseas has got to be better than the life you get home. It's a necessity of finding a better life outside your country. And the second is family that makes you stay in the country you are. Because of the commitments you have with your family members. Third is just the passion for anything. Maybe in Japan you have somebody that likes eating things, like there's a lot of food around. Or doing things. There are many, many hobbies you can have. But I don't think that's just because of Japan. If you want to live overseas, you need to have these three elements.(Joseph: 3-4)

Joseph's "three elements" seem clear in his mind, but as we will see later in the typological results, this does not mean he eliminates difference from the host culture. Throughout this study similar statements reflect that confidence is more representative of the individual's philosophy and personal history mixed with their current level of cultural understanding. The early recognition that certain traits or abilities promote integrative success could be invaluable to those who are trying to make a decision to stay for the long-term in Japan. Knowing whether someone fits or not could help make the decision easier while recognizing what adjustments need to be part of their personal commitment to live in the host cultural.

#### **6.2.4 Qualitative differences for male and female**

Throughout the survey, variance between male and female respondents turned out many interesting results. This section will not dive into the numbers but will present certain items within the survey which can be added as a part of a group of mini-conclusions or discoveries. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the mini-discoveries are abundant and could easily be used as seeds for future work.

Starting off with job security, Q44 revealed how 30.8% of men feel more secure at their job while women only agreed at 18.3%. This question is open for some debate as work security could also entail how quickly they find a new job after losing one. Although men seem to identify with women's trouble in the Japanese workplace as Q52 shows when combining those who agree and strongly agree with men at 60.2% and women with 55.1%. This same understanding by male respondents repeated itself again when combining the top two agreeing scores in Q51. 51.7% of men recognize women as having more social trouble than men followed by 45% of women answering the same.

Socially women have shown throughout the study to be in contact with the culture more due to social roles they take on, especially if they are married to a Japanese national and have children. One observation was how none of the interview respondents could think of foreign women who had

married a Japanese national and could not speak Japanese at a somewhat decent level. The opposite was true for men. This was somewhat reflected in Q73, which asked if westerners can lead a functional life without the language. 35.5% of men and 52.5% of women either disagreed or strongly disagreed. This result shows that women over the long-term recognize the necessity of language. Men agreed their personalities are suited for Japan at 52.5% while women responded with 41.7%.

Most of the questions touching on cultural interactions showed some sort of variance between the sexes. Items such as Q69 resulted in 21.3% of women agreeing that they have had a cultural mishap, which has made them question their existence in Japan. This was only experienced by 11% of men. This result displays women as more susceptible to cultural friction. In Q86, 39.7% of women agreed they had experienced microaggressions with men responding with 26%. Those who are sensitive to cultural misunderstandings such as microaggressions will experience them with more host culture based interactions. This result would make sense, due to women being more connected to the culture through traditional Japanese family duties. Women also responded with 30.9% saying they have felt discrimination from their in-laws. Men responded at half that number with 25.2%. Q70 displays women as having a support group more than men do. Men reported in at 47.2% and women at 64.5% when combining the responses for agreeing or strongly agreeing. This is a fairly large variance which displays the social connections women have and reflects the higher levels of cultural stress they may be experiencing. Further proof of this cultural connectivity women have is that they are more frequently told that they are “like Japanese.” 28.1% of women strongly agreed to being told that they are “like Japanese” compared to 18% of men.

### **6.3 Other significant quantitative data**

Other than the variances between the sexes, significant data about the respondents as a whole can be found in the results of additional items. One undeniable fact is for those who wish to live in Japan; they need to understand the culture. This does not necessarily refer to cultural

activities or traditional arts, but rather the system which they interact with on a daily basis. 63.7% (agree and strongly agree combined) of respondents believe to understand the culture requires learning the language. 21.5% were in the middle on this item, but the overwhelming evidence show the importance of the language. Language was also labeled as one of the major commitments which promote successful integration.

The strong “yes” for Q29 and Q30, which inquired about dual citizenship and whether or not they would like the right to vote in all elections, also shows the commitment to staying in country. 76.5% said they were interested in dual citizenship followed by 78% wanting full voting rights. This reflects an astounding commitment to their adopted country and policies should be seriously approached as to be modified in the future. It was shown that this commitment to the country changed over the years for many of the respondents. Q13 and Q14 revealed the reasons respondents came to Japan and why they stay differ. Many came for work and/or adventure in that order, while many still stay for work, the quality of life and family also make the list. Once family has been established, the connection to the country also becomes inevitable whether this connection is voluntary or not depends on which type they fall into. LTW wanting to be linked through citizenship or through voting representation, as shown in Q29 and Q30, is a logical outcome.

#### **6.4 Types**

The major contribution this study makes is the formation of the types as presented in Chapter 5 which creates a visualization of how LTW developed over time in Japan. The criterion of a minimum of 10 years consistently in the country makes this study standout from past studies on LTW in Japan. The types are not meant to apply to those still in the earlier stages of integration. Ten years is a very arbitrary number, but was usually argued only by those with less than 10 years in the country, but never refuted even once by those with than 10 years. This final section will briefly summarize how attributes from the hybrid model are applied to each type. The quotes used

are not stating the specific individual belongs in said type, but the quote must be seen as a representation or in some cases a maxim of the type itself.

The types themselves are also not four solid types to place westerners into. It offers the flexibility of a quadratic form where each subject would be represented in various degrees within the type. In the end, any placement of individuals in the quadrants would be considered subjective in nature. The point of this research was to conclude how westerners assimilate into a host culture that is infamous for it being labeled an impossibility to do so. If assimilation is defined as completely taking on the adopted nation's citizenry as seen in multicultural countries like the United States or United Kingdom, then it is near impossible. The hybrid model and subsequently the formation of the types were created to answer this conundrum. As stated earlier in this paper, this research has found integration into the Japanese host culture is not a swirl of cultures uniting like a candy cane, but rather two colors mixing to create a whole new color.

Depending on the type, some may be unwillingly anchored to the country for various reasons. Others face limitations due to language ability, while others thrive in the unobtrusive "live and let live" culture of Japan by living parallel not interwoven with it. There is little evidence that a westerner will assimilate completely into the Japanese context without preparation from a young age. This is not to say the situation is discriminatory, but rather preferred by some westerners to maintain a healthy mix of what they choose to be. As shown in the research, this may be the current state of many successfully integrated foreigners. The factors used to determine the four types start with the needed existence of some level of cultural fit. The levels of life satisfaction as well as language ability were also taken into consideration. Friends, family and/or group activity could also be connected to the host culture and/or a more internationally based one within the borders of Japan. Finally, the presence or abundance of perceived discrimination and microaggressions was also a part of determining attributes of each type. While both systemic as well as culturally bred discrimination have been well documented in Japan, this research found little evidence of LTWs who allow this to affect their lives uncontrollably. Some have developed

specific coping mechanisms which help actively control feelings of discrimination. Others stated learning the language has bridged some parts of the gap which often bred misunderstandings. Terms for specific identity types can help define levels of stability as well as how they will be applied for each type such as identity diffusion, moratorium, foreclosure and identity achievement (Marcia 1980). The importance of which groups and community they have connected with to form a self-sameness is also of great importance when deciding which type an individual will fall under.

#### **6.4.1 Frustration**

All the types are the result of a combination of the components found in the hybrid model including both the catalysts and styles of belonging as highlighted in Chapter 4. Language skills were not necessarily a major determinant of which type respondents would fall under. Although a respondent with the lack of or the presence of language skills would most likely experience a different form of frustration. The existence of language ability is often transformed into a buffer to explain their frustrations and to self-validate their personal observations. While they are linguistically connected, they may not fit within the cultural context of Japan. Frustrated non-speakers, as explained in the interviews, may not recognize certain subtleties or definitions of certain situations in the Japanese context. This lack of recognition could develop into deep frustrations. They are convinced their years of experience in Japan mean they understand everything going on around them. But lack of linguistic input from their surroundings limits their access to a full understanding of what is happening around them. Friendships for non-speakers also add to their limited access, as it would be unlikely for their English-speaking Japanese friends to provide feedback after listening to their frustrations. Japanese friends are very good listeners, but in many cases will refrain from giving advice because of constructed roles in the relationship. Frustrated types will often score low or below average on life satisfaction and cultural fit. They have low commitment to their career and would most likely leave Japan if they could find work which would allow for an

economic life style similar to what they currently have. This lack of commitment creates fewer choices and exposure to situations which may promote advancement. This situation can result in a diffusion of identity, which self-marginalizes the individual.

Professional success can be observed in the frustrated type, but most likely they will leave the country whenever they have a long break. The reason for leaving is usually to get away from the stress of Japan rather than solely for family visitation purposes. Comparisons to how things in their own country are fairer and more logical are often extensions of ethnocentric thinking. The *othering* of other foreigners who have made attempts to integrate are often seen as sell-outs by the frustrated types. Group connections within the host culture are weak. They show little to no psychological or sociocultural adaptation, which can cause mental instability. They display constant resistance and dissonant acculturation (Portes and Rumbaut 2005). They are often connected to Japan through work or marriage. They struggle daily and often have a hard time describing the origins of their feelings of frustration. They view their existence in Japan as sacrifice and struggle. Carlo sums up such a feeling:

Being in Japan all this time is not free, it's not without its sacrifices. It's not free what we did here. Staying here was not without its sacrifices. We've missed out on many things back home, if you will.

My language suffers. English, even, suffers. I cannot communicate, arguably, I cannot communicate in English at the level of my education would suggest. My practice is down. My vocabulary is down. My communication techniques with the western world, interacting, has to be affected all this time. That's not free, that's a damage, that's a setback. The opportunities that were available have gone and past. I can go back to America, but if I apply for a job or something in America, I have very limited experience, working experience, in America in very limited fields. I'm fifty years old plus; how employable am I in this day and life and world. Yeah, so being here was not without its sacrifice.

...I asked "Was it worth it?"....

How does one measure if it was worth twenty plus years? Was it a good investment? Was it a good decision? Every day you ask yourself that. Every day, I think, people in my position we ask ourselves that, because we read the paper now and the shit is fucked up over there. Do we really want to leave and put up with that? Now, as adults, I'm not twenty something anymore, an adventurer or backpacker, the way I arrived here; as an adult we have different values. It's clean and safe here. We can make a living. We have friends around us, it's fun.

How do you compare the pluses of *Japanese city name* with *city name in the U.S.A.* or other places that you might consider moving to? Can I do business here? Am I happy doing the business I'm currently in? Happy? Yeah. Completely satisfied? No, because my business is rough; it deals with intake of poison every day. It deals with a very, very, what do you call it, people-centric.

Very relationship oriented and every day you're dealing with people full on. The best thing about the business is the people. The worst thing about the business is the people. I like to say pretty often that I'm in the middle of people all the time and they will, if I let them, they will love me to death. They will love me to death.

Yes. I get praised and more than my share, but I'm always being, like crows, being picked at, in the nature of my business....Picked apart every day and I have to be resilient and block that.

Here and physically. Another drink, come on, you can do it, let's go. Physically and mentally I'm being challenged all the time, attacked all the time. From the outside looking in, "Carlo owns his own business, he rolls around in nice khakis, always in a good mood." That's in my nature to be in a good mood, I like smiling. The sun is enough to make me smile...Again, the enigma, what makes this guy so happy? (Carlo: 6-7)

Carlos struggle is apparent. He smiles a lot. He was also a pleasure to interview, but obviously has an inner struggle which has taken him years to work through. The instability of doing business in a foreign country, plus the nature of his business places added stress and pressure on him to maintain his existence in Japan. In many ways, Carlo has mastered doing business in a volatile setting. He is used to struggling in his business and has the strength to continue forward even though he has stated that his past has not always been that stable. He may have some failures in business, but his successes and ability to continue reflect a strong conscious effort to succeed. There are individuals who may use this same situation to retreat away from the culture, but Carlo dives into it every day. Professional success keeps many people anchored to the country longer than they had planned. Tom often displayed throughout his interview that he is not satisfied with his current situation, but professes this about his professional career:

You've got lemons, you make lemonade, and there's a certain amount of lemons falling in my lap as I've been here. I'm not so pretentious to think that I would've had a gig as good as I have now if I had stayed in America the whole time. I probably would've kept being a goofball for a lot longer than I did by moving here, and who knows what I'd be doing now. (Tom: 4)

This is a clear statement showing he is at odds with his life in Japan. He was also quoted as saying in an earlier chapter that his overall feeling "...adds up to a constant dull roar of cultural stress" (Tom: 5). This description is a good example of a feeling which cannot be described or

summed up with one incident, but rather a constant feeling of not fitting into his surroundings. Women actually showed a significantly higher result for strongly agreeing with their professional satisfaction than men.<sup>1</sup> In Tom's case he has made up his mind where he fits or more accurately does not fit into the community around him.

#### **6.4.2 Balance**

Out of all the types, the balance type is the most transitory. It is a state of moratorium in which they are developing psychological and sociocultural adaptation techniques. Portes and Rumbaut (2005) used the term constant acculturation as an adaptive state. But the balance type could theoretically continue for years into an individual's life in Japan. The commitments as discussed in Chapter 4 could still be in progress and yet to come to fruition. One of the major attributes is an open mind for change, but many of their frustrations are still perceived as cultural trouble. The "us" and "them" paradigm is still apparent when they discuss culture. Their life satisfaction is tentative and cultural fit is still being established. They try to remain flexible when cultural differences arise. Connections to certain groups or community affiliations may be an accurate determiner of their future typological placement. Then they could subsequently move to either the satisfied but separate or the full circle type. When asked if people loose themselves in Japan, Cathy reversed it like this:

For a lot of those people, they find themselves here, right? They don't get lost here, they get found here because this is more comfortable for them, depending on the degree to which they integrate. Certainly, there are people who escaped the expectations of their own culture and come here and just want to be party on until they kick the bucket, and be exempt from responsibility there and responsibility here and there are certainly those types. Would you classify them as lost? I don't know. Not really lost, I think they are where they want to be. People like the colleague I mentioned; he is so completely comfortable here. He revels in his life here. You could tell he just rings the most meaning out of it, he loves being here. I know a couple of people like that. That's not me, but for them, they're just very, very satisfied with life here. (Cathy: 3)

Cathy talks of the choices westerners make in their lives in Japan and recognizes the different styles of adaptation. She also stated when referring to some LTW that "they find

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix pg. A-13: Q61

themselves here..." While her observation is correct, there is more to it than that. Through this study's research we have found they actually fit well in the Japanese construct due to their inherent traits they most likely had before ever even arriving in Japan.

It was not uncommon to find slight contradictions in statements from individuals as they begin to explain their theories of living in Japan or overseas. Earlier in Joseph's interview he mentioned his aversion to seeing living in Japan as any different from living anywhere else. This is a positive outlook, but it does not mean that he sees himself as fitting in. He explains it like this:

I have said this in the other question. I don't think there is a formula for living in Japan but there is a formula for living overseas. It could be personality because you need to make a lot of effort from what you ever need because it's more difficult when you go overseas. Everything is more difficult because you need to learn a lot of new things.

... Because you can never be able to do the same things as the people that lived here. In the same way, it's not possible. Because it's just you are cut in different way. So you need to find a way to use your qualities that could be language, could be a technical knowledge. There's another guy, I was telling you about. He was working in Italy and he's technically knowledgeable about electronics and now is doing work on batteries. He's using more of his technical skills rather than language skills and also managerial skills because he's now in this, not only looking at the technical side but also the commercial side. And if there was no commercial side to what he's doing, that would be only technical. And that wouldn't be much reason to keep him in the company instead of any other Japanese person because he's just slower in reading the material or understanding things. It just would not make much sense.

He's got this qualities and he's using them. And the company is accepting the fact that he's got some defects in his skills but those are ... he can make up for those in other ways. And that is profitable for company... If I could not speak English or Italian. Or if I didn't have this ... if I was not the link between Japan and Italy... if I was not working in marketing, then I would probably ... because I have the qualities that I have, I would probably be working in the production. And I think it would be kind of difficult for me to keep up with the other people (Japanese) doing things the same way they do. Because it would be more difficult for me to do that. (Joseph: 4)

This is the key to the balance type. This period of discovering where and how you realistically contribute to your surroundings. Once discovered, confidence will grow which results in advancement into one of the more stable types.

#### **6.4.3 Satisfied but separated**

The lower half of the typological quadrant finds the two types which are considered connected to a community and solidly have found a self-sameness within them. Both of these types can also

apply selective acculturation (Portes and Rumbaut 2005). The satisfied but separated type is summarized through several observations. These observations start with a fairly high level of satisfaction in their life, but tend to display a low cultural fit. They do not dislike the host culture but rather prefer to be less involved whenever possible. The mastery is shown through their style of separation as to not disrupt host culture dominated situations. They have achieved psychological adaption, but not on sociocultural level. This type often is more likely to be a part of foreign based groups mixed with Japanese who follow the co-culture's rules creating a subordinate role for the host-culture within the co-culture group. Perceived discrimination is lower in this group due to their learned ability to define situations that may be deemed discrimination by frustration or balance types. Microaggressions can still affect them which constitute as one of the reasons they may stay away from host culture dominated situations. The “us” and “them” paradigm is also still found in conversations with this type. Japanese ability, as shown in all the types, is only applicable for communication purposes, while it promotes high levels connectivity, it does not always give them high compatibility with the host culture.

The separation this type has created does not mean they necessarily live in a bubble. Those with language skills have highly functional lives and some may be active with selected groups. The difference is they are active in controlled mixed groups or foreign based ones that offer a more relaxing atmosphere which allows them to have control over the rules of play to create their preferred situation. The basis for the separation has varying reasons from person to person. Anything from cultural, social construction to ethnocentrism could define the separation. They may be more likely to use the “gaijin card” to benefit themselves. While this could be observed as the freestyle type due to its various styles, they maintain a functional and often successful lifestyle. They have plans, goals and connections to a community and fit the criteria to have formed a solid identity within it. They have made conscious commitments or have active positive catalysts that promote identity formation. A downfall to such a separation by first generation westerners can

affect their children's assimilation. Either selective acculturation or segmented assimilative processes can attribute to negative assimilation for the second generation (Portes et al 2005).

One of the interview respondents summed up this type in a short but accurate quote. He was asked what kind of person lives in Japan for 20 years. He replied:

Crazy people (jokingly). I think people who are, who are open minded. You have to be open minded to live here. And people who are also very flexible. I think if you're a really rigid person you're not going to make it here. Someone who's very tolerant, and also patient. The daily stress, the stressful things you encounter, you have to have patience. (Garry: 6)

When given the chance to describe what he thinks what kind of westerners live in Japan for 20 years, he jokingly replied "crazy people". His joke shows he is consciously aware that some LTW live in a way that would, in some ways, be considered crazy due to sacrifices made over the years to develop into what they have become. His other answers are also very informative. He understands the open mindedness and the necessity of flexibility while also mentioning tolerance and patience. These are all attributes found in the full circle type as well. The difference is in the cultural stresses he experiences and the subsequent separation it. The separation is maintained for preventative reasons and for the self-preservation of their psychological adaptive success and the development of a hybrid identity. The presence of this trait is especially a key to being plotted in the satisfied but separated or possibly the balance if the individual has not settled yet. In Garry's case, the stress he feels is not the out of control marginalized feeling found in the frustrated type, but a manageable position. It is managed through patience, tolerance and open mindedness.

#### **6.4.4 Full circle**

The full circle (FC) type has reached a normalization of their life within the Japanese context. They observed to display both a high level of life satisfaction and cultural fit. They do not operate within a cultural or linguistically challenged bubble, but comfortably blend into their surroundings. They have made solid commitments which connect them to the host culture in necessary spheres of influence. The full circle types interviewed for this research such as Ann or Dan have in no way

assimilated to become like a Japanese, but rather the formation of a hybrid identity perfectly matches what they wish to be while protecting parts of their own cultural core. Their identity is connected to the Japanese community, and if necessary an international community as well. The full circle does not cover *soto komori* as spoke of in Chapter 5, but they rather embrace any opportunities equally whether they come from Japanese or western community. It may be natural for them to have more non-English speaking Japanese friends rather than other westerners or English speaking Japanese, because this fairly reflects the demographics around them. Technically they do not have to speak Japanese. The argument that someone with high energy, patience and low language ability could exist without the feeling of restriction should be left open. This would be rather rare if it occurs at all. The connection FC types have made to Japan is deep, but does not bind them to the country. They will choose to move back to their home country for normal life decisions such as family, professional, or retirement reasons. While living in Japan, they prefer not to use the “gaijin card” too often. They see it as holding back their progress within the Japanese context. FC acknowledges their cultural differences and uses them to redefine situations which can be appreciated by host culture members. This high level of functionality allows for psychological and sociocultural adaptation leading to identity achievement within the host culture’s contextual boundaries.

This section will finish with a few quotes that sum up the concept of the full circle. The results often revealed people just living a normal life without much of the excitement of cultural peaks and valleys. For example Donald explained conflicts like this:

The bad things I've had tended to be related to individuals as opposed to cultural things. I had a problem with a university and it was with a couple of people in the university and the way they were not particularly honest about things. (Donald: 4)

Donald makes a simple statement, which reflects a theme throughout his interview. He has gone beyond the “us” and “them” paradigm and sees individuals as individuals rather than cultural representatives of their country. This is a seemingly small step, but a step few would make in frustrating situations of conflict in which the culture can easily be blamed. Donald would mostly

likely point out cultural differences, but only when they are truly so. He seemed to fairly judge situations and proved this throughout his interview. Dan was similar in this way. Dan has found his sweet spot of functionality in Japan and described it this way:

I found a niche. I'm in the community. I'm in the business community, but I'm definitely using my skills in teaching English and business. I tend to have far fewer problems hiring school teachers than a lot of the Japanese school owners I know. It doesn't mean that every person that came from America necessarily has that skill, but I think coming from America definitely makes that easier. A lot of the things that Japanese owners complain about, I understand, root of where it's coming from. (Dan: 5-6)

Dan can visualize his advantage. He created a situation which allows him the freedom to grow and feel independent within the Japanese construct. He performs all of the sales for his company and networking in Japanese himself. The respondent Ann was very similar in her level of functionality. This high functionality and connectedness offers them flexibility to learn and grow as part of their complete surroundings. There is a possibility that non-Japanese speaking LTW could function in the Tokyo area without Japanese skills, but such a case would limit movement outside of the region. David's statement seen earlier in Chapter 2 saying that "Japan does not need one more imitation Japanese person" sums up the ideal image of FC. He is basically stating the importance of protecting the self while maintaining a working relationship within the Japanese constructed community to improve or expand on it and in essence forming a hybrid identity.

## 6.5 Conclusion

This study along with other research performed throughout my doctoral candidacy has revealed many points to reflect upon. While the creation of the types was one of the major challenges, other applications of how this information could be utilized are another. The number of foreign students coming to Japan is on the rise. While the majority is from Asia, western foreign students will also most likely continue to increase as well. This information provides some caveats needed to be implemented into a long term plan to live in Japan. Most students will return to their countries, but those who wish to stay should weigh their compatibility with the host culture before giving years of their life only to find out they are not compatible. This goes especially for non-

metropolitan areas which tend to offer a larger cultural gap than the metro areas in Japan. This study also can act as a resource for those who already live in Japan, but due to the bubble effects of the types were unaware of some of the various hybrid styles used by other LTWs living in Japan.

Discovering that cultural fit, and not language, was the major factor for a successful identity formation, was a substantial finding (O'Keefe 2016). This will be met some resistance, because it breaks away from the common thought. Research cannot be successful unless something new is discovered. Just confirming a commonly held belief would not be much of a contribution to anyone. As O'Keefe (2016) showed this common belief can be challenged within the construct of Japan. Language is important, but the successfully well-integrated FC type needs to also have a cultural fit to seamlessly navigate the gaps the Japanese community presents. Cultural fit does not reflect only successful employment, but also the non-existence of a cultural bubble around the subject. If cultural biases or values were sacrificed or suppressed just for work or relationships purposes, frustrations could develop after years in the country as those suppressed feelings naturally return to an individual's awareness.

When asked to explain their own integrative styles as well as other LTWs around them in Japan, respondents brought up personalities more than any other trait. Whether it was their personality enabling them to become interwoven with the host culture or that their introverted behavior somehow fit better in Japan rather than their own country. LTW observed with the highest forms of mobility and flexibility within the culture are the ones who became necessary within the system they belonged to. This necessity always went beyond just being a westerner foreigner, but they have a skill which allows them to perform an irreplaceable role within the system or community they have created or belong to. This is no different from how host culture members would be treated. It can be understood that LTWs who aim to be a functioning equal to the host culture members are more likely to be successful and have more autonomous movement throughout any cultural situation. "Functioning" would be defined as offering a trait that is irreplaceable rather than just a copy of what host culture members perform. Understanding the

importance of the various commitments early on in their time in Japan is a crucial step and act as a catalyst of success. People who decided and consciously commit to stay long term do better than those who “just take it as it comes.”

There are successful examples of integrative methods found in the interviews performed for this study showing how westerners integrate differently than other foreign groups—a difference allotted to them through high socio-economic status. The satisfied but separated type shape the Japanese host culture into a sort of controlled co-culture even within the borders of Japan through the use of various complexes many Japanese have about language and westerners in general. This is most likely unique to the western foreign groups only. Other minorities in Japan create their own ethnic communities which create a unique culture of their own (Morehead 2010), but when they exit it they enter back into the host culture. Westerners have the choice to use their status to control the culture around them even when interacting in a host culture setting.

The complexes many Japanese have about westerners have started to fade in recent years as Japan attempts to make its very slow ascent to a global format. The recent raising of employment standards of Japanese universities, which require new hires to hold a PhD with Japanese ability has many westerners questioning whether they will stay in Japan or not. Those who do not fit these qualifications will either need to continue their education or be willing to lead the life of an adjunct professor or contract teacher. On the other hand, Japanese companies are starting to hire more foreign staff, so employment in other fields may be on the rise albeit in the form of contract work. This would of course require fairly high language ability and a special ability to fit in the culture of any specific Japanese company. This can be a difficult career shift, as this research has shown, if an individual hadn't learned the language early in their life in Japan, it can be difficult to attain certain levels of literacy. It was revealed that those who became literate in the language did so within their first several years and were often in their 20's or early 30's when they did the brunt of their study. Although, some have learned to speak later in their stay, literacy rates seem to be apparently low for late learners. This research will hopefully act as a guide for westerners trying to

make the decision to live in Japan and understand what commitments and lifestyle adjustments will be needed to raise their success rate.

Finally, some comments on the discrimination and microaggression section covered earlier need to be made. Overall, perceived discrimination seems to decrease over time for many LTWs, which is a reflection on their ability to distinguish misunderstandings from true inherent systematic discrimination. When asked to give recent examples of systematic discrimination, very few clear examples were received. Outside of Dan's example of running into trouble trying to rent an apartment for his employee, other experiences were mostly from early in a respondent's stay and not a recent example. Microaggressions on the other hand seem to be very apparent for some of the respondents. The frustration, balance, and to some extent the satisfied but separate types tend to be affected by them the most. Those who are affected by microaggressions are more likely to have a low cultural fit than those who are not. They are recognized by all respondents, but negative reactions are observed differently depending on the type they fall under. This is an area, which could be followed up on with additional research. In the end, this researcher understands discrimination does exist in Japan, although very few LTW respondents in this study wished to spend time talking at length about it.

This research hopes to redefine the belief that although westerners cannot be 100% accepted within the Japanese construct, they can form a more highly effective hybrid style. While 49.2% of LTWs said they will never be fully accepted in Japan, this shouldn't necessarily be viewed as dissatisfaction. Some subjects have created their own hybrid space which allows more flexibility than offered by traditional full integration. In the best case scenarios, successful LTWs offer the community something, which was not there before. The process to a globally aware society is slow in Japan, but has shown to be possible on the microcosmic level through the efforts of individuals seamlessly mixed into the local communities throughout the country.

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Research of Long Term Western and European Foreign Residents in Japan  
2014.6

Research origin: Kyushu University Social and Cultural Studies Department  
Greg O' Keefe, Speciality in Japanese Society

This in-depth questionnaire investigates the integrative habits of non-military foreigners from English speaking or European countries who have lived for more than 10 years and have developed an identity in Japan. We apologize for the length of the questionnaire. We hope to take this opportunity to research a group that is rarely covered in academic work. The length of the respondent's stay is what makes this different from many past surveys. The contents of this questionnaire are confidential on an individual basis, but the results will be published in the future. This anonymity is extremely important because we are looking for real opinions, so please answer as honestly as possible. For those interested, short interviews will be held for respondents who wish to give more in depth opinions on the topic. Please circle the appropriate answers and write neatly in the case of short answers. Your care and time are very much appreciated. Thank you.

※note: for the sake of this questionnaire "foreigner" means native English speaking or European foreigners.

General Questions:		
1	How long have you lived in Japan? (10 consecutive years is the minimum)	number of years:
2	Current postal code in Japan	
3	Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> ①male <input type="checkbox"/> ②female
4	Age	
5	Country of origin	
6	Ethnicity	
7	Primary occupation (please specify: full/part-time, self employed)	
8	Secondary occupation (if applicable)	
9	What is your highest level of education?	<input type="checkbox"/> ①high school <input type="checkbox"/> ②junior college <input type="checkbox"/> ③university <input type="checkbox"/> ④graduate degree <input type="checkbox"/> ⑤doctoral degree <input type="checkbox"/> ⑥other::
10	Marital status	<input type="checkbox"/> ① married <input type="checkbox"/> ② single <input type="checkbox"/> ③ divorced <input type="checkbox"/> ④ widowed
10a	→If married, how long?	
10b	→What is your spouse's nationality?	
10c	→Number of biological children:	#
10d	→Number of step children:	#
11	What are your average expenses for one month?	<input type="checkbox"/> ①~10万 <input type="checkbox"/> ②10-20万 <input type="checkbox"/> ③20-30万 <input type="checkbox"/> ④30-40万 <input type="checkbox"/> ⑤40-50万 <input type="checkbox"/> ⑥50万~
12	How much do you spend on entertainment every month?	<input type="checkbox"/> ①~5万 <input type="checkbox"/> ②5-10万 <input type="checkbox"/> ③10-15万 <input type="checkbox"/> ④15-20万 <input type="checkbox"/> ⑤30万~
13	Why did you come to Japan? (Circle all which are applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> ①work related <input type="checkbox"/> ②self-actualization <input type="checkbox"/> ③family <input type="checkbox"/> ④marriage <input type="checkbox"/> ⑤adventure <input type="checkbox"/> ⑥fun <input type="checkbox"/> ⑦language study <input type="checkbox"/> ⑧study culture <input type="checkbox"/> ⑨other:
14	What are your primary reasons for staying in Japan? (Circle all which are applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> ①work <input type="checkbox"/> ②business <input type="checkbox"/> ③study <input type="checkbox"/> ④enjoyment <input type="checkbox"/> ⑤quality of life <input type="checkbox"/> ⑥family <input type="checkbox"/> ⑦other
15	What media do you mainly depend on for your news about Japan? (Please circle all the appropriate media)	<input type="checkbox"/> ①Internet (English) <input type="checkbox"/> ②Internet (Japanese) <input type="checkbox"/> ③Japanese newspaper <input type="checkbox"/> ④English newspaper <input type="checkbox"/> ⑤cable or satellite television (English) <input type="checkbox"/> ⑥Japanese television <input type="checkbox"/> ⑦other:
16	What forms of entertainment do you enjoy? (circle all appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/> ①outdoors <input type="checkbox"/> ②nightlife <input type="checkbox"/> ③restaurants <input type="checkbox"/> ④movies <input type="checkbox"/> ⑤Japanese cultural activities <input type="checkbox"/> ⑥other:
17	Please rate your overall life satisfaction in Japan from 1 (low) to 10 (high)	1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
18	How many times have you moved while living in Japan?	number of times:
19	How many different employers have you had since coming to Japan?	number of employers:

20	How often do you return to your home country? (Please enter your average)	
21	How often do you contact family back home? (Please enter your average)	
22	Japanese Level (personal assessment): please rate each from 1(low) to 10 (high)	
23	speaking	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
24	listening	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
25	reading	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
26	writing	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
27	Do you pay into the national health insurance?	① yes ② no
28	Do you pay into the national retirement fund?	① yes ② no
29	Would you like the right to vote in Japan?	① yes ② no
30	Would you be interested if Japan decided to offer dual citizenship?	① yes ② no

Please circle the best responses to the follow statements:

①:strongly disagree ②:disagree ③:somewhat agree ④:agree ⑤:strongly agree

31	You live in an area you consider desirable.	1 2 3 4 5
32	You feel welcome in the area you live.	1 2 3 4 5
33	In general, it is easy to communicate with Japanese people.	1 2 3 4 5
34	You feel religious conflicts in Japan	1 2 3 4 5
35	You feel lonely in Japan	1 2 3 4 5
36	Western foreigners can be fully accepted in a Japanese community.	1 2 3 4 5
37	The quality of your life is affected by your Japanese level.	1 2 3 4 5
38	You feel stress when you think about your future in Japan.	1 2 3 4 5
39	You seek to spend time with people from your home country in Japan.	1 2 3 4 5
40	You feel like you have benefited from living in Japan.	1 2 3 4 5
41	You consider yourself more patient after coming to Japan.	1 2 3 4 5
42	Your personality is suitable for Japan.	1 2 3 4 5
43	Some foreigner's personalities are not suitable for Japan.	1 2 3 4 5
44	You have job security.	1 2 3 4 5
45	If you lost your current job, you could find new employment quickly.	1 2 3 4 5
46	You have room for professional advancement.	1 2 3 4 5
47	You feel stuck in Japan.	1 2 3 4 5
48	You feel frustrated in the Japanese community you live in.	1 2 3 4 5
49	You feel frustrated in a Japanese work environment.	1 2 3 4 5
50	You feel frustrated in personal relationships with Japanese people.	1 2 3 4 5
51	Foreign women have a harder time than foreign men in social settings in Japan.	1 2 3 4 5
52	Foreign women have a harder time than foreign men in a Japanese work environment.	1 2 3 4 5
53	You can trust Japanese people around you.	1 2 3 4 5
54	You feel confident functioning in a <i>Japanese only</i> environment.	1 2 3 4 5
55	You feel more personal freedom in Japan compared to your home country.	1 2 3 4 5
56	With all your experience living in Japan, you feel living in Japan is basically the same as living in your home country.	1 2 3 4 5
57	You would feel confident using Japanese in an emergency situation.	1 2 3 4 5
58	You feel down after you experience a cultural mishap.	1 2 3 4 5
59	You feel a strong sense of cultural difference with Japanese.	1 2 3 4 5
60	You are satisfied with your performance in your personal life in Japan.	1 2 3 4 5
61	You are satisfied with your performance in your professional life in Japan.	1 2 3 4 5
62	You feel you still have a lot to learn about Japan.	1 2 3 4 5
63	You feel comfortable living in Japan.	1 2 3 4 5

64	You originally planned to stay in Japan for the long term when you first came.	1	2	3	4	5
65	You feel like you navigate between your culture and Japanese culture looking for an acceptable middle ground.	1	2	3	4	5
66	The economic conditions for western foreigners has improved since you came to Japan.	1	2	3	4	5
67	You feel free to express your feelings around Japanese friends.	1	2	3	4	5
68	You feel free to express your feelings around Japanese co-workers.	1	2	3	4	5
69	You have experienced a cultural difficulty that has made you want to leave Japan.	1	2	3	4	5
70	You have a support network around you.	1	2	3	4	5
71	You have been told you are more Japanese than Japanese.	1	2	3	4	5
72	You experienced a honeymoon period when first arriving in Japan.	1	2	3	4	5
73	Long term residents can live a functional life without speaking Japanese.	1	2	3	4	5
74	You feel proficiency in Japanese can be a hinderance. i.e.: One may get more responsibility than their non-speaking counterparts	1	2	3	4	5
75	Japanese ability is necessary to understand the culture.	1	2	3	4	5
76	You need to use Japanese for your current work or business.	1	2	3	4	5
77	You feel excluded from the Japanese around you.	1	2	3	4	5
78	You need help with Japanese language-only situations on a regular basis.	1	2	3	4	5
78a	→If you need help, who helps you the most?	relationship:				
79	You consider Japan a suitable place to raise children.	1	2	3	4	5
80	You have been discriminated against at your work in Japan.	1	2	3	4	5
81	You have been discriminated against by Japanese friends.	1	2	3	4	5
82	You have been discriminated against by a stranger.	1	2	3	4	5
83	You have been discriminated against by in-laws.	1	2	3	4	5
84	Acts of discrimination have decreased as your time in Japan gets longer.	1	2	3	4	5
85	You think micro-aggressions*(see note) exist against foreigners in Japan.	1	2	3	4	5
86	You have experienced micro-aggressions.	1	2	3	4	5

87	To the best of your knowledge, can you rate the quality of education in Japan? (please rate from 1[low] to 10[high])	
87a	Elementary	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
87b	Junior High School	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
87c	High School	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
87d	University	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
88	If you have school aged children, do they attend Japanese schools?	① yes ② no ③ n/a
88a	→Do/Did you take part in school activities?	① never ② rarely ③ sometimes ④ often ⑤ always
88b	→Does/Did your child (children) attend international school?	① yes ② no
88c	→If so, from what grade?	① elementary ② junior high ③ high school ④ overseas college / university
89	Do you plan to stay in Japan?	① yes ② no
89a	→If "no", when are you planning to leave? Date specific or estimate	year: month:
90	Have you ever experienced the <i>empty seat syndrome</i> when the seat next to you in a public place or train is the last seat taken?	① yes ② no
91	Do you have Japanese friends of the same sex that you confide in?	① yes ② no
92	How many close Japanese friends do you have to confide in?	① 0-1 ② 2 or 3 ③ 4 or 5 ④ 6 or 7 ⑤ 8 or more
93	What language do you primarily use with your friends in Japan?	① Japanese ② English ③ other

For those interested, optional short interviews with long term residents of Japan will be conducted from the end of 2014 through the middle of 2015. This is to help fill the void of the questionnaires and create records of actual case studies of what long termers think. The goal of the interviews is to collect opinions, stories or anecdotes describing life in Japan over the long term. Interviews will be from 15 to 30 mins. in length. The option for video, audio or Skype for long distance will be available. Anonymity will be offered for those who request it. If interested, please send us a short email for more information.

Email: greg.okeefe@kyudai.jp

\*Microaggressions: Something hurtful said or done out of cultural ignorance which in no means is meant to be hurtful by the speaker. This can be repetitive within a host culture towards a social minority, racial or religious group causing stress to those minority groups.

If you have any comments about this questionnaire, please write them below.

**Q1 Length of time living in Japan (LOT)**

LOT	Sex		Total
	male	female	
9	2	1	3
10	17	5	22
11	6	5	11
12	12	2	14
13	11	5	16
14	8	8	16
15	18	9	27
16	9	8	17
17	8	7	15
18	4	6	10
19	7	4	11
20	11	11	22
21	4	4	8
22	10	8	18
23	4	5	9
24	3	4	7
25	8	1	9
26	7	4	11
27	9	4	13
28	5	1	6
29	3	2	5
30	7	3	10
31	0	4	4
32	3	2	5
33	1	0	1
35	2	2	4
36	0	2	2
37	1	0	1
38	1	0	1
39	1	1	2
40+	2	4	6
Total	184	122	306

**Q4 Age of respondents**

Age	Sex		Total
	male	female	
27	1	0	1
31	1	0	1
32	1	0	1
33	2	1	3
34	2	1	3
35	1	0	1
36	3	1	4
37	6	2	8
38	6	3	9
39	12	6	18
40	4	7	11
41	2	1	3
42	7	5	12
43	5	7	12
44	11	7	18
45	5	5	10
46	8	5	13
47	7	2	9
48	6	8	14
49	13	5	18
50	10	6	16
51	8	4	12
52	7	3	10
53	6	8	14
54	6	3	9
55	5	2	7
56	4	4	8
57	7	4	11
58	6	3	9
59	3	3	6
60	3	2	5
61	3	1	4
62	4	0	4
63	0	3	3
64	3	2	5
65	1	2	3
66	0	1	1
67	1	1	2
68	2	0	2
69	0	2	2
72	1	0	1
74	1	0	1
Total	184	120	304

**Q5 Country of origin**

Country of origin		U.S.	Can	U.K.	Aus	N. Z.	West Euro	Other	Total
Sex	male	Count	103	27	30	12	6	5	184
		% within Sex	56.0%	14.7%	16.3%	6.5%	3.3%	2.7%	.5% 100.0%
		% within item	65.2%	58.7%	53.6%	50.0%	75.0%	38.5%	100.0% 60.1%
	female	Count	55	19	26	12	2	8	122
		% within Sex	45.1%	15.6%	21.3%	9.8%	1.6%	6.6%	.0% 100.0%
		% within item	34.8%	41.3%	46.4%	50.0%	25.0%	61.5%	.0% 39.9%
Total		Count	158	46	56	24	8	13	306
		% within Sex	51.6%	15.0%	18.3%	7.8%	2.6%	4.2%	.3% 100.0%
		% within item	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Q9 What is your highest level of education?**

highest level of education		Other	high school	junior college	uni	grad degree	doc degree	Total	
Sex	male	Count	20	7	5	44	82	25	183
		% within Sex	10.9%	3.8%	2.7%	24.0%	44.8%	13.7%	100.0%
		% within item	66.7%	77.8%	83.3%	53.0%	59.0%	65.8%	60.0%
	female	Count	10	2	1	39	57	13	122
		% within Sex	8.2%	1.6%	.8%	32.0%	46.7%	10.7%	100.0%
		% within item	33.3%	22.2%	16.7%	47.0%	41.0%	34.2%	40.0%
Total		Count	30	9	6	83	139	38	305
		% within Sex	9.8%	3.0%	2.0%	27.2%	45.6%	12.5%	100.0%
		% within item	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### Q10 Marital status

Marital status		married	single	divorced	widowed	Total		
Sex	male	Count	153	24	7	0	184	
		% within Sex	83.2%	13.0%	3.8%	.0%	100.0%	
		% within Marital status	61.9%	66.7%	33.3%	.0%	60.3%	
	female	Count	94	12	14	1	121	
		% within Sex	77.7%	9.9%	11.6%	.8%	100.0%	
		% within Marital status	38.1%	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%	39.7%	
Total		Count	247	36	21	1	305	
		% within Sex	81.0%	11.8%	6.9%	.3%	100.0%	
		% within Marital status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

### Q10b What is your spouse's nationality?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Jap	222	72.3
	NJ	21	6.8
	Total	243	79.2
	Sys	64	20.8
Total		307	100.0

### Q11 What are your average expenses for one month?

Monthly Expenses		~10万	10-20万	20-30万	30-40万	40-50万	50万~	Total		
Sex	male	Count	8	46	46	43	17	16	176	
		% within Sex	4.5%	26.1%	26.1%	24.4%	9.7%	9.1%	100.0%	
		% within item	57.1%	53.5%	57.5%	66.2%	63.0%	66.7%	59.5%	
	female	Count	6	40	34	22	10	8	120	
		% within Sex	5.0%	33.3%	28.3%	18.3%	8.3%	6.7%	100.0%	
		% within item	42.9%	46.5%	42.5%	33.8%	37.0%	33.3%	40.5%	
Total		Count	14	86	80	65	27	24	296	
		% within Sex	4.7%	29.1%	27.0%	22.0%	9.1%	8.1%	100.0%	
		% within item	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

### Q12 How much do you spend on entertainment every month?

entertainment expense		~5万	5-10万	10-15万	15-20万	20万~	Total		
Sex	male	Count	114	35	17	7	3	176	
		% within Sex	64.8%	19.9%	9.7%	4.0%	1.7%	100.0%	
		% within item	57.3%	60.3%	70.8%	87.5%	75.0%	60.1%	
	female	Count	85	23	7	1	1	117	
		% within Sex	72.6%	19.7%	6.0%	.9%	.9%	100.0%	
		% within item	42.7%	39.7%	29.2%	12.5%	25.0%	39.9%	
Total		Count	199	58	24	8	4	293	
		% within Sex	67.9%	19.8%	8.2%	2.7%	1.4%	100.0%	
		% within item	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

### Q13 Why did you come to Japan?

Why did you come to Japan?		Sex		Total
		male	female	
work related	Count	104	82	186
	% within item	55.9%	44.1%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
self-actualization	Count	47	23	70
	% within item	67.1%	32.9%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
family	Count	8	10	18
	% within item	44.4%	55.6%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
marriage	Count	23	14	37
	% within item	62.2%	37.8%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
adventure	Count	84	43	127
	% within item	66.1%	33.9%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
fun	Count	56	26	82
	% within item	68.3%	31.7%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
lang study	Count	44	27	71
	% within item	62.0%	38.0%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
study culture	Count	44	34	78
	% within item	56.4%	43.6%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Other	Count	32	18	50
	% within item	64.0%	36.0%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### **Q13 Responses for “other”**

- all of the above excepting marriage
- To check out Japan before committing to marrying my Japanese boyfriend
- work for year, make money, go back to school
- I asked to be sent to a German-speaking country as I was studying German but was assigned to Japan as a Rotary exchange student.
- First came in military, then after discharge and five years of college returned and have been here since.
- found Japan a good fit for me as an exchange student and wanted to live here
- My husband is chonan, his mother died, we came initially to look after his father      • Missionary (first time)
- Anthropological research                      • break from a boring career
- because it was possible and I wanted out of the RSA      • Christian Ministry                      • Helping a sick friend move here
- combination - language study, "“roots”, adventure      • dissatisfaction with own country
- far too personal to describe in survey      • friend here      • University work-study program
- For the experience of living in a foreign country      • Unhappy with my career path in my home country
- had been to Korea, China, HK, Taiwan, back to Korea, Japan was next
- I needed to pay off my student debts      • immersively experience a culture very different from my own
- Lack of opportunity in USA      • lifelong love of Japanese women
- Military for the first 4 years. Separated in country.      • ministry as church pastor
- Needed a change and came to Japan "“for a year”.      • New venue for a widow.      • Asian women
- Pursuit of a Japanese woman      • research(2)      • Retirement      • spouse's job      • To study Zen
- study martial arts      • exchange student      • karate      • martial arts(2)      • Girlfriend      • Volunteer(2)
- Canadian economy tanked in the early '90s      • Visit a friend(2)      • missionary(2)      • Love.      • Travel

### **Q14 What are your primary reasons for staying in Japan?**

		Sex		Total
		male	female	
work	Count	145	79	224
	% within item	64.7%	35.3%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
business	Count	36	9	45
	% within item	80.0%	20.0%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
study	Count	14	8	22
	% within item	63.6%	36.4%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
enjoyment	Count	73	41	114
	% within item	64.0%	36.0%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Quality of Life	Count	121	56	177
	% within item	68.4%	31.6%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
family	Count	125	90	215
	% within item	58.1%	41.9%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Other	Count	18	17	35
	% within item	51.4%	48.6%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### **Q14 Responses for “other”**

- After some time this became home
- am missing 4 years to qualify for jpn. pension. have been out so many years from cda that need this extra supplement to combine with cdn pension
- Business mostly but my hobby is Mountain Biking and I have helped build the MTB community greatly here. Good Fun!!
- been here too long to return
- Discovered I enjoyed teaching, and met--married my wife
- continuing lifelong love of Japanese women
- Future family(engaged)
- Inexpensive health insurance, public transportation choices which enable me to work easily, no need to drive (my license has lapsed), safety
- continuing lifelong love of Japanese women
- study Japanese traditional arts
- Tired of the violence in my own country
- I feel I have put my roots down here.
- meaningful contribution
- my only home is here
- this is now my home      • Cultural resonance
- Christian Ministry      • my life is here      • Love Fukuoka
- retirement      • Safety • safety of life in Japan      • same as above. Still a good fit.
- Work      • family land      • Food      • Friends (4 times)      • Health care (4 times)      • inertia      • Career

## **Q15 What media do you mainly depend on for your news about Japan?**

		Sex		Total
		male	female	
Internet (Eng)	Count	167	107	274
	% within item	60.9%	39.1%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Internet (Jap)	Count	43	23	66
	% within item	65.2%	34.8%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Japanese newspaper	Count	29	14	43
	% within item	67.4%	32.6%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
English newspaper	Count	38	37	75
	% within item	50.7%	49.3%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
cable / satellite television (English)	Count	41	30	71
	% within item	57.7%	42.3%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Japanese television	Count	93	69	162
	% within item	57.4%	42.6%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Other (please specify)	Count	9	10	19
	% within item	47.4%	52.6%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

## **Q15 Responses for “other”**

- Before the iPhone Japanese English newspapers.
  - conversations with spouse, etc.
  - Japanese monthly magazines & their advertisements
  - Japanese newspaper in English and Twitter
  - Japanese periodicals, databases, etc available via university library online
  - My son. I tend to follow English-based news outlets and my son will often send me links to import and news here I've missed here. We got rid of the TV 3 years ago and it's definitely harder to follow Japanese news now.
  - Japanese radio
    - my husband, word of mouth
  - coworkers
    - Facebook
    - From my husband
  - Radio over the Internet
    - NHK bilingual
    - NHK TV
  - social media
    - Twitter
    - Word of mouth.
  - my Japanese husband fills me in
  - Japanese English newspaper
  - Radio over the Internet

## **Q16 What forms of entertainment do you enjoy?**

		Sex		Total
		male	female	
outdoors	Count	122	81	203
	% within item	60.1%	39.9%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
nightlife	Count	49	14	63
	% within item	77.8%	22.2%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
restaurants	Count	128	106	234
	% within item	54.7%	45.3%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
movies	Count	105	59	164
	% within item	64.0%	36.0%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Japanese cultural activities	Count	55	49	104
	% within item	52.9%	47.1%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Other (please specify)	Count	46	34	80
	% within item	57.5%	42.5%	100.0%
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### Q16 Responses for “other”

- Camping, hiking, mountain biking, home crafts, making things from scratch, teaching my kids about life!
- classes, meeting with other foreign residents for dinner in a nearby city
- I have small children. I have no time for entertainment.
- jpn. friends who take me here and there      • Books; video games
- movies/TV shows at home, video games, social media, books
- cycling & swimming (school pool)      • cycling, golf, gym
- fireworks      • friends      • games
- Art exhibitions      • art museums      • at home with the family
- books, music      • Choral singing      • computer games
- Hanging out at malls.      • Home pool church
- Internet, TV, books      • Internet, sports      • Izakaya
- Karaoke, festivals, etc      • Karaoke, meeting friends, skiing
- movies- videos we have rented      • Music
- non-Japanese cultural activities      • outdoor activities
- reading newspapers and listening to music      • Pub
- reading, dancing, music      • reading, interacting with people
- reading, online games, musical instruments, SNSs      • reading, pc games, whisky
- reading, writing      • Reading; exercise      • reading, family activities
- running and weight-training      • satellite television (English), books
- spending time with friends      • Yoga      • Sporting events
- theatre, dance      • Travel      • TV, SNS      • sport(3)
- DIY, gardening      • gardening
- basketball, internet, books      • books
- craft beer, sports      • hot springs
- Jogging      • live music shows
- music in any form      • Playing music
- reading(2)      • reading, singing
- Web browsing
- seeing friends
- shopping, hot springs
- Sports:Basketball      • television
- volunteer, dance class (hula)

### Q17 Life Satisfaction (LS)

			Q17 Life Satisfaction (LS)										Total
			1 Low	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 High	
Sex	male	Count	0	2	2	3	9	15	48	72	26	7	184
		% within Sex	.0%	1.1%	1.1%	1.6%	4.9%	8.2%	26.1%	39.1%	14.1%	3.8%	100.0%
		% within LS	.0%	100.0%	40.0%	42.9%	52.9%	60.0%	64.9%	60.0%	60.5%	58.3%	60.1%
	female	Count	1	0	3	4	8	10	26	48	17	5	122
		% within Sex	.8%	.0%	2.5%	3.3%	6.6%	8.2%	21.3%	39.3%	13.9%	4.1%	100.0%
		% within LS	100.0%	.0%	60.0%	57.1%	47.1%	40.0%	35.1%	40.0%	39.5%	41.7%	39.9%
	Total	Count	1	2	5	7	17	25	74	120	43	12	306
		% within Sex	.3%	.7%	1.6%	2.3%	5.6%	8.2%	24.2%	39.2%	14.1%	3.9%	100.0%
		% within LS	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### Q23 speaking level

			speaking									Total
			low 1	2	3	4	5	7	8	9	high 10	
Sex	male	Count	5	8	11	12	18	27	32	34	37	184
		% within Sex	2.7%	4.3%	6.0%	6.5%	9.8%	14.7%	17.4%	18.5%	20.1%	100.0%
		% within	83.3%	66.7%	57.9%	50.0%	64.3%	73.0%	53.3%	68.0%	52.9%	60.1%
	female	Count	1	4	8	12	10	10	28	16	33	122
		% within Sex	.8%	3.3%	6.6%	9.8%	8.2%	8.2%	23.0%	13.1%	27.0%	100.0%
		% within	16.7%	33.3%	42.1%	50.0%	35.7%	27.0%	46.7%	32.0%	47.1%	39.9%
	Total	Count	6	12	19	24	28	37	60	50	70	306
		% within Sex	2.0%	3.9%	6.2%	7.8%	9.2%	12.1%	19.6%	16.3%	22.9%	100.0%
		% within	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### Q24 listening level

			listening									Total
			low 1	2	3	4	5	7	8	9	high 10	
Sex	male	Count	5	7	9	9	15	19	31	39	50	184
		% within Sex	2.7%	3.8%	4.9%	4.9%	8.2%	10.3%	16.8%	21.2%	27.2%	100.0%
		% within listening	100.0%	70.0%	81.8%	47.4%	65.2%	55.9%	57.4%	63.9%	56.2%	60.1%
	female	Count	0	3	2	10	8	15	23	22	39	122
		% within Sex	.0%	2.5%	1.6%	8.2%	6.6%	12.3%	18.9%	18.0%	32.0%	100.0%
		% within listening	.0%	30.0%	18.2%	52.6%	34.8%	44.1%	42.6%	36.1%	43.8%	39.9%
	Total	Count	5	10	11	19	23	34	54	61	89	306
		% within Sex	1.6%	3.3%	3.6%	6.2%	7.5%	11.1%	17.6%	19.9%	29.1%	100.0%
		% within listening	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### Q25 reading level

			reading									Total
			low 1	2	3	4	5	7	8	9	high 10	
Sex	male	Count	23	26	22	19	26	29	12	12	15	184
		% within Sex	12.5%	14.1%	12.0%	10.3%	14.1%	15.8%	6.5%	6.5%	8.2%	100.0%
		% within reading	67.6%	63.4%	52.4%	51.4%	68.4%	72.5%	48.0%	52.2%	57.7%	60.1%
	female	Count	11	15	20	18	12	11	13	11	11	122
		% within Sex	9.0%	12.3%	16.4%	14.8%	9.8%	9.0%	10.7%	9.0%	9.0%	100.0%
		% within reading	32.4%	36.6%	47.6%	48.6%	31.6%	27.5%	52.0%	47.8%	42.3%	39.9%
Total		Count	34	41	42	37	38	40	25	23	26	306
		% within Sex	11.1%	13.4%	13.7%	12.1%	12.4%	13.1%	8.2%	7.5%	8.5%	100.0%
		% within reading	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### Q26 writing level

			writing									Total
			low 1	2	3	4	5	7	8	9	high 10	
Sex	male	Count	39	36	26	28	19	10	11	7	8	184
		% within Sex	21.2%	19.6%	14.1%	15.2%	10.3%	5.4%	6.0%	3.8%	4.3%	100.0%
		% within writing	60.9%	58.1%	56.5%	73.7%	59.4%	58.8%	52.4%	53.8%	61.5%	60.1%
	female	Count	25	26	20	10	13	7	10	6	5	122
		% within Sex	20.5%	21.3%	16.4%	8.2%	10.7%	5.7%	8.2%	4.9%	4.1%	100.0%
		% within writing	39.1%	41.9%	43.5%	26.3%	40.6%	41.2%	47.6%	46.2%	38.5%	39.9%
Total		Count	64	62	46	38	32	17	21	13	13	306
		% within Sex	20.9%	20.3%	15.0%	12.4%	10.5%	5.6%	6.9%	4.2%	4.2%	100.0%
		% within writing	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### Q27 Do you pay into the national health

			yes	no	Total
Sex	male	Count	156	27	183
		% within Sex	85.2%	14.8%	100.0%
		% within item	59.3%	64.3%	60.0%
	female	% of Total	51.1%	8.9%	60.0%
		Count	107	15	122
		% within Sex	87.7%	12.3%	100.0%
Total		% within item	40.7%	35.7%	40.0%
		% of Total	35.1%	4.9%	40.0%
		Count	263	42	305
		% within Sex	86.2%	13.8%	100.0%
Total		% within item	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	86.2%	13.8%	100.0%

### Q29 Would you be interested if Japan decided

			yes	no	Total
Sex	male	Count	137	44	181
		% within Sex	75.7%	24.3%	100.0%
		% within item	59.3%	62.0%	59.9%
	female	% of Total	45.4%	14.6%	59.9%
		Count	94	27	121
		% within Sex	77.7%	22.3%	100.0%
Total		% within item	40.7%	38.0%	40.1%
		% of Total	31.1%	8.9%	40.1%
		Count	231	71	302
		% within Sex	76.5%	23.5%	100.0%
Total		% within item	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	76.5%	23.5%	100.0%

### Q28 Do you pay into the national retirement

			yes	no	Total
Sex	male	Count	126	54	180
		% within Sex	70.0%	30.0%	100.0%
		% within item	58.3%	63.5%	59.8%
	female	% of Total	41.9%	17.9%	59.8%
		Count	90	31	121
		% within Sex	74.4%	25.6%	100.0%
Total		% within item	41.7%	36.5%	40.2%
		% of Total	29.9%	10.3%	40.2%
		Count	216	85	301
		% within Sex	71.8%	28.2%	100.0%
Total		% within item	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	71.8%	28.2%	100.0%

### Q30 Would you like the right to vote in Japan?

			yes	no	Total
Sex	male	Count	139	42	181
		% within Sex	76.8%	23.2%	100.0%
		% within item	59.4%	63.6%	60.3%
	female	% of Total	46.3%	14.0%	60.3%
		Count	95	24	119
		% within Sex	79.8%	20.2%	100.0%
Total		% within item	40.6%	36.4%	39.7%
		% of Total	31.7%	8.0%	39.7%
		Count	234	66	300
		% within Sex	78.0%	22.0%	100.0%
Total		% within item	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	78.0%	22.0%	100.0%

**Q31 You live in an area you consider desirable.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total
Sex	male	Count	1	9	29	71	74	184
		% within Sex	.5%	4.9%	15.8%	38.6%	40.2%	100.0%
	female	Count	3	8	14	49	48	122
		% within Sex	2.5%	6.6%	11.5%	40.2%	39.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	4	17	43	120	122	306
		% within Item	1.3%	5.6%	14.1%	39.2%	39.9%	100.0%

**Q32 You feel welcome in the area you live.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total
Sex	male	Count	0	11	41	85	47	184
		% within Sex	.0%	6.0%	22.3%	46.2%	25.5%	100.0%
	female	Count	2	5	23	54	37	121
		% within Sex	1.7%	4.1%	19.0%	44.6%	30.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	2	16	64	139	84	305
		% within Item	.7%	5.2%	21.0%	45.6%	27.5%	100.0%

**Q33 In general, it is easy to communicate with Japanese people.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total
Sex	male	Count	4	20	53	83	22	182
		% within Sex	2.2%	11.0%	29.1%	45.6%	12.1%	100.0%
	female	Count	2	11	34	55	19	121
		% within Sex	1.7%	9.1%	28.1%	45.5%	15.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	6	31	87	138	41	303
		% within Item	2.0%	10.2%	28.7%	45.5%	13.5%	100.0%

**Q34 You feel religious conflicts in Japan**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total
Sex	male	Count	120	49	8	4	2	183
		% within Sex	65.6%	26.8%	4.4%	2.2%	1.1%	100.0%
	female	Count	80	32	7	2	0	121
		% within Sex	66.1%	26.4%	5.8%	1.7%	.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	200	81	15	6	2	304
		% within Item	65.8%	26.6%	4.9%	2.0%	.7%	100.0%

**Q35 You feel lonely in Japan**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total
Sex	male	Count	40	69	54	15	6	184
		% within Sex	21.7%	37.5%	29.3%	8.2%	3.3%	100.0%
	female	Count	21	37	38	15	10	121
		% within Sex	17.4%	30.6%	31.4%	12.4%	8.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	61	106	92	30	16	305
		% within Item	20.0%	34.8%	30.2%	9.8%	5.2%	100.0%

**Q37 The quality of your life is affected by your Japanese level.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total
Sex	male	Count	5	19	34	60	66	184
		% within Sex	2.7%	10.3%	18.5%	32.6%	35.9%	100.0%
	female	Count	3	8	24	50	36	121
		% within Sex	2.5%	6.6%	19.8%	41.3%	29.8%	100.0%
Total		Count	8	27	58	110	102	305
		% within Item	2.6%	8.9%	19.0%	36.1%	33.4%	100.0%

**Q38 You feel stress when you think about your future in Japan.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total
Sex	male	Count	29	50	53	42	10	184
		% within Sex	15.8%	27.2%	28.8%	22.8%	5.4%	100.0%
	female	Count	10	40	27	27	17	121
		% within Sex	8.3%	33.1%	22.3%	22.3%	14.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	39	90	80	69	27	305
		% within Item	12.8%	29.5%	26.2%	22.6%	8.9%	100.0%

**Q40 You feel like you have benefited from living in Japan.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total
Sex	male	Count	1	3	15	72	93	184
		% within Sex	.5%	1.6%	8.2%	39.1%	50.5%	100.0%
	female	Count	0	2	9	58	53	122
		% within Sex	.0%	1.6%	7.4%	47.5%	43.4%	100.0%
Total		Count	1	5	24	130	146	306
		% within Item	.3%	1.6%	7.8%	42.5%	47.7%	100.0%

**Q41 You consider yourself more patient after coming to Japan.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total
Sex	male	Count	5	21	33	75	50	184
		% within Sex	2.7%	11.4%	17.9%	40.8%	27.2%	100.0%
	female	Count	0	12	20	43	46	121
		% within Sex	.0%	9.9%	16.5%	35.5%	38.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	5	33	53	118	96	305
		% within Item	1.6%	10.8%	17.4%	38.7%	31.5%	100.0%

**Q42 Your personality is suitable for Japan.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total
Sex	male	Count	3	9	42	96	33	183
		% within Sex	1.6%	4.9%	23.0%	52.5%	18.0%	100.0%
	female	Count	3	12	30	50	25	120
		% within Sex	2.5%	10.0%	25.0%	41.7%	20.8%	100.0%
Total		Count	6	21	72	146	58	303
		% within Item	2.0%	6.9%	23.8%	48.2%	19.1%	100.0%

**Q43 Some foreigner's personalities are not suitable for Japan.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	6	4	20	66	88	184	
		% within Sex	3.3%	2.2%	10.9%	35.9%	47.8%	100.0%	
	female	Count	1	6	24	39	50	120	
		% within Sex	.8%	5.0%	20.0%	32.5%	41.7%	100.0%	
Total		Count	7	10	44	105	138	304	
		% within Item	2.3%	3.3%	14.5%	34.5%	45.4%	100.0%	

**Q45 If you lost your current job, you could find new employment quickly.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	14	36	60	60	14	184	
		% within Sex	7.6%	19.6%	32.6%	32.6%	7.6%	100.0%	
	female	Count	8	19	39	35	18	119	
		% within Sex	6.7%	16.0%	32.8%	29.4%	15.1%	100.0%	
Total		Count	22	55	99	95	32	303	
		% within Item	7.3%	18.2%	32.7%	31.4%	10.6%	100.0%	

**Q47 You feel stuck in Japan.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	42	61	55	19	6	183	
		% within Sex	23.0%	33.3%	30.1%	10.4%	3.3%	100.0%	
	female	Count	34	33	29	15	10	121	
		% within Sex	28.1%	27.3%	24.0%	12.4%	8.3%	100.0%	
Total		Count	76	94	84	34	16	304	
		% within Item	25.0%	30.9%	27.6%	11.2%	5.3%	100.0%	

**Q49 You feel frustrated in a Japanese work environment.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	3	50	73	39	18	183	
		% within Sex	1.6%	27.3%	39.9%	21.3%	9.8%	100.0%	
	female	Count	6	31	57	22	3	119	
		% within Sex	5.0%	26.1%	47.9%	18.5%	2.5%	100.0%	
Total		Count	9	81	130	61	21	302	
		% within Item	3.0%	26.8%	43.0%	20.2%	7.0%	100.0%	

**Q51 Foreign women have a harder time than foreign men in social settings in Japan.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	5	36	46	65	28	180	
		% within Sex	2.8%	20.0%	25.6%	36.1%	15.6%	100.0%	
	female	Count	2	31	33	32	22	120	
		% within Sex	1.7%	25.8%	27.5%	26.7%	18.3%	100.0%	
Total		Count	7	67	79	97	50	300	
		% within Item	2.3%	22.3%	26.3%	32.3%	16.7%	100.0%	

**Q44 You have job security.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	24	34	35	56	33	182	
		% within Sex	13.2%	18.7%	19.2%	30.8%	18.1%	100.0%	
	female	Count	24	19	31	22	24	120	
		% within Sex	20.0%	15.8%	25.8%	18.3%	20.0%	100.0%	
Total		Count	48	53	66	78	57	302	
		% within Item	15.9%	17.5%	21.9%	25.8%	18.9%	100.0%	

**Q46 You have room for professional advancement.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	9	25	44	73	32	183	
		% within Sex	4.9%	13.7%	24.0%	39.9%	17.5%	100.0%	
	female	Count	7	23	30	36	22	118	
		% within Sex	5.9%	19.5%	25.4%	30.5%	18.6%	100.0%	
Total		Count	16	48	74	109	54	301	
		% within Item	5.3%	15.9%	24.6%	36.2%	17.9%	100.0%	

**Q48 You feel frustrated in the Japanese community you live in.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	48	73	44	17	1	183	
		% within Sex	26.2%	39.9%	24.0%	9.3%	.5%	100.0%	
	female	Count	36	52	19	9	4	120	
		% within Sex	30.0%	43.3%	15.8%	7.5%	3.3%	100.0%	
Total		Count	84	125	63	26	5	303	
		% within Item	27.7%	41.3%	20.8%	8.6%	1.7%	100.0%	

**Q50 You feel frustrated in personal relationships with Japanese people.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	13	78	67	22	4	184	
		% within Sex	7.1%	42.4%	36.4%	12.0%	2.2%	100.0%	
	female	Count	6	50	39	19	7	121	
		% within Sex	5.0%	41.3%	32.2%	15.7%	5.8%	100.0%	
Total		Count	19	128	106	41	11	305	
		% within Item	6.2%	42.0%	34.8%	13.4%	3.6%	100.0%	

**Q52 Foreign women have a harder time than foreign men in a Japanese work environment.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	3	26	43	77	32	181	
		% within Sex	1.7%	14.4%	23.8%	42.5%	17.7%	100.0%	
	female	Count	3	21	29	37	28	118	
		% within Sex	2.5%	17.8%	24.6%	31.4%	23.7%	100.0%	
Total		Count	6	47	72	114	60	299	
		% within Item	2.0%	15.7%	24.1%	38.1%	20.1%	100.0%	

**Q53 You can trust Japanese people around you.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	7	18	55	87	17	184	
		% within Sex	3.8%	9.8%	29.9%	47.3%	9.2%	100.0%	
	female	Count	5	10	41	54	11	121	
		% within Sex	4.1%	8.3%	33.9%	44.6%	9.1%	100.0%	
Total		Count	12	28	96	141	28	305	
		% within Item	3.9%	9.2%	31.5%	46.2%	9.2%	100.0%	

**Q55 You feel more personal freedom in Japan compared to your home country.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	21	75	39	39	9	183	
		% within Sex	11.5%	41.0%	21.3%	21.3%	4.9%	100.0%	
	female	Count	21	44	28	21	5	119	
		% within Sex	17.6%	37.0%	23.5%	17.6%	4.2%	100.0%	
Total		Count	42	119	67	60	14	302	
		% within Item	13.9%	39.4%	22.2%	19.9%	4.6%	100.0%	

**Q57 You would feel confident using Japanese in an emergency situation.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	11	15	54	59	45	184	
		% within Sex	6.0%	8.2%	29.3%	32.1%	24.5%	100.0%	
	female	Count	3	14	33	33	38	121	
		% within Sex	2.5%	11.6%	27.3%	27.3%	31.4%	100.0%	
Total		Count	14	29	87	92	83	305	
		% within Item	4.6%	9.5%	28.5%	30.2%	27.2%	100.0%	

**Q59 You feel a strong sense of cultural difference with Japanese.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	7	57	75	35	9	183	
		% within Sex	3.8%	31.1%	41.0%	19.1%	4.9%	100.0%	
	female	Count	6	42	45	21	7	121	
		% within Sex	5.0%	34.7%	37.2%	17.4%	5.8%	100.0%	
Total		Count	13	99	120	56	16	304	
		% within Item	4.3%	32.6%	39.5%	18.4%	5.3%	100.0%	

**Q61 You are satisfied with your performance in your professional life in Japan.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	6	20	47	80	30	183	
		% within Sex	3.3%	10.9%	25.7%	43.7%	16.4%	100.0%	
	female	Count	3	15	22	48	31	119	
		% within Sex	2.5%	12.6%	18.5%	40.3%	26.1%	100.0%	
Total		Count	9	35	69	128	61	302	
		% within Item	3.0%	11.6%	22.8%	42.4%	20.2%	100.0%	

**Q63 You feel comfortable living in Japan.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	0	11	21	94	56	182	
		% within Sex	.0%	6.0%	11.5%	51.6%	30.8%	100.0%	
	female	Count	1	4	14	67	33	119	
		% within Sex	.8%	3.4%	11.8%	56.3%	27.7%	100.0%	
Total		Count	1	15	35	161	89	301	
		% within Item	.3%	5.0%	11.6%	53.5%	29.6%	100.0%	

**Q54 You feel confident functioning in a Japanese only environment.**

			1	2	3	4	5		
Sex	male	Count	4	30	51	71	28	184	
		% within Sex	2.2%	16.3%	27.7%	38.6%	15.2%	100.0%	
	female	Count	7	13	38	42	22	122	
		% within Sex	5.7%	10.7%	31.1%	34.4%	18.0%	100.0%	
Total		Count	11	43	89	113	50	306	
		% within Item	3.6%	14.1%	29.1%	36.9%	16.3%	100.0%	

**Q56 With all your experience living in Japan, you feel living in Japan is basically the same as living in your home country.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	33	78	47	21	4	183	
		% within Sex	18.0%	42.6%	25.7%	11.5%	2.2%	100.0%	
	female	Count	27	54	31	7	2	121	
		% within Sex	22.3%	44.6%	25.6%	5.8%	1.7%	100.0%	
Total		Count	60	132	78	28	6	304	
		% within Item	19.7%	43.4%	25.7%	9.2%	2.0%	100.0%	

**Q58 You feel down after you experience a cultural mishap.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	9	61	69	33	9	181	
		% within Sex	5.0%	33.7%	38.1%	18.2%	5.0%	100.0%	
	female	Count	3	37	37	35	8	120	
		% within Sex	2.5%	30.8%	30.8%	29.2%	6.7%	100.0%	
Total		Count	12	98	106	68	17	301	
		% within Item	4.0%	32.6%	35.2%	22.6%	5.6%	100.0%	

**Q60 You are satisfied with your performance in your personal life in Japan.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	3	27	50	78	26	184	
		% within Sex	1.6%	14.7%	27.2%	42.4%	14.1%	100.0%	
	female	Count	1	18	30	56	17	122	
		% within Sex	.8%	14.8%	24.6%	45.9%	13.9%	100.0%	
Total		Count	4	45	80	134	43	306	
		% within Item	1.3%	14.7%	26.1%	43.8%	14.1%	100.0%	

**Q64 You originally planned to stay in Japan for the long term when you first came.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	70	53	29	20	12	184	
		% within Sex	38.0%	28.8%	15.8%	10.9%	6.5%	100.0%	
	female	Count	53	37	11	12	7	120	
		% within Sex	44.2%	30.8%	9.2%	10.0%	5.8%	100.0%	
Total		Count	123	90	40	32	19	304	
		% within Item	40.5%	29.6%	13.2%	10.5%	6.3%	100.0%	

**Q65 You feel like you navigate between your culture and Japanese culture looking for an acceptable middle ground.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	5	45	78	43	9	180
		% within Sex	2.8%	25.0%	43.3%	23.9%	5.0%	100.0%
	female	Count	4	23	50	30	14	121
		% within Sex	3.3%	19.0%	41.3%	24.8%	11.6%	100.0%
	Total	Count	9	68	128	73	23	301
		% within Item	3.0%	22.6%	42.5%	24.3%	7.6%	100.0%

**Q67 You feel free to express your feelings around Japanese friends.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	7	31	57	74	12	181
		% within Sex	3.9%	17.1%	31.5%	40.9%	6.6%	100.0%
	female	Count	7	21	46	37	10	121
		% within Sex	5.8%	17.4%	38.0%	30.6%	8.3%	100.0%
	Total	Count	14	52	103	111	22	302
		% within Item	4.6%	17.2%	34.1%	36.8%	7.3%	100.0%

**Q69 You have experienced a cultural difficulty that has made you want to leave Japan.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	47	73	28	20	14	182
		% within Sex	25.8%	40.1%	15.4%	11.0%	7.7%	100.0%
	female	Count	17	50	18	26	11	122
		% within Sex	13.9%	41.0%	14.8%	21.3%	9.0%	100.0%
	Total	Count	64	123	46	46	25	304
		% within Item	21.1%	40.5%	15.1%	15.1%	8.2%	100.0%

**Q71 You have been told you are more Japanese than Japanese.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	32	37	24	57	33	183
		% within Sex	17.5%	20.2%	13.1%	31.1%	18.0%	100.0%
	female	Count	12	20	21	34	34	121
		% within Sex	9.9%	16.5%	17.4%	28.1%	28.1%	100.0%
	Total	Count	44	57	45	91	67	304
		% within Item	14.5%	18.8%	14.8%	29.9%	22.0%	100.0%

**Q73 Long term residents can live a functional life without speaking Japanese.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	22	43	65	39	14	183
		% within Sex	12.0%	23.5%	35.5%	21.3%	7.7%	100.0%
	female	Count	18	46	32	23	3	122
		% within Sex	14.8%	37.7%	26.2%	18.9%	2.5%	100.0%
	Total	Count	40	89	97	62	17	305
		% within Item	13.1%	29.2%	31.8%	20.3%	5.6%	100.0%

**Q75 Japanese ability is necessary to understand the culture.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	5	22	40	63	53	183
		% within Sex	2.7%	12.0%	21.9%	34.4%	29.0%	100.0%
	female	Count	1	17	25	46	31	120
		% within Sex	.8%	14.2%	20.8%	38.3%	25.8%	100.0%
	Total	Count	6	39	65	109	84	303
		% within Item	2.0%	12.9%	21.5%	36.0%	27.7%	100.0%

**Q66 The economic conditions for western foreigners has improved since you came to Japan.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	36	87	37	15	7	182
		% within Sex	19.8%	47.8%	20.3%	8.2%	3.8%	100.0%
	female	Count	29	61	21	5	3	119
		% within Sex	24.4%	51.3%	17.6%	4.2%	2.5%	100.0%
	Total	Count	65	148	58	20	10	301
		% within Item	21.6%	49.2%	19.3%	6.6%	3.3%	100.0%

**Q68 You feel free to express your feelings around Japanese co-workers.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	15	49	65	46	7	182
		% within Sex	8.2%	26.9%	35.7%	25.3%	3.8%	100.0%
	female	Count	18	37	42	20	2	119
		% within Sex	15.1%	31.1%	35.3%	16.8%	1.7%	100.0%
	Total	Count	33	86	107	66	9	301
		% within Item	11.0%	28.6%	35.5%	21.9%	3.0%	100.0%

**Q70 You have a support network around you.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	3	31	61	67	18	180
		% within Sex	1.7%	17.2%	33.9%	37.2%	10.0%	100.0%
	female	Count	1	9	33	44	34	121
		% within Sex	.8%	7.4%	27.3%	36.4%	28.1%	100.0%
	Total	Count	4	40	94	111	52	301
		% within Item	1.3%	13.3%	31.2%	36.9%	17.3%	100.0%

**Q74 You feel proficiency in Japanese can be a hindrance.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	34	55	58	27	7	181
		% within Sex	18.8%	30.4%	32.0%	14.9%	3.9%	100.0%
	female	Count	19	47	31	16	7	120
		% within Sex	15.8%	39.2%	25.8%	13.3%	5.8%	100.0%
	Total	Count	53	102	89	43	14	301
		% within Item	17.6%	33.9%	29.6%	14.3%	4.7%	100.0%

**Q76 You need to use Japanese for your current work or business.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	5	25	33	55	64	182
		% within Sex	2.7%	13.7%	18.1%	30.2%	35.2%	100.0%
	female	Count	3	13	16	49	38	119
		% within Sex	2.5%	10.9%	13.4%	41.2%	31.9%	100.0%
	Total	Count	8	38	49	104	102	301
		% within Item	2.7%	12.6%	16.3%	34.6%	33.9%	100.0%

**Q78 You need help with Japanese language-only situations on a regular basis.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	50	60	42	22	9	183	
		% within Sex	27.3%	32.8%	23.0%	12.0%	4.9%	100.0%	
Sex	female	Count	37	49	21	8	4	119	
		% within Sex	31.1%	41.2%	17.6%	6.7%	3.4%	100.0%	
Total		Count	87	109	63	30	13	302	
		% within Item	28.8%	36.1%	20.9%	9.9%	4.3%	100.0%	

**Q77 You feel excluded from the Japanese around you.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	24	59	67	24	8	182	
		% within Sex	13.2%	32.4%	36.8%	13.2%	4.4%	100.0%	
Sex	female	Count	15	43	39	14	9	120	
		% within Sex	12.5%	35.8%	32.5%	11.7%	7.5%	100.0%	
Total		Count	39	102	106	38	17	302	
		% within Item	12.9%	33.8%	35.1%	12.6%	5.6%	100.0%	

**Q78 Responses**

- A close Japanese friend
- children(2)                    •children or friends
- colleague, spouse            •Colleagues
- Coworker or friend         •Daughter(2)
- For documentation kanji is still too difficult so my wife usually helps me the most.
- For reading and writing (wife)
- Friend, Staff                 •Friend/ husband
- Friends who work for NPOs
- friends, husband, co-workers, son and daughter
- Husband - in formal writing of city hall documents; or a colleague - again in formal writing of official documents
- Husband & school staff      •Husband & sons
- husband, female friends (PTA stuff)
- Japanese English teacher, students
- Japanese-speaking friends from my country, Japanese staff at my school and Japanese English-speaking friends
- Lawyer                         •My child.                    •My co-worker or my girlfriend
- my Japanese friend who can't speak English
- my Japanese wife              •My life partner
- my T.A., my colleague's daughter, my Jpn. friends (but try not to burden them), me myself  
→ blunder along until i make myself understood, students
- My wife(5)                    •my wife and and the fukushu-san at my university.
- No one                         •office staff                •paid assistant
- spouse, my teen/adult children, best friend (Japanese)
- staff; finance (professional situations)
- Wife for paperwork (taxes etc.)
- wife, co-worker                •Wife, staff, friends
- co-worker / staff secretary
- colleagues & boyfriend
- explanations by a friend, as needed
- friend(3)
- Friends and neighbors
- Friends, students, International Center Staff in that order.
- Girlfriend
- Husband(2)
- Husband - he is fluent in Japanese
- husband or son
- Japanese colleagues
- Japanese Friend
- Husband(2)
- Husband - he is fluent in Japanese
- husband or son
- Japanese colleagues
- Japanese partner
- Japanese teacher
- my dictionary
- My husband or son
- recently started going to japanese class
- Spouse & translator (work)
- wife & co-workers
- Wife or my staff
- Wife, staff, friends
- my husband(2)
- my Japanese partner
- staff or spouse
- wife and Japanese coworke
- wife or office manager
- wife; friend(2)
- My wife and son
- Wife and friends
- wife or office manager
- Wife, children

**Q79 You consider Japan a suitable place to raise children.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	9	14	52	74	34	183	
		% within Sex	4.9%	7.7%	28.4%	40.4%	18.6%	100.0%	
Sex	female	Count	3	5	34	49	29	120	
		% within Sex	2.5%	4.2%	28.3%	40.8%	24.2%	100.0%	
Total		Count	12	19	86	123	63	303	
		% within Item	4.0%	6.3%	28.4%	40.6%	20.8%	100.0%	

**Q80 You have been discriminated against at your work in Japan.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	20	60	34	39	28	181	
		% within Sex	11.0%	33.1%	18.8%	21.5%	15.5%	100.0%	
Sex	female	Count	17	34	25	24	19	119	
		% within Sex	14.3%	28.6%	21.0%	20.2%	16.0%	100.0%	
Total		Count	37	94	59	63	47	300	
		% within Item	12.3%	31.3%	19.7%	21.0%	15.7%	100.0%	

**Q81 You have been discriminated against by Japanese friends.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	35	83	35	19	10	182	
		% within Sex	19.2%	45.6%	19.2%	10.4%	5.5%	100.0%	
Sex	female	Count	22	49	27	14	9	121	
		% within Sex	18.2%	40.5%	22.3%	11.6%	7.4%	100.0%	
Total		Count	57	132	62	33	19	303	
		% within Item	18.8%	43.6%	20.5%	10.9%	6.3%	100.0%	

**Q82 You have been discriminated against by a stranger.**

			1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Sex	male	Count	5	25	34	60	55	179	
		% within Sex	2.8%	14.0%	19.0%	33.5%	30.7%	100.0%	
Sex	female	Count	2	19	22	44	34	121	
		% within Sex	1.7%	15.7%	18.2%	36.4%	28.1%	100.0%	
Total		Count	7	44	56	104	89	300	
		% within Item	2.3%	14.7%	18.7%	34.7%	29.7%	100.0%	

**Q83 You have been discriminated against by in-laws. (if applicable)**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	53	58	28	15	10	164	
		% within Sex	32.3%	35.4%	17.1%	9.1%	6.1%	100.0%	
	female	Count	26	24	15	17	12	94	
		% within Sex	27.7%	25.5%	16.0%	18.1%	12.8%	100.0%	
Total		Count	79	82	43	32	22	258	
		% within Item	30.6%	31.8%	16.7%	12.4%	8.5%	100.0%	

**Q84 Acts of discrimination have decreased as your time in Japan gets longer.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	14	54	58	36	15	177	
		% within Sex	7.9%	30.5%	32.8%	20.3%	8.5%	100.0%	
	female	Count	8	40	36	27	6	117	
		% within Sex	6.8%	34.2%	30.8%	23.1%	5.1%	100.0%	
Total		Count	22	94	94	63	21	294	
		% within Item	7.5%	32.0%	32.0%	21.4%	7.1%	100.0%	

**Q85 You think micro-aggressions exist against foreigners in Japan.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	5	11	49	64	52	181	
		% within Sex	2.8%	6.1%	27.1%	35.4%	28.7%	100.0%	
	female	Count	0	2	26	41	51	120	
		% within Sex	.0%	1.7%	21.7%	34.2%	42.5%	100.0%	
Total		Count	5	13	75	105	103	301	
		% within Item	1.7%	4.3%	24.9%	34.9%	34.2%	100.0%	

**Q86 You have experienced micro-aggressions.**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total		
Sex	male	Count	11	19	43	58	46	177	
		% within Sex	6.2%	10.7%	24.3%	32.8%	26.0%	100.0%	
	female	Count	0	6	22	45	48	121	
		% within Sex	.0%	5.0%	18.2%	37.2%	39.7%	100.0%	
Total		Count	11	25	65	103	94	298	
		% within Item	3.7%	8.4%	21.8%	34.6%	31.5%	100.0%	

**Q87a,b,c,d**

		Elementary	Junior High School	High School	Uni
N	Valid	301	298	292	289
	Missing	6	9	15	18
Mean	7.6478	6.1242	5.8048	4.9308	
Std. Dev.	1.54776	1.73147	1.81997	1.93166	

**Q87a Elementary**

Elementary	Sex		Total
	male	female	
low 1	1	0	1
	2	0	1
	3	0	4
	4	3	8
	5	6	17
	6	7	19
	7	21	59
	8	43	106
	9	25	62
	10 high	14	23
Total	181	119	300

**Q87b Junior High School**

Junior High School	Sex		Total
	male	female	
low 1	1	1	2
	2	6	9
	3	6	14
	4	5	21
	5	29	57
	6	21	57
	7	17	68
	8	24	54
	9	7	13
	10 high	2	2
Total	179	118	297

**Q87c High School**

High School	Sex		Total
	male	female	
low 1	2	2	4
	5	6	11
	12	5	17
	17	10	27
	39	31	70
	37	16	53
	34	19	53
	25	17	42
	5	6	11
	2	1	3
Total	178	113	291

**Q87d University**

University	Sex		Total
	male	female	
low 1	9	4	13
	15	8	23
	17	13	30
	29	19	48
	34	28	62
	32	12	44
	28	17	45
	10	6	16
	3	3	6
	0	1	1
Total	177	111	288

**Q88 Do/Did your child (children) attend Japanese schools?**

		yes	no	N/A	Total		
Sex	male	Count	97	6	38	141	
		% within Sex	68.8%	4.3%	27.0%	100.0%	
		% within item	59.1%	66.7%	66.7%	61.3%	
Total	female	Count	67	3	19	89	
		% within Sex	75.3%	3.4%	21.3%	100.0%	
		% within item	40.9%	33.3%	33.3%	38.7%	
		Count	164	9	57	230	
		% within Sex	71.3%	3.9%	24.8%	100.0%	
		% within item	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

**Q88a Do/Did you take part in school activities?**

		never	rarely	sometimes	often	always	Total		
Sex	male	Count	15	22	42	25	14	118	
		% within Sex	12.7%	18.6%	35.6%	21.2%	11.9%	100.0%	
		% within item	75.0%	84.6%	58.3%	44.6%	56.0%	59.3%	
	female	Count	5	4	30	31	11	81	
		% within Sex	6.2%	4.9%	37.0%	38.3%	13.6%	100.0%	
		% within item	25.0%	15.4%	41.7%	55.4%	44.0%	40.7%	
Total		Count	20	26	72	56	25	199	
		% within Sex	10.1%	13.1%	36.2%	28.1%	12.6%	100.0%	
		% within item	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

**Q88b Does/Did your child (children) attend international school?**

		yes	no	N/A	Total		
Sex	male	Count	15	89	20	124	
		% within Sex	12.1%	71.8%	16.1%	100.0%	
		% within item	62.5%	60.1%	58.8%	60.2%	
	female	Count	9	59	14	82	
		% within Sex	11.0%	72.0%	17.1%	100.0%	
		% within item	37.5%	39.9%	41.2%	39.8%	
Total		Count	24	148	34	206	
		% within Sex	11.7%	71.8%	16.5%	100.0%	
		% within item	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

**Q89 Do you plan to stay in Japan?**

		yes	no	Total		
Sex	male	Count	157	26	183	
		% within Sex	85.8%	14.2%	100.0%	
		% within item	61.8%	53.1%	60.4%	
		% of Total	51.8%	8.6%	60.4%	
	female	Count	97	23	120	
		% within Sex	80.8%	19.2%	100.0%	
Total		% within item	38.2%	46.9%	39.6%	
		% of Total	32.0%	7.6%	39.6%	
	Count	254	49	303		
	% within Sex	83.8%	16.2%	100.0%		
	% within item	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
			% of Total	83.8%	16.2%	100.0%

**Q89 Responses**

- 1 year      •2015      •2016      •2016 Jan.      •2017      •2020      •2021      •2025
- 5 years      •5-10 years      •After retire(3)      •approx.2021      •Around 2020      •c. 2016-7
- depends on where kids live after my wife's parents pass      •Don't know      •eight years time      •eventually
- From 5 to 10 years      •In 2017, after our child finishes high school      •In a couple of years
- In a year      •In about two years      •in another 2 1/2 years      •in five years      •in one or two years
- in the next 5 years      •no plans; when I get ""old      •No specific date at the moment
- No definate plans one way or another. May stay, may go      •Possibly 2030      •probably 2015
- Retirement      •Retirement: 2017      •soon I hope      •undecided      •USA soon
- When I no longer need the income I can earn here      •when I retire(2)
- When my child starts school      •When my husband and I retire      •With in 1 year
- Within 2 years      •within a year      •Within next couple years

**Q90 Have you ever experienced the empty seat syndrome when the seat next to you in a public place or train is the last seat taken?**

		yes	no	Total	
Sex	male	Count	141	40	
		% within Sex	77.9%	22.1%	
		% within Item	64.1%	49.4%	
	female	Count	79	41	
		% within Sex	65.8%	34.2%	
		% within Item	35.9%	50.6%	
Total		Count	220	81	
		% within Sex	73.1%	26.9%	
		% within Item	100.0%	100.0%	

**Q91 Do you have Japanese friends of the same sex that you confide in?**

		yes	no	Total	
Sex	male	Count	102	81	
		% within Sex	55.7%	44.3%	
		% within item	50.5%	78.6%	
	female	Count	100	22	
		% within Sex	82.0%	18.0%	
		% within item	49.5%	21.4%	
Total		Count	202	103	
		% within Sex	66.2%	33.8%	
		% within item	100.0%	100.0%	

**Q92 How many close Japanese friends do you have to confide in?**

			0-1	2 or 3	4 or 5	6 or 7	8 or more	Total	
Sex	male	Count	65	77	19	8	12	181	
		% within Sex	35.9%	42.5%	10.5%	4.4%	6.6%	100.0%	
		% within item	73.0%	55.8%	45.2%	61.5%	66.7%	60.3%	
	female	Count	24	61	23	5	6	119	
		% within Sex	20.2%	51.3%	19.3%	4.2%	5.0%	100.0%	
		% within item	27.0%	44.2%	54.8%	38.5%	33.3%	39.7%	
Total		Count	89	138	42	13	18	300	
		% within Sex	29.7%	46.0%	14.0%	4.3%	6.0%	100.0%	
		% within item	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

**Q93 What language do you primarily use with your friends in Japan?**

			Jap	English	Other	Total	
Sex	female	Count	50	65	7	122	
		% within Sex	41.0%	53.3%	5.7%	100.0%	
		% within item	46.7%	35.9%	38.9%	39.9%	
	male	Count	57	116	11	184	
		% within Sex	31.0%	63.0%	6.0%	100.0%	
		% within item	53.3%	64.1%	61.1%	60.1%	
Total		Count	107	181	18	306	
		% within Sex	35.0%	59.2%	5.9%	100.0%	
		% within item	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

**Interview agreement:**

This is a confirmation of understanding for the interview that will take place on / /2015 between Greg O'Keefe (interviewer) and \_\_\_\_\_(interviewee). This interview is for the purpose of research of applied identity theory to long term western foreign residents living in Japan. The interviewee also agrees to fitting the criteria listed below to fulfill the requirements of this research. The criteria for this study is as follows:

A self-initiated expat(someone who wasn't transferred to Japan but came by their own choice) who has been living in Japan for over 10 years.

From a native English speaking country or a European who speaks English as a second language.

sex, race or religion are not specified as long as they fit the requirements above. We will try to reflect the demographics of the group.

I give Greg O'Keefe approval to use the information from our interview on / /2015 for his research and any publications he creates in the future. All statements and the identity of the interviewee will be anonymous outside of this agreement. I also retain the right to use any parts of my own interview for my own future work or writings as well.

**Interviewee signature:**

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pseudonym	PC	age	sex	CoO	eth	LOSJ	vs	job	ms	nos	# child	LS	sp	lis	re	wr
David	810	55	m	USA	C	30.00	PR	SE	mar	NJ	3	9	7	4	2	1
Chris	165	45	m	USA	C	23.00	PR	FTC	mar	jap	2	7	8	8	7	5
Edward	411	47	m	FRA	C	20.00	PR	FT	mar	jap	2	9	6	8	3	2
Robert	811	53	m	CAN	A	24.00	PR	PT	d (nj)	NA	0	7	8	7	6	5
Donald	811	75	m	USA	C	39.00	PR	ret	mar	jap	2	9	7	8	5	2
Anthony	810	56	m	USA	C	23.00	PR	SE	mar	jap	0	8	7	8	4	2
Mark	826	34	m	USA	C	14.00	PR	SE	mar	jap	2	8	8	8	4	4
Carlo	810	51	m	USA	H/L	25.00	bus	SE	sing	NA	0	8	5	6	3	1
Judi	223	49	fe	USA	C	21.00	PR	PT	mar	jap	1	9	5	6	4	3
Tim	630	43	m	USA	C	15.00	PR	FT	mar	jap	2	8	8	7	6	5
Tom	432	52	m	USA	C	28.00	PR	FT	mar	jap	2	7	10	10	10	10
Dorothy	640	70	fe	USA	C	31.00	PR	PT	d (nj)	NA	0	8	6	7	4	5
Nick	812	38	m	UK	C	10.00	PR	SE	mar	jap	0	4	6	6	6	6
Joseph	810	38	m	ITA	C	11.00	PR	FT	mar	jap	2	7	7	7	7	7
Ann	330	51	fe	AUS	C	30.00	PR	SE	d (j)	NA	3	7	10	10	10	10
Cathy	810	46	fe	CAN	C	17.00	PR	FT	mar	NJ	2	8	6	7	4	2
Gary	810	41	m	USA	C	11.00	work	FT	sing	NA	0	7	6	7	4	2
Dan	999	40	m	USA	C	17.00	PR	SE	mar	jap	3	7	7	8	6	5
Barbara	546	45	fe	USA	C	20.00	PR	PT	mar	jap	0	7	6	7	7	4
William	816	35	m	AUS	C	11.00	Sp	FT	mar	jap	1	8	8	7	4	8
Theresa	200	67	fe	USA	C	18.00	PR	SE	sing	NA	0	5	3	3	2	2
Steve	802	43	m	USA	C	11.00	work	FT	sing	NA	0	7	7	4	3	3
Amy	819	45	fe	CAN	C	21.00	PR	PT	d (j)	NA	0	8	8	9	8	7
Collin	350	40	m	USA	C	18.00	PR	SE	mar	jap	2	8	8	8	5	5
Sean	658	50	m	USA	C	27.00	PR	PT	mar	jap	2	8	7	7	5	5

sp = speaking re = reading

lis = listening    wr = writing

jap = japanese

NJ = non-japanese

## Basic Interview Crosstabulation

### Interview Respondents's Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Dev
age	25	48.3600	10.35000
length of stay in Japan	25	20.6000	7.52219
Life Satisfaction	25	7.5200	1.15902
speaking	25	6.9600	1.51327
listening	25	7.0800	1.65630
writing	24	4.5000	2.58760
reading	25	5.1600	2.15407
Valid N (listwise)	24		

		Freq.	%
Sex	male	18	72.0
	female	7	28.0
	Total	25	100.0

		Freq.	%
country of origin	USA	17	68.0
	Canada	3	12.0
	UK	1	4.0
	Australia	2	8.0
	France	1	4.0
	Italy	1	4.0
	Total	25	100.0

		Freq.	%
Job/employment	full-time	8	32.0
	full-time contract	1	4.0
	part-time	6	24.0
	self-employed	9	36.0
	retired	1	4.0
	Total	25	100.0

		Freq.	%
ethnicity	Caucasian	23	92.0
	Hispanic/Latino	1	4.0
	Asian	1	4.0
	Total	25	100.0

		Freq.	%
marital status	married	17	68.0
	divorced (NJ)	2	8.0
	divorced (japanese)	2	8.0
	single	4	16.0
	Total	25	100.0

		Freq.	%
Visa status	Permanent Resident	21	84.0
	Spousal	1	4.0
	business	1	4.0
	work	2	8.0
	Total	25	100.0

		Freq.	%
Nationality of Spouse	japanese	15	60.0
	non-japanese	2	8.0
	NA	8	32.0
	Total	25	100.0

## Synopsis on the origins of my research

Our reality isn't understood until we step out of it and observe it from the outside without sympathy of the other community members who often act as mutual guardians of roles and acceptable actions within a specific group. This is how I felt when first arriving in Japan remembering my own family history and the life within the community I grew up in. Many of my thoughts and actions since I set foot in Japan 20 years ago to the time I write this paper were in remembrance of my great-grandfather, grandfather and many other relatives who left Italy to live in the United States more than 100 years ago. They were challenged linguistically, culturally, and economically. My grandmother's cousin, Joseph Langone appeared as George Ravello, an Italian political figure, in William Foote Whyte's ethnographic study *Street Corner Society*. Joseph Langone stated in a news article after the book was published that he realized Whyte was not trying to be completely negative in his descriptions of the residents of Boston's North End when describing the resident's virtues as a community, but he did not like the fact that the predominantly Italian populated North End was described as a slum (Sorrentino and Krase 2000). It was not uncommon to see men in suits in these so-called "slums" and the racketeering Whyte talked about was in Langone's opinion, overstated. It was typical for upper class white Americans to define the second wave of European immigrants to America as lower class. The areas were most likely called slums not due to the dirtiness of the area, but rather the image of the lower class of immigrants. My grandfather lived in the North End during the time Whyte wrote his book. My great-grandfather also lived and died in the area working in the tunnels of Boston's first subway, which is still operational to this day and one of the oldest in the United States.

This personal history is all important to the progression of my curiosity in the development of immigrants over the long term. How they are seen by a host culture and how they see themselves merge together. When living in a host culture which may not recognize immigrants beyond stereotypical images, the case for identity conflicts comes into play. My

grandfather used to tell me to study hard and learn English. This always seemed strange to me, because English was the only language that I spoke even though I heard him occasionally speaking Italian to his friends. He did not learn English until later in his life and received an English proficiency certificate in his early 40's from his employer which is safely kept with one of my aunts. He understood that language was important to do well inside and outside of the ethnic co-culture and he wanted me to understand that lesson too.

Another step in understanding what my grandfather had told me occurred after arriving in Japan. I read Handlin's ([1959]1991) book on the acculturation on Boston Immigrants and realized how my grandfather must have felt leaving his own country. In my case, I was not a downtrodden immigrant looking to journey for a new life as an American like my grandfather was. It was rather the opposite. I had a socio-economic advantage in the Japanese construct and I wasn't planning on becoming Japanese anytime soon.

Until the 1980's, Boston was famously segregated throughout the city. Every ethnic or socioeconomic group had a safe area of control. When exiting a safe area, a challenge of some sort would always be present. But the safety of one's area was always there and available. The absence of that area in Japan was a complete shock. On top of the feeling of separation, not being able to freely communicate was an eye opener that offered me a challenge I was not expecting.

After the initial uneasiness, I became increasing interested in the seemingly enigmatic way of life in Japan. I was fascinated with the cultural differences and how they made me step out of myself and see perspectives in ways that often contradicted even my own common sense. The contextual distance from my own experiences proved to be a huge gap, especially for a kid who grew up in a city of mostly second and third generation immigrants of various nationalities whose safe zone was defined by certain streets and neighborhoods. I noticed changes in myself as well as observing different approaches to life in Japan by other westerners who lived in the same area as I did. The Chinese and Korean immigrants significantly outnumber westerners,

but they seemed almost non-existent in the western expat circles. I noticed a stark integrative contrast of the westerners around me. Some acted confined, stunted even handicapped while others thrived in the seemingly autonomous and socially friendly country. I did not know why this was, but the reasons intrigued me. I became diligent to ask other westerners what their lives were like after arriving in Japan and kept notes of answers. Some would complain and others were endlessly searching for answers to cultural disparities, which always reminded me of the quote on traveling by Robert Pirsig (1999), “The only Zen you find at the top of a mountain is the Zen you bring yourself.”

This made me wonder how much of an individual’s success in Japan was already inherent before they even stepped foot in the country. Maybe they just “fit” in. I started to recognize how some methods used to integrate into the culture were more effective than others, but more often than not I realize that someone’s cultural success was just a natural extension of the individual’s personality. It became clear what may be considered successful traits in the United States would not work in Japan and vice versa. Of course, all of these observations were subjective, but acted as a seed to my current research. After researching various identity statuses, I started to understand how to label some of these changes. Some westerners were forming identities through a moratorium (Marcia 1980). They were searching for their place in the host culture while others rebelled against it or became diffused within it. Some westerners ignored it all together. I observed that those with a successful achieved identity were a part of their surroundings or community. This all depended on the individual. Some had a connection with either the Japanese community or an expat one. They were not just living parallel to the host culture but interwoven with parts of it. They still maintained parts of their own culture and would not be considered fully assimilated (Berry et al 2006). It is this personally defined interwovenness that concerns much of my research.

## **Questioning techniques**

The interview questions originally used for the interviews started out with the intention to reinforce my prior hypotheses on hybrid identity of LTWs in Japan (O'Keefe 2013), but the questions evolved to include much more. There were two types of changes that I made as the interviews progressed and gathered information. One change was to reduce the amount of resistance from respondents by rephrasing some questions. The original questions were sometimes overly assumptive, which caused contention in some cases.

An example of this was the question pertaining to experiencing a honeymoon period upon arriving in Japan. I originally asked them directly if they had experienced this or not. The term “honeymoon period,” for the most part was universally understood, except for one interviewee who used English as a second language and thought it was reference to his actual honeymoon. There was resistance to this question in early interviews. I noticed some, not all, did not seem very enthusiastic about talking about their earlier beginnings in Japan. I started to just ask what it was like when they first arrived in Japan without using the term honeymoon, which extracted more productive results. I also used role reversal and asked what they thought other people experienced when they first arrived in Japan. After they explain what it may be like for someone who has first arrived in Japan, this eliminated the necessity of asking them directly. When someone gives an example, they will often follow up with why their experience was different. This is also strong evidence of the *intragroup othering* mentioned earlier in this paper which is important when determining identity. It can be challenging for many long-termers to even recall what it was first like when they entered the country without their 20-30 years of experience to intrude on their perceptive memory. This style was necessary when approaching respondents with a deep cultural understanding in Japan, who tend to keep their ideological concepts within a necessary framework of operation.

Questions on discrimination were also adjusted. When I asked about discrimination many replied they had experienced discrimination of some sort. When I asked for details, very few did so. Most answers were very general and lacked credible details. In conversations that were an account that included Japanese being used, the language level of the respondent often was revealed through inconsistencies and lack of clear translations. The most common type of story was when renting apartments, but these problems often occur in the earlier years of their stay especially to single people. Their lack of time spent in the country may have also been a contributing factor when trying to rent.

I tried to find a place in K--- and they wouldn't let me stay. I even went with a Japanese friend my same age, and we would go from place to place in downtown K---, and they would say, "No, the landlords don't allow foreigners." That's illegal actually, but the real estate company would just take one look at my face and say, "No, you can't get an apartment." My Japanese friend was stunned.

...just blatant discrimination. They would say, "No, foreigners can't get apartments through our company." It took us ten tries and we found one company, and even this final company said, "We have to check with the landlord to see if foreigners are okay." My Japanese friend said, "You know that's against the law." They said, "Well, technically blah, blah, blah." Eventually they said, "Look, this guy's got a university job. He's got a graduate degree, he can speak Japanese, he's fine." But that happened every time I tried to get a place. It happened two more times. The landlords would just openly say, "We don't allow foreigners." I don't have any rights here. It's not like I can go to a court and sue you. I don't have any money and I wouldn't win anyways. They would just say, "You're not a Japanese person." I gave up. It was really, really hard to find an apartment. (Tim: 5)

He mentioned that incident occurred in 2002, which was early on in his current stay.

According to Tim's account, the real estate agent seemed to have made this judgement on the sight of him entering the agency, so Tim's status as a newcomer to Japan was not part of the realtor's decision. He also mentioned his Japanese friend said the action of not renting to foreigners is "against the law." While this is not a fair practice, it is not against the law. Rental property is viewed as private and the landlord can choose who and what types of people rent their property (Arudo and Higuchi 2012). Another point to be made is when the word "technically" came up. Tim chose to use "blah, blah, blah" to fill in the blanks. This is a common colloquialism, but could be construed as a language deficiency (O'Keefe 2013) at the time of the

incident and used to fill in areas that were incomprehensible in Japanese to him at the time or part of his overall lack of understanding of the legality of the situation. While Tim's current level of Japanese is high, this story took place in 2002. Emotionally tainted accounts can be a poor source of data. In this case, Tim mentions it has happened to him several times. The frequency which he had trouble was not consistent with other interviews performed. This is not to say that it did not happen but separating fact from visceral information is challenging. This said, these acts are not fictitious, they do happen but need to be recorded accurately so not to be overburdened with weak information which will only discredit the cause rather than advance it.

There were other accounts described as discrimination, but most stories would be labeled as microaggressions rather than full on systematic discrimination. My original strategy was to openly ask for details. This often put respondents on the spot. I rearranged this style by pausing after they replied yes, instead of jumping in with a follow up question. The pause allowed them to voluntarily give me the information. If this did not happen, I dropped the subject completely after the pause, but purposely brought it up later. I did this mostly to balance respecting the respondents' privacy and trying to get the most accurate information possible. Once the defense mechanisms of a respondent go up, the chances for discovering the necessary data for the most accurate conclusion are eliminated. My goal was always to get honest information.

Another major adjustment made to the questioning was to add entirely new questions. One example was when the topic of discrimination came up, many would refer to the fact they have experienced much more positive discrimination than negative. It was also observed when questions on positive discrimination were added that almost every respondent had such an experience. The examples recalled by the respondents were often much clearer than the recalling of negative discrimination. This resulted in some fruitful data being gathered within that theme.

There were also some completely new concepts that arose from respondents. The best example of this was when a female respondent mentioned she did not know any western women

who had gotten married to a Japanese national and did not speak Japanese. This was a very insightful observation. There are many examples of western men who do not speak Japanese and are married to Japanese nationals. I immediately added it to my list of questions and found that all the following respondents agreed with the concept.

These are some examples of how the short questionnaire developed in accordance to the respondents' reactions, answers, and input during the interview process. The complete review of the interviews and quotes pertaining to this paper's main hypotheses are documented throughout the chapters of this research.

Interview respondents		
001 David	010 Tim	019 Barbara
002 Chris	011 Tom	020 Lee
003 Edward	012 Dorothy	021 Theresa
004 Roberto	013 Nick	022 Steve
005 Donald	014 Joseph	023 Amy
006 Anthony	015 Ann	024 Collin
007 Mark	016 Cathy	025 Sean
008 Carlo	017 Garry	
009 Judi	018 Dan	

### 001 David

- Interviewer: What was it like when you first came to Japan, just in a brief statement?
- David: I had a very big honeymoon period.
- Interviewer: You had a big honeymoon period?
- David: Very big.
- Interviewer: Oh, okay.
- David: My homestay was set up by one of the most well-connected people in Fukuoka.
- Interviewer: Oh, really?
- David: Yeah, the guy happened to have the job as the chief editorial writer for the Nishinippon Shimbun. He had an office in the tallest building of Fukuoka and was friends with the consulate, knew all the international business leaders and this and that. I had a wonderful time and had diverse job opportunities thrown at me at the tender age of 25.
- Interviewer: Wow, so why did you first come?
- David: That story is going to different anyone else, but I knew as a child that I had something, coincidentally in Japanese there's an *en*, I had something to do with Japan. The real reason is I knew that I could come over here, speak my own language and get paid for it.
- Interviewer: Your original plan was to teach English?
- David: I had intended to come over in 1985, teach English for three months, make enough money to head over to the Greek isles and windsurf with my friends, and then go back to Seattle, which is the place where I was living before.
- Interviewer: When you first came here, you didn't plan to stay here long term?
- David: Correct. It was supposed to be three months.
- Interviewer: How long did it take you to realize that you were going to stay here for the long term?
- David: How many years did it take?
- Interviewer: I would say about the seventh year-
- David: The seventh year.
- Interviewer: ... I realized this was-
- David: The seven year itch.
- Interviewer: It may have been even earlier than that because I went back to Seattle and I found myself bored and I couldn't wait to get back to Japan. It was a strange thing. I had separated myself from my home country.
- Interviewer: Did you feel a sense of reverse culture shock when you went back?
- David: Absolutely.
- Interviewer: Oh, okay.
- David: Yeah.
- Interviewer: Do you use more Japanese in your life here than you do English, or do you use mostly English?
- David: Mostly English.
- Interviewer: Mostly English. How important do you think learning Japanese is to get involved with the people here?
- David: Extremely important, especially in Fukuoka.
- Interviewer: Okay.

David: Yeah.  
Interviewer: Do you think you've assimilated yourself a hundred percent into your community?  
David: No.  
Interviewer: No?  
David: No, and that's not my goal.  
Interviewer: Okay. Do you think it's important to find that middle ground?  
David: Absolutely.  
Interviewer: Okay.  
David: You have to be comfortable.  
Interviewer: You feel like this is your home?  
David: Oh, this is totally my home. I have made a big financial commitment here and I've got three kids that were born here. My wife is Chinese, so it is definitely a deliberate situation that we are here.  
Interviewer: How was it done? How can you find that middle ground?  
David: Well, what you have to do is find a way to be yourself, your own true self, and if being your true self happens to align with the basic culture here, you find a way to express your individuality through the confines of the Japanese system. Never, ever criticize the Japanese for being Japanese. If you find situations that are difficult, look at them as opportunities.  
Interviewer: Okay. You believe that Westerners can assimilate to Japanese culture but they don't have to one hundred percent have to be Japanese? They can find their own niche, they can create their own space?  
David: That is the best way to ... If you want to have a happy life, I would say that's essential, yeah.  
Interviewer: Do you think there are some people who are not happy who have been here a long time?  
David: Yes.  
Interviewer: Okay.  
David: I have met some of them.  
Interviewer: Okay. All right. Do you think people get confused about life here?  
David: Yes, because they are able to examine themselves outside of their own culture here, so if you're afraid of what you find it's going to be a problem.  
Interviewer: Okay. Have you or anybody that you know, have they ever experienced something traumatic, like a legal problem or something that is a clear indication that there was a cultural difference, not something that would happen in your own country, a car accident or something like that. For example, if you had a car accident and the way that the car accident was dealt with in Japan compared to America, was there anything like that?  
David: Yeah, actually yeah, there was.  
Interviewer: Could you give me one example?  
David: Okay. There was a clear-cut case where a young man in my apartment complex caused me to back up into another car and slightly dent a service vehicle that was in there. Everyone knew that it was not my fault, but the way it played out was the victim of the accident at first he said, "Hey, no problem. Don't worry about it because there's dents all over my truck."  
Then he realized he could make money from the insurance company and he took that money and it cost me a point on my license and thousands of dollars. He didn't care. His actual financial gain was far less than the pain inflicted on me and he didn't care at all. I found that out of character for Japan. I saw that as a turning point. It burst my bubble about the dignity of modern Japan.  
Interviewer: Do you think in that case you were dealing with an individual personality?  
David: I think it's individual, yeah.  
Interviewer: Yeah.  
David: Although I do see huge changes in attitudes with respect to authority and I see a generational change in Japan. It just happens to be that I'm here during the bubble and post-bubble and I'm seeing-  
Interviewer: You've been here for quite a long time then?  
David: Yeah, thirty years.

Interviewer: Thirty years. That would definitely be time to observe that.

David: Yeah, yeah. I mean, there's transitions here. When I first got here, for example, Japanese women had to get married by the time they were twenty five or they were called Christmas Cake. We have a lot of Christmas Cakes now.

Interviewer: Just to move on here, do you think it's important to commit to your life in Japan, consciously commit-

David: Yes.

Interviewer: ... Or, does it happen naturally?

David: I think at some point you have to make a conscious commitment because for example I noticed in the workplace that when I got married greater job opportunities came in. Then, once I had kids the opportunities came in. Then, when I bought property even bigger opportunities came. The greater I committed to Japan, the greater trust I must have engendered in people that I interact with.

Interviewer: It is important, a conscious commitment?

David: Absolutely because I think everyone stopped asking me, "When are you going home?"

Interviewer: Oh, that's a very good point.

David: Yeah.

Interviewer: People around you realized-

David: Nobody expects that now-

Interviewer: Yes.

David: They know that. I camped in here for the long haul.

Interviewer: Do you feel discussions like this can be best answered by looking at people's personalities rather than cultural differences? Do you think a person's personality is very important to fit in?

David: I would say personality is definitely more important because first of all, if you come from the United States, you can be any culture, so it would be to say Americans act this way. It's definitely individuals. Americans may be more prone to certain characteristics, but I would think individual differences are going to be great as the case is. Clearly it's individuals because I know other Americans who made it very differently than me.

Interviewer: We spoke about the middle ground before and you agree that there is a power in that middle ground?

David: Absolutely because there is-

Interviewer: I'm sorry, I don't mean to interrupt. Did you read the quote that I put in there?

David: Say it again, I don't-

Interviewer: The quote that I put in the questions was from Daniel Kahl who is a TV personality.

David: Yes, I did read that.

Interviewer: He said that even though his Japanese, he would never be as good as his Japanese counterparts, he knows for a fact that his wit or his originality would never be able to be copied by Japanese.

David: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: He has found this niche-

David: Niche.

Interviewer: ... Center where he just feeds off of, and he says that gives him his power.

David: Yes. It's the same with me.

Interviewer: You feel the same?

David: Absolutely. Yeah, just, yeah. Japan does not need one more imitation Japanese person. What they need is differences and diversity. That's what it's all about. It's finding how you can contribute by being yourself.

Interviewer: You think contributing is very important?

David: This society is a group society and if you're not contributing to the welfare of the group, you'd best pack your bags I think. Yeah, yeah, you see the Japanese have arrived at a ... I'm not trying to just kowtow to the Japanese, but I would say that the Japanese get it. The way to make a successful society is where we all are looking out for each other and we want to see things rise to a new level.

Interviewer: Do you have any Japanese friends that you only speak Japanese with?

David: Sure.

Interviewer: Yeah?  
David: Yeah.  
Interviewer: Would you say that's fairly natural for someone who's been here for thirty years?  
David: Oh, yeah.  
Interviewer: Do you know people who have been here longer than, let's say, twenty years and they don't speak the language?  
David: Sure.  
Interviewer: You know people like that?  
David: Sure, sure, sure.  
Interviewer: Okay. Can you fathom how they get by in life?  
David: I can only imagine that they must have a lot of insecurity and a feel of lack of power and control of their lives. Yeah.  
Interviewer: How many Japanese friends would you guess that you have, if you had to even guess?  
David: That's an interesting thing because definition of friend ... I came to Japan and I learned the word *shirai* and all that jazz-  
Interviewer: *aka-no-tanin*  
David: Pardon?  
Interviewer: It gets farther and farther away.  
David: Yeah. It's a really different thing. My wife would say that I've got loads and loads of acquaintances, but not that many friends.  
Interviewer: I would say that's normal.  
David: Yeah.  
Interviewer: That's normal.  
David: Yeah. Although the interesting thing is when I go to look at my life, like today, the next step in my business requires cooperation from my human network. I think that these people that I consider my acquaintances are more reliable than what I used to call friends in the United States.  
Interviewer: Oh, I see. That is interesting. That's very interesting. Define that cooperation, it's a special thing.  
David: Well, I think because Japanese people have been raised to sort of... They don't look first at what Europeans call the WIFUM, "what's in it for me." They actually see the benefit of helping other people first. It's an enlightened self-interest that people grow up with. Kids serve each other in the school cafeteria, the *kyushoku*.  
Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).  
David: Kids clean their own classroom. People in the dojo clean the dojo.  
Interviewer: Oh, that's right.  
David: We don't do that in the States.  
Interviewer: That's right, that's right.  
David: There's an Eastern thing that it just reinforces it  
Interviewer: The *shacho* sweeps up in front of the building-  
David: Yeah, I love that.  
Interviewer: I know that's interesting.  
David: Yeah. There's a humility that's really good.  
Interviewer: Do you have any dissatisfaction that you would equate with living in Japan?  
David: Oh, sure.  
Interviewer: What kind of dissatisfaction? Would you explain anything of that?  
David: Okay, only recently it's actually getting better, but I used to complain that there was a lack of a social life because people's focus is so much related to achieving business goals or community goals that if you didn't fit into a category, like your kids didn't go to the same elementary school or you didn't have some affiliation on some business initiative that there really was no time to socialize.  
Now, I think, my complaints are actually decreasing because there's a café culture that is emerging here. Japan is really changing their immigration policy. I used to bemoan or bewail the lack of diversity and all of a sudden you've got Thai people, Chinese, everybody is coming in all of a sudden.

To tell you the truth, the areas that I thought were uncomfortable are being addressed. As soon as we get Mexican food, I'm looking for the Apocalypse.

Interviewer: Easy to come by burritos is one of the seven signs?

David: Yeah. The arrival of Taco Bell will signal it's one of the seven horses of the Apocalypse.

Interviewer: Yeah, exactly.

David: I mean, it's already too good to be true that you can get good hamburgers here.

Interviewer: One of the final questions here, actually I have a couple more because we do have some time. Do you have any anecdotes that could crystallize, 'oh, this is a Japan story'?

David: Oh, God, are you kidding?

Interviewer: Like when you get together with friends, I mean, you have a ton of them.

David: You mean like the Suntory time lost in translation moments and things like that?

Interviewer: Exactly.

David: Okay, one of my worst ones, the early years ... Okay, I don't have these so much any more because I've been here more than half my life, but when I first got here, I was mourning the loss of a college buddy.

I was explaining to my homestay father that my best buddy had died. He went, "Ha, ha, ha," and I thought he was laughing at me. I'm, 'you cruel creature.' All he was doing was acknowledging it, "Ha, ha, ha." We don't say, "Ha, ha, ha," in English.

Interviewer: That's right.

David: I thought, 'you bastard.'

Interviewer: When they say, "Ha, ha, ha-"

David: What are you going, "Ha, ha, ha," at me for? I just lost my best friend and you're going, "Ha, ha, ha." It was really one of those completely taking it totally wrong. It was one of the most amazing realizations. I don't know how long it took me to realize that he wasn't denying or dissing me, he was just speaking Japanese. That was one.

Interviewer: Could you give us another one?

David: Yeah sure, I've got plenty of them, my God. Well, one of the saddest things I learned was that when I was charging too little for my English lessons, people didn't take me serious. I found out, I thought ... In America it was common sense to lower the price and people would come, so I lowered my rates after I first got here.

I was up in Kyoto and I rushed back and I even got in a motorcycle accident I was in such a hurry to get to the class. I got there and the people didn't show up and it's because it was so cheap they thought, 'we'll just cancel. No big deal.' From that point on I increased my prices by 250 percent and nobody ever cancelled again.

Interviewer: Oh. Just a couple of bonus questions here. When you experience something that you feel like somebody is misrepresenting you. If you meet a Japanese person and they think you just came in yesterday. How do you deal with that?

David: For example, if they want to speak to me in English and stuff?

Interviewer: Right, right.

David: I just say, "Hello, how are you?"

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

David: I totally go along with it because I know, for them, you're brand new.

Interviewer: Oh, I see.

David: At first I used to be offended, 'hey, I can speak Japanese.' No, no.

Interviewer: When you meet a new person here, when I say that, a new person from America who's just come here, what kind of differences do you see that they just can't understand at the beginning?

David: Well, I'm dealing with one of those today. The guy's not from America, he's from the U. K. He doesn't understand who his real friends are in this society. If you meet people from the U. K. or America and they come here, they think they have to fend for themselves. They don't understand that you've got a build a team, you've got to get people who will vouch for you to get in. It's disappointing for me that some guys just don't get it and they cancel out and they don't respect your time. That to me is, 'wow, I guess I've jumped sides. I'm now on the Japanese side,' because I can imagine Japanese friends seeing that same disappointment in me when I first got here because I thought-

Interviewer: Yeah, I totally understand.

David: Yeah.  
Interviewer: Sometimes when you're speaking to people who've been here a really long time, you just really feel like you're speaking to a double because we've experienced similar things, just a path that you go down.  
David: Yeah.  
Interviewer: We deal with it different ways but really the goal, the final part, it's the similar, very similar, yeah.  
David: Yeah. Here's another interesting thing is I no longer care whether people stay here forever or leave. People are going to come and go as they please. I used really be upset if people that I became attached to left. I think part of that is the Internet. You never lose touch with people now, ever, so let them go.  
Interviewer: Do you feel there's more or less autonomy in Japan? Do you feel more autonomous in Japan.  
David: Oh, totally, completely free here. You can do anything you want to.  
Interviewer: Oh.  
David: Whereas if you're in the States, now you've got to pull the party line.  
Interviewer: Oh yeah. You have to keep in the social check.  
David: Yeah, not only that but there's so many politically correct things that have come out since I left that if you don't ... Well, so many issues that if you don't support them, you're shunned. Here, nobody cares what your political views are. They don't care what your religion is. I love it here.  
Interviewer: Okay.  
David: Yeah, Japan is actually far more accepting when it comes down to that. No one will ever challenge me for my religious views, or lack of them, for example. You can be anything here.  
Interviewer: Yeah.  
David: I told my kids to just be themselves. Don't try and blend in too much. Like what you like. Be who you are.  
Interviewer: Raising kids in Japan is a whole other story. I can't even get into that.  
David: I know that's a huge story.  
Interviewer: That's a whole other chapter of life-  
David: Yeah.  
Interviewer: ... But, something I'd like to see in the future. I don't mean to get into the negative-  
David: We need to stay on the-  
Interviewer: Do you feel there's discrimination? I'm sorry-  
David: Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
Interviewer: Have you ever been discriminated against?  
David: Yes, in a positive way. That's the funny thing, it's reverse discrimination.  
Interviewer: Ah, okay, so this is an advantage, in a way?  
David: Oh, totally. In certain situations, for example, people didn't used to sit down next to me on the buses and stuff and I used to be upset by that. I'm the gaijin and nobody wants to sit next to me. Then, I realized, 'what a minute, I like that space.' Now, actually, 'darn it, people are sitting next to me now.' They don't give me the space they used to. Dang it, I'm not *gaijin-san* anymore.  
Interviewer: They can tell. They can-  
David: They can tell you're safe, they sit next to you. Even girls sit next to me now. I was, 'oh, God. The days of being the odd commodity are over.' There was also discrimination where some restaurants wouldn't serve me.  
Interviewer: This was way back when?  
David: In the old days, we're talking 25 years ago.  
Interviewer: Nowadays you don't see that?  
David: I don't see any of what we call typical standard-fare discrimination. Banks will loan money to me. Businesses will deal with me, so no, not really.  
Interviewer: Okay.  
David: I don't attempt to be a *shain*. That's the difference.

Interviewer: I see. Okay, that's a big difference. Have you accomplished what you planned, when you first came, or did you just-

David: It's exceeded it. I think, I've got a couple more goals. I've got a couple more goals that involve, life goals that I even had before I came to Japan, that I have not yet fulfilled, but I'm very much on my way.

Interviewer: Very good. Do you have a lot of friends who are the same sex as you in Japanese, not just women friends?

David: Do I have men friends?

Interviewer: Yeah.

David: Actually most of my friends are men.

Interviewer: Okay.

David: That changed because when I first got here it was mostly women.

Interviewer: It's harder to do that.

David: Right, and now, men because it's the time in my life where I'm focusing on business and that's what men do.

Interviewer: Right, right.

David: Yeah, and that's definitely changed over time because I grew up. There's a thing that I refer to though, the resetting of the odometer when you come here. Chronologically, if I were in America, I would be 55, but here I'm 30.

Interviewer: Oh, you feel younger?

David: Oh, totally because I had to learn everything from zero.

Interviewer: Right, I see.

David: It's an elixir of life to come to another country, with that attitude.

Interviewer: That's a good way to put it. Well, thank you very much.

David: Thank you.

Interviewer: I appreciate it. Very good information.

David: Thank you.

Interviewer: Yeah, thanks a lot. Hey-

### **002 Chris**

- Interviewer: I'll start at the very top. What was it like when you first arrived in Japan? Do you remember?
- Chris  
Interviewer: 1991.  
Chris 1991.
- I came over, it was September. I found a job in 3 days. The Japan Times at the time, had a huge classified section with 90 percent of the jobs were for English teaching, English conversation schools.
- Interviewer: Really? 1991.  
Chris Yeah it was really easy to get a job. They were just hiring anybody.
- Interviewer: The reason why you came was to teach English?  
Chris Well, yeah. Not at all. My wife, we met in university. We had been together for 3 years and I felt that this is the woman I'm going to spend the rest of my life with. She ended up staying in America for 2 more years to get her masters.
- Interviewer: I see.  
Chris We graduated together, we met in America, we graduated together. Completely by chance, serendipity if you will. She said, "Well I want my masters in counseling, psychology," and her parents said okay. I was burnt. I was really tired from studying, from working. I used to be an athlete. I was a runner. I just needed a break, so I thought I'm come over to Japan, improve my language skills, my knowledge of the culture, whatnot. Spend a couple years here, maybe challenge law school or get a masters degree.
- Interviewer: Your original plan wasn't to stay long? It was just to come for a few years.  
Chris No, not actually. She was never going to leave. I knew more or less that if I was going to stay with my wife, at that time, my girlfriend, I was going to stay here forever. I knew that. I was a little bit different from a lot of people. I'm going to be immigrating to Japan basically.
- Interviewer: I see. How long did it take you to realize this is it? It sounds pretty early on that you realized, this is it, I'm going to be here for a long time.  
Chris Yeah. I think as long as she was going to want to be here and her family was. Her connections to her family are very strong.
- Interviewer: Okay.  
Chris Especially to her mom. She just basically said, "We're going to live in Japan." I said okay. It didn't make much difference to me.
- Interviewer: I see. You're just looking for work, you're getting ready to basically settle down, just do the proper thing, get a good job.  
Chris I was thinking of law school.  
Interviewer: I see.  
Chris Then, I had so many friends who were going through the motions and they despised the career choice. I started teaching, and I just really liked it. I love seeing the growth in people and that really attracted me to it. That's why the Columbia graduate program here, I found that out. Basically I figured if I'm going to stay here forever and I'm going to stick to education, then I need to get my masters and so that's when I started the Columbia program here in Tokyo.
- Interviewer: Okay.  
Chris That was another big step in this path in my life that I'm basically going to stay here forever. I'm going to get my masters. I was already teaching at universities even without my masters.
- Interviewer: Right.  
Chris I got out of the English conversation situation after just 2 years. I just love teaching. I haven't looked back ever since.
- Interviewer: Well that's good. All right. I'm going to switch topics a little bit here. Do you use more Japanese than English in your regular life?  
Chris I saw that question and I was like, "Oh," I'm not sure how other people answer, but this is going to be a little bit complicated.
- Interviewer: I think, usually when it gets complicated, usually it's more English.  
Chris I do almost everything in Japanese.

Interviewer: Okay.  
Chris Except with my wife.  
Interviewer: I see.  
Chris And my sons, and TV at home, I gave up on Japanese TV a long time ago.  
Interviewer: Okay.  
Chris I understand it, but I'm just not interested anymore. In my work, in my Kendo, in my daily conversations with colleagues, friends, Japanese friends and so on. It's all Japanese.  
Interviewer: I would say that's mostly Japanese wouldn't you?  
Chris Yeah.  
Interviewer: I would say.  
Chris I'm outside of the house, 12, 13 hours a day.  
Interviewer: It sounds to me like maybe you're using English at home for your boys to learn English. Is that safe to say?  
Chris No, it's just I don't know if we're making a big mistake or not. I see all my friends here who are making this conscious effort to have their children learning or studying English. We're not doing anything like that.  
Interviewer: I see.  
Chris Everything in the house is English. Whatever DVDs, whatever TV shows, whatever books. There's a bunch of games we have, everything is English in the house. There's delayed speech. I know they're not as good as they should be, but they're just going to regular Japanese schools, and I let the boys focus on Japanese for the time being.  
Interviewer: I see.  
Chris Maybe I'm making a mistake. I don't know.  
Interviewer: Time will tell.  
Chris Will they ever be perfectly bilingual? I'm not sure there's such a thing as perfectly bilingual. Everybody has different strengths and weaknesses.  
Interviewer: I agree.  
Chris My wife and I agree on this, and we haven't really made any conscious effort. A-- is starting junior high school in April. The English education starts kicking in a little bit more.  
Interviewer: Right.  
Chris He's really good at English already. He likes it, in fact.  
Interviewer: Anyway, so just to move on here. How important do you think it is to speak the language. There are some people here that don't speak the language.  
Chris Yeah, I know some of the lifers here that have no Japanese ability, and I don't know how they do it.  
Interviewer: You think it's important to learn a language?  
Chris I wouldn't be in my position otherwise. I wouldn't be able to do anything, I don't just practice Kendo, but I'm teaching Kendo, I do volunteer activities where we teach Kendo at schools. In my everyday work, everything is in Japanese. Even the other English professors speak to me in Japanese. I mean, if I didn't have Japanese ability, my own interview for my position right here, 15 years ago, I knew every single professor in the interview. They're all bilingual. They asked me point blank, what's my philosophy on entrance exams in Japanese. Then I said, "Can I answer in English?" They were like, no. Nobody had told me. I wasn't prepared. Here I am, 15 years later. If somebody asked me how good is your Japanese, I think it's safe to say I'm not that bad.  
Interviewer: Well that's good. You would put a great importance on the language. Learning.  
Chris If you're going to be working in a Japanese organization and you can't read and write and speak, I don't know why you would even try to be in a Japanese organization.  
Interviewer: Did you learn Japanese early on?  
Chris I've never studied it.  
Interviewer: You've never studied, but you started learning from the day you came. Trying to pick it up right?  
Chris Yeah, osmosis.  
Interviewer: Okay. There's one question here that says have you assimilated yourself 100 percent in your community.  
Chris Yeah, I like that one.

Interviewer: You say 100 percent?

Chris No.

Interviewer: Obviously, there's a reason why I chose 100 percent, right?

Chris I'm going to break your heart, probably with this one. It's something I don't share publicly, so I'm not sure if I can tell you this or not. Can I?

Interviewer: Go ahead. You go ahead and break my heart, because it's only the second time it will happen today, so go ahead.

Chris If you're going through the Japanese education system, you'll notice that parents are incorporated a lot. Whoever the stay home parent is, if there is a stay home parent. My wife works and she still has to take care of all the stuff, because I absolutely refuse. I had a really bad experience with my son in kindergarten, my oldest. After that, I have nothing to do with any of their education. I don't go to parents day, I don't go to the whatever sports festivals, I don't go to anything. I told my wife I would leave her if she made me do it ever again. We had huge fights.

She just didn't get it. I don't need the gaijin thing. All it was, was I ate a sandwich at a picnic with my son. The women were like, "Why aren't you eating a bento, where's your bento?" We finished the sandwich in like 10 minutes. They're sitting there and they're just criticizing. I went to the teachers, I went even to the principal, and they wouldn't do anything. I was like, screw this, I'm out of here. I left, and I never had anything to do with my son's education ever since.

My wife's like, well there's other international couples in my neighborhood, and all the fathers participate. I know on Facebook, and other people, everybody seems to be happy go lucky and participate with their children's education. I can't deal with it. I don't know why. Now Kendo, Kendo I told you, I do volunteer work. I've been to my son's schools and I've taught Kendo, or introduced Kendo to the class and the parents, and that's fine.

Interviewer: This is something that you can do and you feel like you're more comfortable doing. In that case ...

Chris I know they're going to respect me. I'm carrying a stick as well.

Interviewer: That usually helps yeah.

Chris They're respecting me in that situation.

Interviewer: The point here, the reason why I ask about the 100 percent. There's probably very few people who will say they've 100 percent. I think there has to be some sort of balance that's the middle ground. I don't know if you saw the quote from Daniel Kahl. I got that from the *At Home Abroad* group actually. I think he puts it very well there. He says he'll never speak Japanese as well as the Japanese that he works with, but they'll never really be able to copy his originality. Which I think shows that he's found his own niche. I think that happens with a lot of us.

Chris No, when it comes to Kendo. I've been practicing for 17 years now. I'm 100 percent assimilated. I'm *godan*, I'll challenge for *rokudan* in May. I have all the rights and privileges and expectations of anybody else in my shoes. I love it. For some reason, just to sit there and eat with other parents and kids and have to reintroduce myself and have to start from zero and put up with the, you use chopsticks, or you can eat this, you eat sushi. I just can't deal with it.

At the same time, I don't want to tell these people off because I have respect for them that their kids and my kids are best friends. I just can't tell them to go take a leap off a pier. My way of dealing with that is just don't get involved whatsoever. I would never share that on Facebook. I would never tell anybody that to be honest.

Interviewer: That's why these are anonymous interviews. I need people to tell me things like that.

Chris I'm sure I would break a lot of people's hearts. I think a lot of people would lose respect for me, but I don't care. I just don't want to even bring it up in the first place.

Interviewer: Do you think people get confused with their life here? They don't find the niche, they don't really know where to go and they kind of meander around.

Chris I think it goes both ways. I think some people make a niche for themselves, and others have a niche forced upon them. I think the good example is a bunch of friends who, they live here. I will say they work here. I won't say necessarily they live here. They work here, but as soon as work is off, they're on the next plane to Thailand or the next plane to

wherever. Then, as soon as they have to work again, they come back. They could be out of the country 3, 4 months a year and make a perfectly decent living and say they live in Japan, but my eyes, they don't live here.

Me, and other people like myself, this is my home. I don't have a place to escape to. I have, my own house, I have the mortgage, I have connections to the community. The Kendo is big. My full time job. It requires me to be here. This is February, and I still have work to do. I mean, when you're full time faculty, real full time faculty is different from a lot of people here who just do part time here, part time there and stuff like that. Finding your niche, I think it goes both ways. I have my niche, and I think I've had a lot of say in this path in life.

Interviewer:  
Chris

I see.

I don't think everybody has that luxury here. What happens is a lot of people get miserable because they have this thing forced upon them. They don't necessarily want. They don't see other options available to themselves. I'm like well if you're not happy then do something. They don't do anything, I don't understand that. A lot of that has to deal with, I think language is an issue and the culture is an issue and the lack of assimilation into everyday life here. It gets very superficial and then, when they hit walls, when they hit barriers and they're told no, then they're like why not? I'm like, because you didn't pay your dues. You didn't do as much as you could have done.

I've mentored a bunch of people, personally. Friends and academic circles. Every once in a while, I look at their resumes, they'll send me a resume for a job, or say I'm introducing to a university. I look at what they've done and I'm like that's all? I don't want to show off, but I share mine every once in a while, they're like what the hell? This is normal. This is what you're supposed to be doing. They're like, I didn't know that, I was like yeah. I was like, now you understand why I'm where I am and why you're not.

Interviewer:  
Chris

That makes sense, that makes sense.  
I've become an academic and especially in pharmacy education, pharmacy English education. That's my niche. I've published 9 textbooks now. I've done various research, I've had grant money from the ministry of education. I am a real academic. I think some people try, they aren't as successful.

Interviewer:  
Chris

Have you ever had a situation where you felt that there was something complicated by culture?

Yeah.

Interviewer:  
Chris

I know you have. Could you give me one example?

My wife for God sake. My marriage. It took us 8 years to get married for God's sakes.

Really?

Interviewer:  
Chris

Yeah. We've been together 26 years now. 18 of those have been married. The first 8, her mom absolutely refused to allow her to get married to a foreigner. No *gaijin* genes.

Interviewer:  
Chris

Right.

She was miserable. If you ask my wife, the same kind of question, she would probably tell you exactly what I'm telling you. I felt really bad for her, because I didn't give up, her mom didn't give up, and she was just stuck in the middle. It's funny because her father's never had any animosity towards me, he never cared. Mom was, no *gaijin*. That aspect of the culture was the inclusivity. It didn't seem like, mom's passed away now, and actually we became great together once the boys were born.

Interviewer:  
Chris

When she finally was able to see my growth and my potential and everything like that, she finally just completely 180 degree turn in attitude towards me. Yeah, it's just, she was a special person, and she did wonderful, she was a wonderful, wonderful grandmother. Wonderful mother-in-law, but before getting married, it was really, really bad situation.

It's not an uncommon story. 8 years seems like a long time though.

Interviewer:  
Chris

Yeah.

Interviewer:  
Chris

That's a long time.

How patient I am. I always joke about it, but you're not the only one who can make jokes. I'm definitely going to heaven, because I put up with a lot that nobody else would have wanted. A few friends who know the whole story, I earned a lot of respect. The cultural issue that always blew my mind was my wife was such a highly intelligent person,

hardworking, jack-of-all-trades. She can do so much. Yet, she couldn't live her own life. She could not marry the person she loved without her mom's consent.

That's a huge part of the cultural thing here that I'm not sure many people can fully grasp until they actually encounter it. That was probably the biggest thing in my life so far.

Interviewer: Do you think it takes commitment to live here?

Chris Yeah.

Interviewer: A conscious commitment.

Chris Patience.

Interviewer: Patience.

Chris I would say for me, I mean, I don't know.

Interviewer: Do you think part of that commitment is also contribution?

Chris Contribution from where? Me giving or they giving to me?

Interviewer: You are giving.

Chris When you've contributed and you've made a commitment, and you get recognition for that, then I think it's really nice.

Interviewer: I see.

Chris I'm not sure everybody gets recognition for what they do here. I think that's, even though you can be so committed and you can be so giving, and you get zero back. Then, I see a lot of people just give up, and I understand that. I've been lucky where on various levels where at work, or publishing companies or my wife, her mother-in-law, other people around me. They have given me that recognition for the work that I've done. That makes it easier. Much, much easier.

Interviewer: Right.

Chris I generally tend to say the only reason that I'm here is Kendo. Well, because I get a lot of acceptance. Put it this way, I've put 17 years of commitment into Kendo. There's no reason for me to stop. I'll probably be doing this until I die. That commitment I think is nothing special. When I share that, every once in a while people on Facebook who don't know me so well, they'll ask me, "So by the way, how long have you been in Kendo?" I say 17 years, and their eyes pop out.

Interviewer: Yeah right.

Chris You've been doing what? For how long? I'm like 17 years, no big deal. We're in Japan right? Where people will commit their whole life to something. My own teachers have been doing it for 60 years, so 17 years seems like nothing. Outside Japan, it's a different story. You don't always have this kind of need for commitment.

Interviewer: Do you ever feel any stress in your life?

Chris Yeah.

Interviewer: You would say that's normal? Do you just deal with that as it comes?

Chris I don't know. For me, if people didn't have stress in their life, they're dead.

Interviewer: I'm talking about more of a cultural stress. Do you consider it all, in one of my questions here, do you feel like these discussions are almost better looked at as a personality discussion than actual cultural differences? Once you've been here for a long time, the people you're dealing with, you're dealing with them as individuals. As individual personalities. Do you feel like that's more of the core of the discussion?

Chris Stress. I think, okay, you touched on something very important about individuals. I think one of the things that really bothers me a lot is with the othering that occurs when somebody writes about Japan or talks about Japan. They're all the same and I hate that. I've been able to make some wonderful, wonderful friends, acquaintances, work colleagues. I don't get a whole lot of stress from that. I get stress from the people who don't know me, that I have to reintroduce myself again. Again, I've been here 23 years, you came yesterday? I'm like no, I've been here for 23 years. Can you speak Japanese? I'm speaking Japanese right now for God's sakes.

Chris That kind of conversation, that gives me stress. Every once in a while I meet people who don't do like that. They've never met me before, and they can just speak to me in Japanese and treat me like a normal person, and I really, really appreciate that. It's not common unfortunately. I kind of got to the point where, if I don't have to leave the house, I don't leave the house. If I have something to do, Kendo or work something, I want to go

shopping, I have something specific. Somebody's visiting me from another country. I have some reason to go outside, I will. If I don't have, I'm perfectly happy to stay home. I just don't want to put up with the crowds or the people or the nonsense.

Interviewer: I see.

Chris

Interviewer: Which one of the 622 do you want?

Chris

I'm going to take the 451 please. Break out the Rolodex.

Just the other day, I thought it was really neat. A friend of mine was in from Hong Kong, we went shopping in Ginza. He's a rather wealthy person. He wanted to buy some nice shoes we went to the Berlotti's which is a famous Italian brand. They're a boutique in Ginza. We were treated like royalty, just wonderful. The guy spoke some English and took care of my friend. I was there in Japanese and supporting. We finished up, he didn't have exactly what my friend wanted. If you're going to pay \$2000 for a pair of shoes you expect to get exactly what you want.

He asked for a card. The guy pulls out his business card holder and by accident dropped the card onto the floor. Instead of picking it up and giving it to my friend, he got another card out of his card holder and gave that to my friend.

Interviewer: That's a good one. That's a good one. That's perfect.

Chris

I spend the whole day with my friend, we end up being in *Roppongi* until 3 o' clock. I haven't done that in 20 years. We spent the whole day together, another friend joined us. He's a Japanese-American. My friend from Hong Kong shared that, he said, "Eric and I were at this shop today and this guy dropped his *meishi*, he dropped his business card. Instead of picking it up and giving it to me, he just got a new one out. A second one out." We hadn't even talked about it. My friend was still impressed by that. This is at 2 o' clock in the morning, we're eating soba. We're half drunk out of our minds and exhausted from a 18 hour day. He was sharing that. My Japanese-American friend was like, "Yeah, that's common sense." Outside Japan, I think they would have just picked it up and given it to you. Not here. You can't do that.

Interviewer: Right, right.

Chris

There's all these landmines. It goes in reverse, I don't know if this is going to help you or not. It goes the other way around too. When I have to work in professional settings, and I have guests or I have visitors, I have Japanese people that I collaborate with. Then, that goes both ways. If I drop that *meishi*, I cannot pick that up and give it to him. I might have done that 15 years ago. I might have done that and not even known what I was doing was wrong. Nobody would ever say a word. Until after I was gone, then they say what an idiot.

There's all these little things, nuances, little unwritten rules. I'm not sure, maybe it's written somewhere, I've never seen. If you drop your *meishi* on the ground you cannot pick it up and bring it to someone.

Interviewer: How do you think, for example, someone who's new, who's coming compares to someone who's been here for 20 years or 30 years?

Chris

You know *komakai* right, in Japanese. There's an attention to detail at certain situations in life in Japan that is world class. I don't think anybody on the planet cares so much about the small little details like some people, not everybody, but some people in Japan. My wife, she's very particular about some of these rules too. There's the famous stuff like you could give somebody food with your chopsticks to their chopsticks. That's something that's a famous no-no.

Interviewer: Right.

Chris

All these famous no-no's are just the tip of the iceberg. There's so many more that until you've actually either broken it and somebody's slapped you against the side of the head and told you, "Don't do that ever again." Or I learned a lot from Kendo.

Interviewer: I agree.

Chris

If it weren't for Kendo, I wouldn't have any idea.

Interviewer: I totally agree.

Chris

Generally speaking, you're not supposed to lean against a wall in Japan. Especially in a dojo. I can walk into a dojo and I see somebody leaning against a wall, and I say "What a

smuck". I'm teaching, in my own university, I'm the coach for the Kendo team, and I have to teach the kids that you don't do that. I'm teaching them how to be Japanese.

Interviewer: I understand that. I can definitely relate with that.

Chris A new person here, even after a year or 2, why can't you lean against a wall? It's just not done. It's the same thing, like you wouldn't just throw something. You need something, I have it, I just toss it to you. You wouldn't do that in Japan in a professional setting. Big no-no. Even just handing something. I would have to turn it around and hand it to you so it's facing you.

Interviewer: That's right.

Chris Whereas Americans are hey just give it to me, I don't care.

Interviewer: On the opposite side of *komakai*, do you feel like you have more autonomy in Japan than you would, for example in America?

Chris No.

Interviewer: No.

Chris I did at one time, but I was just young and stupid.

Interviewer: I see.

Chris Now I know too much and I have very little autonomy. It breaks my heart. No, it was ripped away from me in terms of my teaching. In terms of publishing and other stuff, I do have a great deal of autonomy, which I appreciate. No, it's a long story I won't get into, but I wish I had more.

Interviewer: What about discrimination? Do you ever feel discriminated against in Japan?

Chris Every day.

Interviewer: Really?

Chris If I had a day, I freely say it. Even first day of classes. I've been here 23 years, I haven't had a day without feeling discriminated against. I'm sorry, I'm just being honest. The thing is, I just had to do this, our university is being evaluated by a third party. This is going to happen to all the universities and I guess people are sick and tired of shenanigans that professors are getting away with, with taxpayer money.

There's this third party evaluation system, my university got chosen for one of those first pharmacy schools. We have to turn in all this paperwork, what we've done for the past 6 years. I didn't do it, because I'm not tenured. Everybody else on my campus is tenured, I'm the only one who's not tenured. The reason I'm not tenured, even though I do all the same work and have all the rights and privileges as the associate professors, simply because I'm *gaijin*.

Interviewer: Really?

Chris They made a rule when I was hired, and they never hired anybody else non Japanese after me. The rule is my rule, Eric's rule. Nobody has any intent of reversing that rule as far as I can tell. Basically, my daily life, as long as I'm working here, I'm being discriminated against.

Interviewer: Interesting.

Chris Then they tell me, but you are a full time faculty member, so please do the paperwork, even though it's 2 weeks late. That's what I was doing this morning.

Interviewer: Right. I just wanted to, just a couple of quick questions at the end here. You put your life satisfaction pretty high I guess.

Chris You know, every once in a while, I hear about friends around the world and issues with divorces or children they can't see, or health issues or this and that. I think to myself, yeah my life ain't that bad, I should shut up. Why am I complaining? I try to think more optimistically and more positively. I think I have a pretty decent life here. I think it shows on my Facebook posts and a lot of people have a lot of appreciation for the positivity and the nice things that I share about life in Japan.

I think very few people have an idea about what life is really like here. The stupid media, and the news programs and they just give BS cliches and stuff like that. What I share is more real, and I think a lot of people sincerely appreciate that. In return, I appreciate their appreciations. It works both ways. I think too many people have this. The worst thing that I really don't care for is this mysticism, like Japan is special or practicing a martial art is special. There's some, everybody's got ESP, some spider man sense.

I'm like, dude they're people, just like you and me. There's nothing special. Some people say, how can you live in Tokyo? I'm like, how can you live in London, how do you live in New York? It's just a big city. That's always been my take. It's just a big city. Too many people, too expensive, and polluted, but it's never really mattered to me that I'm physically in Japan. It wasn't like I had this fascination marrying a Japanese woman. I was marrying K----. I don't know ...

### **003 Edward**

Interviewer: What was it like when you first arrived in Japan?  
Edward: Little bit of a change, different culture, and the language totally different than, what I been, this one was totally different than what I knew.

Interviewer: Oh so you had traveled a lot before?  
Edward: Yes

Interviewer: Where had you been before that?  
Edward: Uh, lot of places, lot of countries in Europe. USA, Canada, Australia, East Asia...

Interviewer: Did you live in any of these places?  
Edward: I lived in the US

Interviewer: You lived in the US, how long did you live there?  
Edward: I don't know probably, all together, I don't know. Maybe close to two years actually.

Interviewer: Oh okay, so that's actually...pretty long actually. Okay, all right. So why did you come to Japan, what was the original plan?  
Edward: So, I met ---- in the US.

Interviewer: Okay, you met your wife, that's your wife?  
Edward: That's my wife, yeah. And she had to come back to Japan, and were not married at that time, so I said okay let me go first and see how the country is. And I came here, and I automatically fell in love with the country. And so, yeah that's basically what..at that time I decided I would stay here, so.

Interviewer: So you originally just enjoyed the atmosphere of the country, it seemed exciting to you?  
Or...

Edward: It was. It was totally different than what I knew, and what I anticipated for. And, there was a rich country and culture and I can say ultimately felt comfortable being here.

Interviewer: Okay. You feel comfortable. Did you feel challenged at the beginning, in a good way, or in a bad way or? Because you used the word challenged before, is that in a good way or a bad way?  
Edward: It's in a good way. It's in a good way. All challenges is in a good way, I see. And, the challenges, the main one was the language barrier...

Interviewer: I see.  
Edward: And even though I was living in Tokyo, it was a language barrier. So I realized, from the straight go that I had to take Japanese language lesson.

Interviewer: Do you feel comfortable with the language now?  
Edward: Yes and no  
Interviewer: Yes and no?  
Edward: Okay. My comprehension was pretty good, I'm capable of understanding almost everything. Conversations, I can have very basic conversation, but when it gets too technical. I sometime...it's difficult for me to put the word.

Interviewer: I see  
Edward: Even if I would understand the word, it's difficult for me to say it.

Interviewer: What about, uh, you work on a military base...and actually you're French, I didn't mention that in the recording. You're originally from France. When you work on the military base, are you working with Japanese people?  
Edward: Okay, yeah my job itself, it's only in English.

Interviewer: It's only in English. Okay, no I just wanted to confirm that.

Edward: It's only in English, however, my coworkers because I'm fire prevention but I work along with the Fire Department, and they're all Japanese.

Interviewer: I see  
Edward: So I work with Japanese.

Interviewer: Just to get back to the original discussion, when you first came to Japan, did you plan to stay for the long-term?  
Edward: Uh, no.

Interviewer: Not from the beginning?  
Edward: Not from the beginning.

Interviewer: So how long did it take you to realize that you were going to be here for the long-term?  
Like what year, or what month?

Edward: Probably about, after the first couple month.  
Interviewer: First couple months? So fairly early?  
Edward: Fairly early, yeah, as I told you earlier, I felt very comfortable being here.  
Interviewer: Okay.  
Edward: About the country and I always traveled before...  
Interviewer: Okay.  
Edward: So it was not difficult for me to live in other countries. And, yeah, I love it, I think from almost the straight go, and at that time I realized that I wanted to stay here.  
Interviewer: Okay, all right. Good. Did you ever feel like...was there ever a situation or a time where you felt like it's hard to live or I might have made a mistake, did you ever have that feeling?  
Edward: Probably at the beginning when I was looking for job and straightening up my, uh, visa situation.  
Interviewer: Ah, I see. So this is fairly common to have stress during visa times and also employment. That's not uncommon so. Okay, so let's kind of move on here.  
So in your life, do you use more Japanese than you do English?  
Edward: That's a difficult question because being French, I use some French, of course at home...  
Interviewer: Ah, that's right, I'm sorry. I forgot about that.  
Edward: Yeah I use some French at home.  
Interviewer: Of course, of course you do, I'm sorry.  
Edward: And also of course use Japanese at home, I also speak English with my wife. At Work I speak Japanese with my coworkers, but all the other people and all my reports is done in English.  
Interviewer: Actually, no that's a good answer, because it is kind of complex. It sounds like it's complex because you're dealing with three languages. Also do you have any activities outside of your work or family that you do?  
Edward: I used to, and I don't do as much as I used to, *Iaido*.  
Interviewer: You did *Iaido*? Very traditional...  
Edward: Yes  
Interviewer: Martial art  
Edward: And do a lot of outdoor things, hiking and camping and that type of stuff.  
Interviewer: So how important do you think it is to learn the language, to learn the language to live here?  
Edward: I think it is crucial.  
Interviewer: It's crucial.  
Edward: For instance I just came back from the hospital, if I was not able to fully communicate, I would not be able to explain what was my problem.  
Interviewer: I see.  
Edward: And understand what the *sensei* is telling me.  
Interviewer: Are they happy that you speak the language? Do they feel relieved that you speak the language? I should put it that way.  
Edward: Actually relieved, I think is more the word. That I understand and I speak the language.  
Interviewer: They feel relieved.  
Edward: Because at the beginning...thinks you're gonna hide, I'm a *gaijin* and so they're automatically shy and then when they realize I'm capable of communicating with them, it changes the aspect of the situation.  
Interviewer: Right, okay. Have you assimilated yourself one hundred percent into Japanese society?  
Edward: I think so.  
Interviewer: You think so?  
Edward: I think so  
Interviewer: I understand you feel one hundred percent comfortable.  
Edward: But sometimes, there's things I can not hide. I look foreigner, and so ultimately people will see me differently.  
Interviewer: Right.  
Edward: The..yeah, sometimes do have it, but it's nothing I really care about.

- Interviewer: So how do you deal with that? If someone comes up to you and says, like, they thought you just arrived yesterday, you deal with that, right? You have mechanism...do you just completely ignore it, or how do you deal with that with the person? Do you continue to talk to that person, or do you ignore that person?
- Edward: No, I continue. I'm not going to stop or anything like that, if I was contact with that person for a reason I'm going to keep on going.
- Interviewer: Do you think it's attitude?
- Edward: It's different than attitude, if you...I have several friends, foreigners, here. Most of them are Americans, sometimes they don't make the effort, and if you decide to live here you have to make the effort to integrate yourself in a society. If you don't make that effort, you will never be integrated into a society.
- Interviewer: Have you ever had like, a legal problem, or something that you would definitely label as a cultural difference that really puts your life in Japan at risk, or you felt like it was something that made you think about, again, like maybe I don't want to live in Japan.
- Edward: Probably the closest experience I had, I never, at that time I never questioned myself of being here or not. But I had a car accident...
- Interviewer: Ah ha.
- Edward: And had to deal with the police. And the first approach to police, toward foreigners, is fairly rude. Not all of them, I've got friends in the police department, so it's definitely not all of them, but it's, uh, one experience, initially the guy was fairly rude, but I still tried to..at that time I tried to stay positive, still tried to communicate with the guy. And it turned out to go well.
- Interviewer: But at the beginning you found them very rude?
- Edward: Fairly rude, yes.
- Interviewer: But even though they were rude, you responded with kindness, I would guess. Or politeness.
- Edward: Yeah.
- Interviewer: I should say politeness . it's not like you gave them a flower or anything like that. Okay, do you think commitment is an important part of living in Japan, like being committed to the community, being committed to the people around you, the Japanese? And what I mean by commitment is giving back to the community or...
- Edward: Yeah, I think it is, uh, crucial. I think. As I mentioned, probably earlier, it's the commitment, it's when you decide to integrate to a society, you need to make an effort. It's not a one-way deal, and you receive from the community, you need to give back to the community. And, I think, it's being living in the countryside, people are not automatically familiar with foreigners. And I think it is crucial to show good impression and it probably will help the next generation of foreigner coming here, but I think it is important for them to show appreciation and willingness to do things.
- Interviewer: Okay that makes sense.
- Edward: And sometimes it might not make sense to what you asked to do, but yeah you just do it. Could you give an example of something that doesn't make sense?
- Interviewer: Sometimes you might have it in your, uh, the emergency preparedness days, or where you have to go and go to the meeting point and use fire extinguishers and thing like that.
- Edward: Oh, I see.
- Interviewer: I don't know if you have that in your area, but we do have it here. And, uh...
- Interviewer: We do have it in our area, and it's usually most of the people who live in houses go, but we live in mansion.
- Edward: Okay, but for instance...this is my job. I'm like a, uh, I think I'm pretty good at what I do and even if I think it is useless what they do, I just comply with the situation and okay, let's do it. Not try to say no, this is the right way to do, this is how you should do it.
- Interviewer: So you listen to their side?
- Edward: I listen to their side.
- Interviewer: Do you think there are more steps involved when Japanese plan to do something? Or do you feel like it's sometimes too complicated, it should be simplified?
- Edward: Probably.
- Interviewer: Probably?

- Edward: Probably, but it took me years to understand, initially I was probably frustrated with that uh, I could say, uh, their....
- Interviewer: System?
- Edward: Their system and the leadership, and I couldn't understand it and it took me years to actually understand it. Now I'm okay, because I fully understand it, but sometimes it tends to be over complicated. For instance I go sometimes to the S---- prefecture emergency preparedness meeting. So there is a governor, there is everybody and they simulate exercise, and for me it would be easier to simplify it and reduce the amount of people. They just tend to over complicate it and putting a lot of people in the structures...and not, uh, just follow the orders basically. Not putting, not giving the opportunity for initiative or things like that.
- Interviewer: I see. That's interesting. So do you think you have developed an instinct over the years about this, just to hold your tongue?
- Edward: Probably, yes. I'm, uh, no more than ... I'm fairly quiet to listen to a conversation before, just like say thanks, and probably being here for the amount of years, it's probably doing this even more than what I used to do.
- Interviewer: You had mentioned earlier that you practiced Iaido, do you feel Iaido has helped you understand the Japanese culture more?
- Edward: I think so, yes.
- Interviewer: Okay.
- Edward: It's, uh, the traditional part where you...the...there are reasons why we do certain things in Japan, and you understand it by doing martial arts. It helps you actually understand that important part.
- Interviewer: I see, okay. Do you ever think there's positive discrimination for foreigners here, for western foreigners?
- Edward: Yes, there is.
- Interviewer: There is, you feel that way?
- Edward: I feel that way. Fortunately, I'm on the good side but I think, yes, there is positive discrimination, and yeah I think...
- Interviewer: Do you ever feel like people take advantage of only that and don't really do anything else, just rely on that only?
- Edward: There might be some people, there, yes. I think there might be.
- Interviewer: There might be?
- Edward: There might be some people taking advantage of that.
- Interviewer: So what are some advantages and disadvantages of being a foreigner, of being a western foreigner in Japan?
- Edward: I don't think...sometimes people will be more helpful to you, um, try to, yeah, more helpful, try to help you more, try to understand what you really want. On the other side, you are automatically put into that category.
- Interviewer: Ah
- Edward: And sometime I would rather just being, like, considered, like, same as Japanese.
- Interviewer: So, there's that little spot that I'm talking about, that's why it's hard to one hundred percent assimilated, because you have that little spot, but, like because of your positive attitude, you've found a mechanism to deal with that, which is pretty cool.
- Interviewer: So do you think there's a power in the middle, if you learn the language and also use your culture and mix it with their culture, do you feel like that gives you a little bit of power in some ways? Like you've learned how to do that?
- Edward: Yeah, at work, specifically at work. And, it's being more proactive, taking responsibility without willing someone to tell it to me.
- Interviewer: So you're more self-motivated?
- Edward: Self-motivated, yeah. How I could say...in general probably people will try not to stick out of the group, by actually bettering themselves.
- Interviewer: I see, in Japan right? You're talking about in Japan, right?
- Edward: In Japan, I learn how to actually, uh, I always like to better myself, to learn something new, to...but I also try to, by doing that..initially people were, like, on the defensive when they saw me taking a lot of certifications and you're too smart, you're too good. And I'm

like no, I'm like everybody, and I realized to not have this impression reflecting directly on me, but actually show the benefits of the group by doing those type of things.

Okay, being French, working on a US military base with Japanese, I see three different way of thinking, and being, the line of work I am, the leadership is a crucial thing. And I would probably say westerners like, okay, European and American, tend to have a leadership, of actually a leader who will create leaders. Japanese, more in leaders create followers. I don't know if you can understand what I am trying to say.

Interviewer: Well, actually that makes sense to me, I don't know if that will make sense to people who haven't lived here for twenty years like yourself, but it does make sense to me.

Edward: My thought is about...

Interviewer: That's actually a very good quote. Do you have any male friends, who are Japanese, that you only speak Japanese with?

Edward: At work, yes. And in private life, I do, yes.

Interviewer: I mean could you guess how many? Like, roughly.

Edward: Work, I don't know, maybe...

Interviewer: Oh, okay, so you're talking about all the guys at work.

Edward: Yes, and on private life I probably have, I don't know around twenty maybe.

Interviewer: Oh, okay so fairly, a, quite a few. Are you close to your in-laws and your relatives?

Edward: We live together so...

Interviewer: Oh, okay. And everything is fine and happy?

Edward: Sometime there is disagreement.

Interviewer: But would you rank that in the normal disagreement, or it's not cultural is it?

Edward: It's more family things, way of thinking.

Interviewer: Did you feel after children were born that in-laws took more interest in your life.

Edward: I don't know actually.

Interviewer: You don't even know, so that's all right.

Edward: I never thought about that so...

Interviewer: Some people say it, it's kind of off the topic here, but I just figured I'd ask.

Edward: So do you consider Japan your home?

Interviewer: Yes.

Edward: Okay, do you ever feel any stress living in Japan?

Interviewer: Used to, I don't think I have it anymore.

Edward: Well, was that mostly related to employment or Japan?

Interviewer: Probably a mix of everything, probably stressed toward the culture because, yeah, I think, work-related dealing with Japanese colleagues and...in the Japanese community things are done differently and maybe add some stress, really add some stress. Now I felt though, now I'm not stressed at all about it like I used to.

Interviewer: Would you have an anecdote, something that would crystallize the whole living in Japan for twenty years, this is the story I always tell my friends that kind of crystallizes the image of what Japan is, or maybe one or two quick anecdotes that you might have.

Edward: Okay, I will...I decided that I will stay in Japan, probably forever, though my wife, ----, probably would rather live in France, it's probably, it's ...and often, my colleagues at work, when it comes to Japanese story or Japanese culture now will tend to ask me, rather to talk each other about it, okay let's ask ---- he knows more than us.

Interviewer: About Japanese culture?

Edward: Japanese culture and history.

Interviewer: So the Japanese, your Japanese colleagues ask you about Japanese culture and history? That's funny.

Edward: Yes.

Interviewer: That, kind of, that happens sometimes I think.

Edward: Yeah, probably some of us knew, and I think it's part of the, as I said, the integration, if you decided to integrate, you know what you love, you know what you are doing and you know more about, so you read more about it, you care more yourself about the country you decided to live in.

Interviewer: Right. I have quick...just to, I might have asked this a little bit, in a different way before, but just to get it a little bit more solid, do you think it's a conscience, a conscience,

decision live in Japan that makes it successful, or do you think that little by little it just slips in? Do you think you need to make a conscience effort to...  
Edward: Yeah, you need to, I think definitely, you need to, uh, it's not...you just don't live in Japan by accident, I think. At one time, you make the choice, and the willingness to live here, it's a commitment, yeah, it's definitely, yeah, you have to make that conscience decision of actually living here.  
Interviewer: And you made that within the first few months you said?  
Edward: Yes, I think so, I automatically fell in love with the country.  
Interviewer: Do you would have culture shock living back to France?  
Edward: Yes, definitely. Lately, watching...due to the incident that I had in France, I've been paying more attention to the news over there and listening to debate on TV or radio and I realize how the country changed since I left. And even when I go back, last time I went back was two years ago, it's, yeah, the country has changed. It's twenty years, and people...the thought of things has totally changed. Probably would be the same for you.  
Interviewer: Oh yeah, I mean it's crazy. When I go back, it's like, I feel like I'm in a different country.

### **004 Roberto**

- Interviewer: What was it like the first time you arrived in Japan?  
Robert: The first time I arrived in Japan. I think a lot of people go through the culture shock. Things look the same but they're different, so ... I guess for maybe the first couple of years, it was wondrous. It was a lot of fun, but I think my experience is a little bit different maybe from some people who are the subjects of your research in that I'm an Asian Canadian, with an Asian set of genetics that make me look very Japanese if you don't really look closely at me. I would encounter different kind of reactions from people than would your normal sort of blonde, blue-eyed, tall white guy or black guy or black girl or whatever who stands out in a crowd.  
A lot of people say the same stories about, oh I learned how to use my first vending machine. Oh, I learned that Japanese barbershops are amazing places where you can get incredible services that treat you and pamper you. Also too, I think my unique view about it was that as an Asian Canadian, thinking of myself as a Canadian first, here, I would sometimes, not always, if I was to encounter any kind of discrimination, negative or positive, it would be not because I'm a Canadian but because I look Asian. That, sometimes, when it was the negative kind of discrimination, it's a little bit saddening but it didn't happen a lot but it happened enough that I can remark on it.  
Most of the time though, it was positive discrimination because I would say, "Oh, I'm a Canadian." "Oh," and then everybody's eyes would light up. "Oh, he's the safe kind."  
Interviewer: They see a safe kind. Why did you originally come? Why did you come?  
Robert: The original plan was just to take a break from studies. I have always been fascinated by the country of Japan when I was living in the Philippines. In the Philippines, in the 60s and 70s growing up, you get a lot of these old 1960s, 1950s samurai drama. I grew up thinking, wow, what a cool country, looking at all these samurai dramas, even though I figured out that nobody walks around with a topknot and a samurai sword anymore. At the time, in the 1980s when I was studying Pacific Rim studies, Japan was still the miracle country. People couldn't figure out just exactly what was going on and maybe it was cultural, maybe it was economic, maybe it was a combination of how industry works or government. Nobody could figure out the Japanese miracle, so it was a real big topic of discussion in my poli-sci courses. I needed money, and I knew that I could make some money teaching English. I wanted a vacation from school. I had always wanted to come here because it was really cool, it was a country that I'd studied so hey, let's bundle it all together. That's why.  
Interviewer: When you first came, did you plan to stay for the long term?  
Robert: No. Not at all. No plan to stay long term at all. I thought it was going to be 4 years tops.  
Interviewer: How long did it take you to realize you were going to be here for the long term? Was it like years, months?  
Robert: I guess? By the time I became serious with my girlfriend, to be my wife, to be my ex-wife, I thought oh, life could be worse. I have an okay job, and I'm sure English teaching would always be something that can pay me money. I've got a girlfriend now and I'm serious about her. Life could be worse. I'm living in this perfectly safe country. Not perfectly. I take that back. Somewhat perfectly safe country and trying to make a living at home. Life could be worse.  
Interviewer: How long did that take?  
Robert: That was what? 1995, so 4, 5 years.  
Interviewer: 4, 5 years.  
Robert: Yeah. It was by the time I realized my original plan was kind of kaput.  
Interviewer: Kaput. Okay.  
Robert: Kind of.  
Interviewer: Did you first start learning Japanese when you first came? Was it something you immediately started or was it something you waited for ...  
Robert: The original plan was to be here for 4 year so that then, while I was working full-time, I could study hard on the weekends and at night, because it's my dream and get a degree of Japanese functional fluency under my belt and home after four years. Didn't happen at all. It could be because of my schedule. I couldn't find a school that I could go to. It could

be because Japanese can be little bit daunting for the first little while. After you get the hang of it, as you probably know, it's not really that hard.

Interviewer: Do you use more Japanese now than English in your daily life?

Robert: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: You do?

Robert: Yeah. Could be 65/35, 70/30, mostly because I teach in Japanese and I really ... okay. I really only use it when I'm sitting in front of the other expatriate teachers.

Interviewer: Oh I see. Okay. How important you think it was that you learned?

Robert: Oh God. I don't think I could have stayed and flourished. I certainly can't live the lifestyle that I have. I live alone. I live in a small farming town, not too far outside of the city but a small farming town. I take care of my utilities, my bills, the bank business that I have, everything, phone calls. I take care of everything myself, and no disrespect at all because I know that you speak Japanese, but I know a lot of foreign males living in Japan who just passed all of that after their wives because they simply can't handle them.

Interviewer: I know exactly what you mean. I've seen it.

Robert: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: It's hard to see people actually living without that skill because even if you do pass off those responsibilities, technically you still have to communicate with other people.

Robert: You do. Yeah.

Interviewer: How do you think they do that?

Robert: Well, okay, if they're at work, usually there's a secretary or one of those office ladies, as you say in Japan, who they can probably tap on the shoulder and, in broken Japanese, broken English, they can figure out what this is and they say, "Go to bank, give them ¥4000." Okay, cool. Okay. Then you figure it out from there. You just struggle along, but what I didn't want for myself was ... I didn't want to be seen as one of those foreigners who just kind of struggle along. You got to pat them on the head and you get that condescending attitude. I wanted to be treated as much as possible as a peer among the Japanese. For that, you need ... you got to sort of pay respect to the language and the culture by learning the language properly.

Interviewer: Do you think there's a separation between foreign staff and Japanese staff at work?

Robert: I would say yes.

Interviewer: It's a natural separation right?

Robert: Yeah. I was about to say, but it's natural. I mean, if you look at, say, any ... I work at a university. I'm a part-time university instructor. If you look at, say, the French staff, I don't know if you know much about Canada and its French/English history and stuff ...

Interviewer: I'm from Boston so I'm very close to Montreal.

Robert: Okay. Montreal is a little bit more of a mix. It's more of an egalitarian mix of English and French. If you were, say, in Quebec city and you had the English-speaking staff, I think that they would naturally tend to congregate amongst themselves; and the French staff probably would naturally tend to congregate amongst themselves just because you ... unless you've got a whole bunch of people who are perfectly bilingual, who switch in and out paragraph to paragraph, I know people who were like that, but then you have to find a bunch of people who are sort of in that kind of clique. It happens naturally not because some people are saying, "Oh you Anglos are over there." Oh you Canadians are over there, and we Japanese are over here." It's not a negative kind of separation.

Interviewer: That's true though. It's not really like that, but it's there. It's very obvious.

Robert: It can be obvious, and there's just so much more positive air in the office, in the staff room that it's really easy to brush it off.

Interviewer: Do you feel like you've assimilated yourself like 100% in Japanese...?

Robert: 100%? No. I think I've assimilated myself ...

Interviewer: Workplace?

Robert: Workplace is better because the workplace ...

Interviewer: But not 100%?

Robert: Not 100%. No. Slightly better than the community, but the community itself, even though they treat me with respect and they treat me nicely, if you use the word assimilate ... but it depends on the definition of your word assimilate. I mean, that's because of my history as

an Asian Canadian Filipino immigrant, naturalized Canadian in Canadian Vancouver, incredibly multicultural, incredibly international city, I know what assimilation is from that point of view, which is that I'm accepted as a Canadian. In some instances, I know more about and I am more Canadian than people who are born in Canada. That to me is assimilation. What I'm experiencing here, it's just positive discrimination. I get called sensei, and people still say, "Oh, your Japanese is so good. I can't believe it's so good." I can't tell if that's condescension or if that's absolute respect. I think it's a mix of both, depends on person to person. That just shows, I'm not seen as a thoroughly assimilated peer.

Interviewer: Not 100%, but you feel very comfortable in Japan, right?

Robert: Yeah, I would say I'm comfortably. Yeah.

Interviewer: How did you get to that point of being comfortable?

Robert: It was language. It was all language. It's got to be language. I mean, even if you understand the culture, even if you've read all the history books and you know Japanese politics really well, how could you possibly be comfortable here? I mean, you can't even easily ... I bet if I put a heart rate monitor on some people and these people say, "Oh I really know Japanese well," and then they go to drop in their dry cleaning? Their heart rate would probably go up to ... because they got to think a little bit more, you know? I don't think that happens to me anymore. I sometimes don't even realize I'm speaking Japanese. I know that sounds a little bit of a brag, but it sometimes happens. Oh sure. You're speaking Japanese all the way through that.

Interviewer: Do you feel, like in general ... once people know who you are in your area, do you think there is that possibility that there's really the assimilation in your area, where you just feel like the people around you feel very comfortable? You get to know them over time? You feel like it's ...

Robert: I think it's where I would like it to be, and I can't expect much more. My neighbors across the street, really nice people. I help the older women with her computer when it goes a little bit nutty sometimes. It's a Windows machine, and I don't really know but I just take guesses. Then she comes over with some vegetables from her vegetable garden. Her husband is a really nice guy. He sees me when I go ... go out cycling and go running. He says, "Oh, you're going at it today huh? Well, keep going! You're doing fine." I'm going, "Thanks a lot. I've been doing it for 30 years but thank you very much anyway." It's like living with an elderly couple across the street if it was Canada.

My neighbors on the other side of me, we don't have such a warm relation but it's certainly not anything wrong. We nod when we say hello. I think I'm living the same sort of life I would have if I was living in the same circumstances in Canada. Some people in Canada, among their Canadian neighbors, don't have the same kind of friendliness that I have with my Japanese neighbors. How they see me, they probably know that I'm a teacher at a university, and that counts for a lot. There's so much more respect for the people who have the title of *sensei*, I think. That helps a lot. If anything, that mattered a lot, but also the fact that I communicate.

You can almost see like the tension released from some Japanese people when they realize that I speak Japanese. They don't have to use hand gestures. They don't have to get all tensed up and say, oh this is going to be just like my horrible English classes in junior high school. I've got to communicate with this guy. When they see me speaking Japanese, I think that makes the biggest difference.

Interviewer: You think people get confused about their life in Japan?

Robert: You mean the *gaijins*?

Interviewer: Yeah, just people. Of course, yeah. Western foreign people?

Robert: I think people think that they understand what the game is. When I talk to them, sometimes I think they don't really understand. Then again, this is just me being subjective and it's opinion versus opinion. I think, yeah, people can get confused but it depends on what you mean by confused, like outright confused. Oh, what am I doing here? I'm wasting my life kind of confused? Oh, I'm so well accepted in the community and people love me, and then I'm thinking, no not really they don't. Not the way you behave, the way you do. I'm "keeping that to myself kind of confused."

I do thought experiments in my head. I take this guy or this woman's Japanese and I kind of play its equivalent of broken English in my head. What if that guy was a Chinese guy with that level of broken English in Canada or America, how would he be accepted or not, it kind of gives you a different perspective on what they think their role is here and how well they're accepted or not accepted. If they are accepted to the degree that they are accepted, because i can't be completely sure that they are or aren't, that's a compliment to the empathy and compassion of the Japanese around them.

Interviewer: Have you ever experienced a cultural difference that's been so daunting, like it had such an impact on you that you felt like maybe it's time to leave the country?

Robert: Culturally, no.

Interviewer: No. Okay.

Robert: Just to answer the question, no.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's it. Do you think commitment is an important part of living here?

Robert: You have to want to live here. Yeah. You have to want to.

Interviewer: Is that a conscious commitment or is it just something that just kind of grows?

Robert: I think I kind of walked into it. I think if you tell yourself ... I have yet to meet somebody who consciously said, "I want to live in Japan." A lot of people kind of just walk into it, and a lot of people, it's because like me, they met a woman or they met a man that they just wanted to spend the rest of their lives with and they happened to be Japanese. Right? I have also seen people on the other end of the scale who just want to get the hell out of here but they can't because of business commitments and family commitments. But yes, if you don't commit yourself to learning the language, accepting the culture, compromising with what it is that you expect for yourself, which to me is all part of the whole idea of commitment, you're going to have a lot of frustration. It can be a frustrating place to live.

Interviewer: For example, commitment could be also seen as someone who ... when they see their future, they see their future in Japan?

Robert: Yeah.

Interviewer: Then maybe you've known people like this. They've been telling you for the last 10 years they're going home?

Robert: Yeah. Not anymore but ...

Interviewer: It's kind of like a lack of commitment there. Would you agree with that?

Robert: Yeah. Those people I've met, and I think the only thing really that keeps them in town, in the country, is just the money. There's a lot of money to be made here, and they would like to leave or they can't wait to leave. "Oh, I'm planning to leave next year," and then it turns out that they didn't get the job that they interviewed for last summer vacation when they went home. It turned out that whatever circumstances about moving in with their parents or whatever didn't work out, and the money is just too good here. I mean, we make pretty good bucks relatively speaking for our relative skillset. Money is great here, and I think that's what keeps people around. That helps you get over the need to make any kind of commitment, but yeah, I do know people who'd like to get out of here but they stay because of the money.

Interviewer: When they go home, they feel like maybe there's just nothing they can do.

Robert: The people that I know who stayed maybe for about, what, 7, 8 years and then they eventually went home, for the first little while they were kind of out of sorts, getting back into things, and then they, by sheer force of will or just by luck, they get back into teaching at a high school or he was actually really good at finance in school so he went into financial services. I've also known people who just ended up being lifeguards. Not that there's anything wrong with lifeguards, but that's not what they went to school for and it's because they got confused when they got home.

Interviewer: What are the advantages or disadvantages of being a foreigner? Could you just give me one example of each if you have?

Robert: I think I mentioned before the disadvantage of being an Asian-looking foreigner, so there's discrimination. I think definitely if you're a handsome, tall, white man with blue eyes and blond hair, girls will be all over you. I mean, that sounds really crude but like ... Do you think people who have those features will get jobs well?

Robert: I would say yes. I would say yes.  
Interviewer: That's a guess?  
Robert: I would say yes. I met some. We both need to see data.  
Interviewer: Have you ever met an unemployed blonde man in Japan?  
Robert: Unemployed blonde man? No. I haven't met one. There might be, but it might be from choice, you know? I don't think it would be hard to get a job as a tall, blonde, blue-eyed handsome or pretty girl in Japan.  
Interviewer: You're saying in your case, it's a bit of a disadvantage?  
Robert: I've never felt it at work because I'm lucky enough in the sense that I can always sell myself by what I say. When I sit down at an interview, and I can sell myself and I think I interview really well. I usually get the jobs that I want. As a disadvantage for myself, it could be. I haven't encountered one yet.  
Interviewer: Do you think a lot of these discussions we're having now, instead of actually focusing on the cultural differences, it's more of a personality difficulties that people have?  
Robert: Oh yeah.  
Interviewer: You think personality takes a lot, takes a lot in all of this stuff?  
Robert: Oh yeah. I think so. I mean, I once had, again, one of those like sitting around thinking about life in Japan and stuff. You look at the people or some of the people that are attracted to living in Japan, especially the people who just come here short term ... The people who have been here long term, they have had that sense of commitment. They've taken root in the community, as you're probably going to find in your data. A lot of the people who come here short term, especially the people that I met in the mid 90s, these are the people who would have stayed only about 3 or 4 years. Short term, real short termers. These were sort of like the wuuw kind of quasi neo hippy types from the mid 90s. What they would do is they're just kids looking to go for a vacation and not really thinking about work and just sort of ... they're almost like hippies just sort of going from this place to another place.  
These are not the best of us. I sometimes tell my students, do remember that a lot of the people you have here, you see them as native speakers and oh, they're experts in the language. I've got to tell you, most of them are not. Most of them are just here because ... oh, you've got to stop?  
Interviewer: No, no. It's okay.  
Robert: Most of them are just here because they're looking for a quick job. They're hired by their company. You've got to go right down, you look at this by person by person by person. A good number of the people that I met here don't impress me. However, in terms of the mix between cultural and case-by-case situation, I think the heavy lean is the cultural. If there are problems between this person and this country, I would probably say that's ... probably a great bit of it is cultural, but why wasn't it solved? Could have been personality clashes too.  
Interviewer: Do you think contribution is an important part of really becoming part of what's around you in the case of work or even your community?  
Robert: I think if you work to be a better community member than me and you were to like take part in the garbage pick ups and the hedge trimmings and you were to show your face around a lot at the community center and do this and do that, I know some of my friends who do that, and they're probably really, really well accepted in their communities. I don't. That's normal, I think, for a single guy.  
Interviewer: Robert: It could be. I mean, I don't even get what's called the neighborhood flyer, the *kaidanban*. I don't even get that. I know there's probably one, but I don't know why I don't get it.  
Interviewer: Robert: Oh we don't have one here.  
Interviewer: Robert: You don't have one here?  
Interviewer: Robert: Yeah.  
Interviewer: Robert: Maybe we don't have one, but it's kind of weird to think ...  
Interviewer: Robert: I used to get them in the old place.  
Interviewer: Robert: I think there are some expatriates who live in Japan and they do really well in their communities and they're really well respected. They're members of the PTA, they help with bake sales and all that stuff. You're familiar with all of this, and they're seen much

more easily as a big part of their community or their school community. Me? I don't really need to be part of that so I'm not part of it and I don't miss because I don't want it.

Interviewer: But there are people who may only teach in English only, and they don't really seem to have that contact with a lot of students. Like, when it comes to actual understanding.

Robert: Again, I think you hit the, what for me is, the bigger button when you said the word language and language knowledge at the end of your question there. The people, whether they're full time or part time, the line that I draw in terms of truly understanding the students and truly knowing what the students need and dealing with them in a better way, are those instructors who actually can speak the language. They don't have to speak the language inside the classroom like I do, but they should be able to speak the language outside of the classroom to a degree where the student feels comfortable talking to them. It's not like you're speaking in broken Japanese, you're not speaking in party Japanese or you're not speaking where everything is a joke or a mix of English and Japanese so that you no longer come across as a foreigner, a *gaijin*, but you come across as a teacher, someone to be trusted, someone who can answer a question with a level of intelligence and with a little of knowledge as can be respected. For me, that's always been language. The people who can understand and use the language well are the ones that, just by definition, do understand the culture.

They still might have some strong vestiges of their Americanism or their Canadianisms, but you can't learn this language without understanding its culture. In that sense, when a student comes up to you and says, "Oh, I'm sorry Mr. ---- but my father has this and that problem and so this and this and that. I can't come to class. What should I do?" Because they've already told you this, it makes you see them in a little bit better light, and I don't know if ... again, if I was to put all of this in a Canadian context and I was dealing with, oh I don't know, a Chinese teacher and I was trying to study Chinese and this Chinese teacher couldn't really speak English, I don't think I would approach him at all. I would just take the absence mark, you know, and take the penalty on my grade.

Interviewer: That's interesting. Do you think there's a middle ground that many Westerners find in Japan?

Robert: I think most people do. I think, if anything, I'm more on the positive side of things. I've not just found a niche that's comfortable that, you know, I'll just stay here and defend myself. I can do what I want when I want, and I can venture out where I like, and I'm not just stuck in a little cubbyhole. Well, again, as some of my students or some of my friends will say, "So, ----, you've been in Japan a long time." "Yeah, I've been in Japan." "How long?" "Well, 23 years. 24 years." "Wow, I guess you really like Japan!" Which to me is an odd question. I mean, how can you even ask that? Of course I like Japan. If I didn't like Japan, I'd leave.

To me, a lot of people who find that niche, you have to come to some kind of compromise with your presence here or you will leave. You just won't be happy.

Interviewer: Did you read the quote here by Daniel Kahl? Did you feel this power in the middle?

Robert: Oh yeah, but it's not ... okay. You put the thing about being in the middle. I don't see it about being in the middle. You simply are a foreigner. Being a foreigner has its own power. Again, my example of the tall, blue-eyed, blonde guy or the chick with the incredible bod or whatever, if they speak Japanese really well, if they have even the slightest modicum of stage presence, you think about the equivalent kind of Japanese girl or Japanese guy, they probably wouldn't have that job just because of the same skill level. The *gaijin* has it because they're a foreigner. That's the power. Again, that's the positive discrimination because if you think about exactly the same skill or the same kind of stage aura, same kind of intelligence, same kind of general good looks, yeah, there are a lot of girls who are hired only for their good looks but they take on a different thing. We're talking about the commentators and everything else on Japanese TV or foreigners, they're there because they're foreigners.

On the other hand, I do agree with him that ... about the quote. I think that really nails it.

Interviewer: Do you consider this your home?

Robert: For the time, yeah. Until I leave, it's my home. I like to tell this story. When I was last in Canada, believe it or not, almost ... 1997, so almost 17 years ago. The last time I was in

Canada, I was there for a 3-week vacation. I thought I'd really just soak it in, be with the family and everything else. By the 10th day, I was homesick. I was saying, "I want to go home." That thought was in my mind. I want to go home. This vacation was planned a little too long. I mean, I love seeing my family. I want to go home. I want to get back to my car. I want to see my cats. I want to sit in my chair. I want to go home. Home meant Japan.

Now when I make the decision to leave, I might miss Japan but I won't miss it like, "Oh, I want to go home. I will miss Japan, but I am home now in Canada." For now, yeah, because this is where my life is. This is home.

Interviewer: Do you feel stressed in that situation?

Robert: Stress in which situation?

Interviewer: Just any stress living in Japan.

Robert: Not any more than I would in Canada. I'm in a car crash. I would feel stressed if it was in Canada. Oh, car crash. A car accident. I've had a couple but I miss a payment because of my stupidity in making a deposit. It wasn't because I live in Japan and the Japanese are so unfair. No. It's because it was me. Not any more than it would be in Canada.

Interviewer: Just a final question here.

Robert: Go, go.

Interviewer: Do you have any anecdotes that you could give about Japan?

Robert: I've got a friend who is kind of an elderly gentleman now. He's about 75. When I first met him, he was about 55? Because he was a Navy man, she went back to America directly with him. He got early retirement at 55 because he worked really hard for his company, decided, "Well, let's turn life around. Let's go live in Japan with my wife's family." His wife had been living in America for the longest time, so she had become quite Americanized to the degree where she underwent this phenomenon that some Japanese go through where they start forgetting parts of their language. They start forgetting their native language. Again, the whole thing about you got to learn the language or else you're just not going to be comfortably here. This was kind of interesting because a Japanese woman who had lived in Japan but then spent ... again, she was like the reverse of us. She's spent more than half her life in America, started forgetting how to speak Japanese because there was nobody around here who was Japanese apparently, comes back to K----- and when I met her husband, my friend, he was talking to me about Macintoshes because I was kind of the Mac guy in K----- at the time, and I was helping him with it and I introduced him to this shop. He thought he had made an appointment for Tuesday for something. This was 20 years ago, this whole anecdote, so I don't know what the appointment was for but it was supposedly they had made an appointment for Tuesday and Tuesday came and nothing, and they were left high and dry, waiting outside with a taxi and they were supposed to deliver something or something or other. He goes back upstairs and said, "Where were you? It's Tuesday."

Because he was kind of agitated and the guy on the other end of the phone spoke a little bit of English, all he could do was, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry, I'm sorry." Kind of hung up the phone. Because I was kind of the middle man on this, I wasn't even speaking Japanese that well but better than him. He calls me and says, "Tuesday! ...." I go, "Oh, let's see." You know, what I can glean out of this. I go to the shop, I explain to them what happened and it goes, "Well, Jose, that appointment was actually for Friday." I said, "Friday? Are you sure?" "Yeah, I got it written down here." Because the guy still basically speaks zero Japanese but spoke zero ... Absolutely zero Japanese and his wife had come back to Japan, couldn't quite get back into the Japanese thing and with her too because she's still Japanese. When she spoke, she still spoke fine.

Apparently, her listening ... well, her ears, literally her listening skill, was going down. When she heard *kinyōbi*, her brain registers *kayōbi*. I think it was the listening. It was the confusion of whatever, and she just got lost in *kinyōbi* and *kayōbi*. "Oh, I know what it is because it's Tuesday." Then I explained back to A--- and he goes, "Actually, J---, that's very plausible," because his wife was going through stress. It wasn't dementia or anything, just getting forgetful. She had had problems with the language and everybody shook hands at the end and said, "I'm very sorry." "Oh, no. I'm very sorry." I felt pretty

proud because I was like Sherlock Homes sleuthing. I was like *kinyōbi*, *kayōbi*. Oh, I know what it is!

Interviewer: Ah I see. Okay. We're going to stop here.  
Robert: Okay.

### **005 Donald**

Interviewer: Could you tell me what it was first like ... Back in the 70s you came. What was it first like when you first arrived in Japan?

Donald: I was thinking about this before. I've actually arrived twice for 2 different purposes. The first time I came, I was in the army.

Interviewer: Tell me about the second time because that's the time you came to stay.

Donald: The second time, I came to stay.

Interviewer: That's the one I want to hear about. What was it like during that?

Donald: It was like coming home, because I'd been here 2 1/2 years.

Interviewer: Oh, I see.

Donald: I was married to my wife at the time, my Japanese wife at the time and because I had experience here it was just coming back. We had made a very conscious decision to come back and live here at least until our children finished school.

Interviewer: I see. That's 18 years of commitment. That's quite a commitment.

Donald: Basically it was a duration commitment and had no ...

Interviewer: When you first came, you actually had decided already you were going to be here long term.

Donald: Yeah.

Interviewer: Very rare.

Donald: One of the reasons was that by this point we had 2 children, girls, and looked at the education in the United States and looked at the education here and it was obvious they were going to get a much better education here than in the United States.

Donald: Also the language problem. If you speak non-native Japanese you're different. If you speak non-native English you're not different at all. You're like half the people who live on your street. One of the main reasons was education. Another really strong reason was so that they learned native speaker Japanese in Japan.

Interviewer: That was the original plan. You had a plan when you came, which is very rare, which is very rare. You planned to stay the long term.

Donald: We had a plan because we had been here before.

Interviewer: That's right.

Donald: I had lived here for 2 years. I was in the army at the time but still, I had lived here and we had a child born here and so it was like moving anywhere.

Interviewer: You married your wife when you were in the army.

Donald: Yeah.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. The year that you arrived to live here, what year was that?

Donald: '76.

Interviewer: '76.

Donald: I first came here in ...

Interviewer: Bicentennial (in USA).

Donald: '69.

Interviewer: I see. Okay.

Donald: We got married in 1970 without any ceremony or anything. We just did the paperwork.

Interviewer: 1970. Do you use Japanese more in your normal life or your English more?

Donald: Overall, English by far.

Interviewer: By far.

Donald: I speak English with my wife because we met in Japanese. I had gone to the military Japanese language school for a year, didn't learn very much Japanese and what I learned was outdated but I was able to get some communication across. Enough to get married, anyways and as soon as we decided to get married my wife started trying to use as much English as she could.

Donald: Then we went to the United States and of course I used English and she used English. She got very fluent for a while. Lost a lot of it now but when we came back to Japan I made a conscious decision to speak English in the house.

Interviewer: In the house. All right. Do you think it's important to learn the language here?

Donald: Yes. How well you learn it's another thing. I think you need to learn it well enough to get along so that you aren't dependent on other people.

- Interviewer: When you say well, do you mean linguistically well or communicatively well?
- Donald: Communicatively so that you can communicate with people. The first level is so that you can go out and go shopping and-
- Interviewer: Right, right. Of course, well that's ...
- Donald: Get food and the necessities of life, but as an example of things that help, when I came I had a one-year renewable visa, okay? My children had 3-year renewable visas so they could stay and I might not be able to but anyways, I had to go every year for a while to immigration and I got to know the people there. I tried using as much Japanese as possible with them.
- They were much more comfortable in Japanese than English, even though they could handle English. The result of that was I didn't ask about it, they said ... And the head of the place handled all the paperwork. He said, "Get the paperwork and bring it back to me." It was approved in about 3 weeks, which was unheard of at the time. This was back in the 1980s so it was ...
- Interviewer: That was definitely very different, right?
- Donald: Yeah. I put it on the fact that I communicated to the extent that I did, I tried in Japanese and also I was very cooperative with them rather than getting angry at them like most people do.
- Interviewer: Do you think you've assimilated 100% to Japanese society?
- Donald: 100%, no. My wife says that I am the most American person she knows and she knows an awful lot of Americans, that I'm still American but I'm comfortable with Japanese culture. I'm comfortable with Japanese people, here I have lots of Japanese friends and so it's ... I don't think first generation ever gets 100%.
- Second generation, my kids are Japanese except for a slight ... If you'll see them with Japanese people they look a little Caucasian and so you might say, "Hmm," but you'd never notice it in the way they act, the way their language is or anything like that.
- Interviewer: What about the workplace, when you're in your job? Did you feel at home then? Did you feel ...
- Donald: Yeah. At first, the problems I had over the years were with the native-speaking teachers as opposed to the Japanese. You don't need to go into that here.
- Interviewer: Unfortunately it's not part of the research.
- Donald: At the *senmongakko* that I worked at for the first 14 years I was in Japan, the boss spoke fluent English and the second in command, the assistant boss spoke fluent English but both of them spoke Japanese to me. I answered in English. Highest level of communication.
- They were saying exactly what they meant and I was saying exactly what I meant and we were ... I was understanding more of what they meant in Japanese than I would have if they'd been making mistakes in English so we got the highest level of communication.
- Interviewer: Interesting.
- Donald: The last 2 or 3 years I was there, the first boss was transferred and we ended up with a group of 4 people. 2 administrators and 2 teachers and the 2 administrators didn't speak English. They didn't speak English but they understood it pretty well and the other teacher of course was fluent in English but more comfortable talking with the Japanese colleagues in Japanese. Our weekly meeting was done in Japanese with me speaking English.
- Interviewer: Really? That's interesting. You could get your point across 100% what you wanted to say, without having to worry about any-
- Donald: Yeah. Without it messing up the language.
- Interviewer: Missing any cultural areas as well, is always a big problem. This is something that you think is needed, that understanding, because even when you were speaking English you were still understanding how it needed to be communicated to Japanese, right?
- Donald: Yeah.
- Interviewer: This is not a skill that you just have. You learned it, I'm sure.
- Donald: Yeah, yeah and I understood what was going on between the Japanese in Japanese but it was ... Input and output are different. Language input and language output so language input, your level is always higher. Even your level in English for example, you understand

- Shakespeare and you can appreciate Shakespeare, you know what Shakespeare is doing, but I'm pretty sure you couldn't write a Shakespearean play that was at the same level as Shakespeare's.
- Interviewer: Never tried. What about Westerners in general? Do you think there is, I don't like to use the word assimilation, I write it down a lot. A better word is adopting the culture in many ways. Do you think it's possible for Westerners to be comfortable here?
- Donald: I know of a lot of people who have been here for a long, long time and those people, most of them, all of the people that I am really friendly with are definitely not Japanese. If you did something, put a mask on them or something so they'd look Japanese, you would not mistake them for Japanese but they had very productive, useful lives. They are happy here. Most of the people that I know have no desire to leave. I've met people who wanted to leave. Most of them have, but the long time people-
- Interviewer: The long-time residents.
- Donald: Getting up over 20, 30 years, those people have found a position that's between the 2 cultures and very comfortable for them. The same thing with me. There is definitely a niche that you can find where you're comfortable and where you can do at least some of the things that you would like to do.
- For example, at work. I learned almost immediately something that none of the other teachers at that school ever learned and that was that it took 5 years to get a new, strange, unheard of idea accepted and what you did was, you talked about it for a year or 2, then you dropped it, and then you'd mention it again without pushing it. The first time you pushed it a little bit.
- "I think this is good, we should do this, we should do this." Then you drop it and then you just bring it up a couple of times and then you wait a little bit and all of a sudden the boss is talking about it and you tell the boss, "Oh, that's a great idea. We should do that." If you do it right, you can get your ideas in and the interesting thing is you don't get any direct credit for it but all the Japanese know where it came from and so that you get indirect credit.
- Interviewer: That's very interesting. That takes a lot of patience.
- Donald: Yeah, it takes patience.
- Interviewer: It takes a lot of patience. Patience and planning.
- Donald: The foreigners when I first came, if they thought of something, if it wasn't done next week they were going out of their tree.
- Interviewer: Do you think some people get confused with the culture here? They get confused? They just don't understand, they can't fit in? Maybe personality ...
- Donald: If that's what you mean by confused, the not fitting in, yes, definitely. I've met quite a few people like that. The first job we had around 15 native speaking full-time teachers and most of them only stayed for a couple of years and some of them were pushed out but an awful lot of those never fit in either in the school with the Japanese faculty or in life, it just ...Japan was not the place for them.
- Interviewer: Not the place.
- Donald: I was very lucky because since I was in the army, I spent 2 years in Vietnam during the war but I had a lot of contact with the Vietnamese so I had a lot of first-hand knowledge of Asian way of thinking, let's put it that way. 2 years' worth which isn't a huge amount but it's a lot. Then I had a year of Japanese language school before I came to Japan, things like that.
- Interviewer: You had a cushion when you first came.
- Donald: Yeah.
- Interviewer: That's interesting. I've heard some Japanese have described Vietnam as old-style Japan. Japanese actually have said that, not ...
- Donald: I think that's probably, in many ways true.
- Interviewer: The way that family's set up and the way that they ...
- Donald: Yeah.
- Interviewer: Have you ever had a situation that has been complicated by a cultural difference? I mean, there's human situations but that is ...
- Donald: I'm married. Of course I have. I'm married to a Japanese woman.

- Interviewer: Thank you. That's a good answer. Could you give us an example?
- Donald: Japanese tend to give gifts all the time. It comes from Buddhism and I'll frequently find something that I really liked going out the door with a guest as a present.
- Interviewer: Something you like and your wife gives it to somebody.
- Donald: Gives it to somebody else, and that makes it an even better gift.
- Interviewer: That you're crying somewhere?
- Donald: Not important, and I adjusted to that a long, long time ago but that's an example of a cultural difference that ...
- Interviewer: Have you ever had something that was so bad that you felt like, "Oh, maybe Japan's not the place"?
- Donald: No.
- Interviewer: Nothing like that.
- Donald: No. Nothing.
- Interviewer: Nothing like that.
- Donald: The bad things I've had tended to be related to individuals as opposed to cultural things. I had a problem with a university and it was with a couple of people in the university and the way they were not particularly honest about things.
- Interviewer: Oh, I see. All those things happened at work, correct?
- Donald: Yeah, but I didn't at the time consider it cultural at all. It was ...
- Interviewer: Personal.
- Donald: Particular, personal thing.
- Interviewer: That's important to recognize, yeah. Do you think it's important to make a commitment to live here?
- Donald: I do know quite a few people who have told me that they had no intention of staying and they just got comfortable teaching. I know one guy that's been here probably 30 years and he had no intention of staying here when he came. He came for a job, his wife at the time was Thai, he came and got a job here. He'd been in Saudi Arabia or someplace in the Middle East and then came here and he's still here.
- Interviewer: I think the majority of people that I have spoken to usually don't have plans to stay, but the point is ... Maybe you've met someone like this. They tell you they're going home. They tell you they're going home but 10 years later, they still tell you ...
- Donald: They're still here. Yeah, I've met a few people like that.
- Interviewer: Do you think this lack of commitment or understanding ... This is cognitive dissonance, right? This is basically what that is. You're dealing with-
- Donald: Definitely.
- Interviewer: Someone who's saying, "I want to go home" or "I don't want to stay here" but at the same time they're always looking for another job. Do these people exist?
- Donald: Yeah, they definitely exist. I've met quite a few of them. There is also the person who comes here and stays a few years and then realize they're unemployable in their own home country. That was something that I knew would happen to me when I came here because of my varied background, that it would be very, very difficult to get a job in the States if after 10 years I had gone back.
- Interviewer: Any advantages of being ... In your case, you're a White Western foreigner. I've interviewed Asian and Black western foreigners as well so there's advantages.
- Donald: I met 2 Americans from the Caribbean, one of the American Islands down there, and they were here and they were working at a terrible job. They were illegal.
- Interviewer: In Japan.
- Donald: Yeah, in Japan and they came on tourist visa and stayed and they were working in a laundry. Really horrible job but they had beds in the laundry.
- Interviewer: Really?
- Donald: And a little stove, a one-burner stove, and they were living there. A long time ago, I'm sure they're not here anymore but we made friends with them and they spoke a Caribbean English that was practically incomprehensible to me. For some reason my wife understood it pretty well. Maybe because they were good-looking but anyway, they came to our house quite often. We'd feed them a home-cooked meal and some cake or something.

Interviewer: In that case it was a disadvantage because they're coming from a background that's different than ...

Donald: Yeah, but for them the whole thing was a plus because they said they couldn't get work in the United States because of their accents, their poor English, they weren't educated.

Interviewer: I see.

Donald: They just couldn't get jobs. The bad jobs that they had here was better than anything they could get in the States.

Interviewer: That's too bad and it's ... What about yourself? What about advantages or disadvantages for yourself?

Donald: Advantages, one that always comes up and is coming up again soon, I don't have to be involved in American politics. I have no say.

Interviewer: That's an interesting completely ... You don't have any say for what reason is that?

Donald: Because I'm not a resident of any State.

Interviewer: Oh, I see so you can't vote. You have no address in the States.

Donald: I could vote but it goes into a pool that just is added to the overall vote for the United ... The summary they give at the total number of votes. It would be in there but it doesn't go toward the Electoral College so it's meaningless. Disadvantages, there's a lot. These glasses, for example. I cannot get glasses that fit me because they're designed for Japanese heads and Japanese noses and so my glasses are always dirty because they're touching my head and my face.

Donald: Clothing is not cut to fit me. My wife, when I was working and needed to dress all the time, I had to go to the import shops and buy clothes. These are American made. Some dealings with the government for example, are difficult without having my wife along to translate. I just don't know the vocabulary. I'm okay in a hospital. No problem with, medicine's okay. I can deal with doctors but with city hall is a problem.

Interviewer: Do you have Japanese friends? You just moved here recently, so ...

Donald: Until now, until I moved here, the only Japanese friends I had were English teachers.

Interviewer: I see.

Donald: And neighbors.

Interviewer: Right.

Donald: Immediate neighbors but I was never very friendly with them. Usually it was, I was friendly with the wife because they were friendly with my wife and they'd come to the house. Her friends I knew but I didn't know any of the husbands and the few that I did know I wasn't particularly interested in knowing any better but since I came here, one of the first things we did was we joined the Senior Club and supposedly, according to a reporter that I met, I'm the only foreign Senior Club member in Japan.

Donald: Foreign, meaning Caucasian foreign. There is probably some Koreans and some Chinese but she said that she notices ... She works in the ----- area and she said no one in her office had ever heard of anybody and they checked with the same company offices. They do monthly magazines that they give out to the members and she said that she'd never heard of a foreigner there and checked and said she couldn't locate another foreigner in Japan in the Senior Club.

Interviewer: In the Senior Club, so you're a ground breaker.

Donald: Yeah. I go sit with the guys and chat with the guys.

Interviewer: Those are all local guys, right?

Donald: Yeah, a large number of them are farmers, actually.

Interviewer: That makes sense.

Donald: Retired farmers.

Interviewer: Especially around here.

Donald: 2 or 3 that I would consider friends.

Interviewer: That's a good number.

Donald: Of course, Japanese friends are different than American friends.

Interviewer: Of course, yeah.

Donald: On the Japanese friend label, we're definitely friends.

Interviewer: Do you consider Japan your home?

Donald: Yes.

Interviewer: It's your home, right?  
Donald: Yeah.  
Interviewer: Do you feel stress outside of that? Do you feel any stress at all ....?  
Donald: No. I feel stress the few times I've been to the United States I felt stress.  
Interviewer: You feel a reverse culture shock when you go there.  
Donald: Yes.  
Interviewer: Absolutely.  
Donald: Yeah and it seems like the United States is a foreign country now because it's been 45 years so the United States has changed tremendously in the time that I've been gone.  
Interviewer: I bet.  
Donald: I had no more dissatisfaction here than I would if I'd lived in the United States. It's all just ... There's something that hasn't come up yet, just because it-  
Interviewer: Go ahead.  
Donald: Didn't come out of the questions. Reverse discrimination.  
Interviewer: Reverse discrimination?  
Donald: I get a lot of discrimination but it's-  
Interviewer: Positive discrimination.  
Donald: Positive.  
Interviewer: Oh, I see.  
Donald: I'll give you an example. In S----- I went to renew my papers. This was again, a long time ago. I went in and got at the back of the line and they called me to the front around the line, and stood off to the side and took my paperwork. I went and sat down and this long line was still standing there and after, I don't know, 45 minutes or so they called me up and my paperwork was all done and all of my manual and everything, whatever it was I was doing was finished. The point was that the long line were Brazilians.  
Interviewer: Oh, really.  
Donald: There was prejudice for me because I was a white American as opposed to ... Visually white but then they found out you were American.  
Interviewer: Yeah. Probably less than it used to be. When I first got here in 1969 it was an awful lot of it.  
Interviewer: Oh yeah, I'm sure.  
Donald: A tremendous amount of it.  
Interviewer: I'm sure.  
Donald: It was closer to the end of the war, Americans were still here.  
Interviewer: Right, right. Interesting.  
Donald: I don't think you've been here long enough but when I first came the junior high school kids, there were very few foreigners. When I first arrived in N----- there were 600 non-Asian foreigners registered.  
Interviewer: In the whole city.  
Donald: When I left N---- 14 years later there were over 1,000 Americans registered so you can see what happened. When I first got here, particularly the junior high school kids that were just getting the English would see you walking down the street and there's a bunch of voices, "Haro, haro. Gaijin da, gaijin da. Haro, haro." It really felt like harassment but gradually it started fading away as they started getting foreign English teachers in class.  
Interviewer: In the 80s.  
Donald: The JET program. When I moved to S--- I was ... I like to walk and I was out walking around. I was coming down the street and there was a house with a garage on the first floor, open garage, and there was a little girl in there and she looked at me. Her eyes opened up just like often happened. She looked at me and she pointed and I knew what was going to come out of her mouth, "Gaijin da," and what she said was, "Hige da," beard.  
Interviewer: Oh.  
Donald: She didn't register that I was a foreigner. She registered that I had a beard and then that really made an impression on me because it was such a change from when I first arrived

to that little girl who had obviously never seen a foreigner before and she was more impressed with the beard than the fact that I was a foreigner.

Interviewer: That's interesting.

Donald: The other little scurry also happened a long time ago but could still happen, I think. I went to an English teacher's conference and there was a young man there who I met and ... Well, I was young then too so about the same age. We made friends at the meeting and he was looking for someone to go out for supper with him, the evening meal, and I said, "Why don't we go out and I'll take you someplace?"

I took him to a restaurant and he was *Nisei*, Japanese-American, second generation. Spoke no Japanese at all. Read no Japanese and we sat at the table and the waiter came to the table, would not look at me. Looked only at the *Nisei* who couldn't communicate with him and I gave the order and I would ask him in English what he wanted and then I would translate and tell the waiter what we wanted to order.

I do not believe that the waiter realized that the Japanese-looking person was not the person who was talking to him.

When I was first here, this would have been 1979, I was on the train, the loop that goes around Tokyo and I was doing something. I was going places and visiting things and I was hungry. There was a kiosk so I said, "A chocolate bar would be really good right now."

I'd only been in the country a few days and so I said, I practiced my Japanese, I don't remember what I said but I wanted a Ghana milk chocolate bar. I stood over on the side and mentally rehearsed what I was going to say to the young lady. There was a woman about 20 behind the counter.

I walked up to her and in my best Japanese, asked for a Ghana milk chocolate bar. She looked at me panic face and said, "I do not-a speak-a English-a." While she was saying this, her right hand reached out, got a Ghana chocolate bar and put it on the counter in front of me so consciously she's in total panic, "I don't speak English," but she understood the English, reacted to it and put it on the bar.

I just looked at the chocolate and I looked at her and she looked at the chocolate bar and it was obvious she had no idea how that chocolate bar got there.

Cross-cultural stuff is really interesting. One teacher was at the school for 8 or 9 years. He had been there a long time and he was leaving and so the Director of way above top people, 2 old Japanese men decided that he'd been there so long they had to take him out for a goodbye party, a meal.

We went out and I got invited along because they were worried about having to sit with him and his Japanese wasn't that good so I got taken along. Always willing to go for a free meal. Drinks on the house, so to speak but the thing that was really interesting was we, all 4 of us knew it was time to leave. When my glass and the other foreigner's glass, beer glass, was empty and the 2 Japanese beer glasses were filled to the rim.

Cultural difference. In Japan you let your glass fill up. You put it to your lips but you don't drink anything out of it, when it gets full it's time to leave. Americans, you leave a little bit. If you want more, you leave just a little bit in the bottom of the glass and you'd get some more. If you drink the glass completely empty it means you want to leave. The foreigners just looked at the glasses and realized what was going on and we all just looked at each other and smiled and got up and walked out.

Interviewer: Thank you very much.

## **006 Anthony**

- Interviewer: When you first arrived in Japan can you tell me what it was like?  
Anthony: When I first came here it's a lot different than it is now because there were just so few foreigners when I first came here.
- Interviewer: How many years ago was that?  
Anthony: About twenty-three years ago.  
Interviewer: Twenty-three years ago, okay.  
Anthony: Twenty-three years ago. When I came here before being a foreigner here in ----- was like, it was almost like being a movie star. A lot people would ask for your, kids would ask for your autograph and people; they would look at you but they wouldn't look at you directly. If you walked past them you could see when you turned around that they were looking at you and things. It was kind of a strange feeling. It was a nice feeling but it was kind of a strange feeling that you were so; it was so unusual being a foreigner in a place where there wasn't so many foreigners.
- Interviewer: Why did you come originally?  
Anthony: I met my wife who's Japanese in America and originally I came here to visit for one week and then we went back and I thought I really liked it there. I wouldn't mind living there for a year so we made plans to live here for, come here and live for a year and I had no plan on working and just enjoying for a year, and we both came over here.  
When you come to Japan taking the apartment and I didn't know at the time and my wife was trying to explain this to me. You rent an apartment and there's nothing in the apartment. I had to buy everything. I thought the light fixtures of course they have those. They must have a refrigerator or something but they didn't. We had to buy everything so my plan was to stay here for one year but after one year it seemed so short and I had spent so much money just trying to get settled in that I decided to stay longer and now it's ... and no plan at any point ... one more year. After that one year well I was just a wait and see kind of approach and I ended up staying for 23 years.
- Interviewer: So when you first came you weren't planning to stay.  
Anthony: No one year. The visit I wasn't planning on staying at all. I was just coming for a visit and then I liked it and I came later and stayed for one year and then I ended up staying for 23.
- Interviewer: How long did it take you to realize that you were going to be here? That year I know you stayed past that first year; but after that first year was there some kind of on the fence feeling? When did you realize I'm here?  
Anthony: I'm not so much the kind of person that plans a lot so that was kind of it was never okay I'll stay for one more year or I thought I'd just stay until I don't feel like staying any more. I see.  
Interviewer: I really enjoyed living here and as you start working and you get more ensconced in what you're doing and you get ... It becomes like moving to a foreign country going back to your own country. It becomes like that so it makes it hard to go back home because everything you have is here. The longer you're here, the longer that becomes like that.
- Interviewer: What about your regular life? Do you use mostly Japanese or English?  
Anthony: I use mostly Japanese.  
Interviewer: Mostly Japanese.  
Anthony: I don't use so much English now.  
Interviewer: Obviously customers and things like that. You own your own business so customers are Japanese, ...  
Anthony: Yeah. Well I was a teacher for 10 years and then at that point of course when you're a teacher and you're stuck in that kind of, I don't want to say stuck, but when you're in that kind of situation you end up speaking a lot of English and your friends end up being people that can speak English. You speak a lot of English so your progress on Japanese is not as good as it could be.  
Once I started my own business then of course, yeah, every day I have customers. You have to make money. You speak Japanese to make the money.
- Interviewer: Right.  
Anthony: It's part of your life. You have to. When you're teaching you don't have to do that.

- Interviewer: That's okay I understand. You think it's important to learn Japanese in general just to live here? Do you think people can live without it?
- Anthony: Yeah. It just depends upon what kind of situation you want to put yourself in I think. You know there's all kinds of different people and from different countries that do it different ways. It just depends upon what kind of lifestyle you want to live.
- If you see like a Chinese person, a young Chinese person coming here and they learn Japanese very fluently within one year and you think wow. Here you are. I came here when I was 33 or 34 I think and of course friendship, I had my wife. Friendship wasn't as an important of thing for me and I didn't need to speak Japanese. I can get around. I could always lean on my wife to take care of it. At that point it wasn't such an important thing to do.
- When I started a business of course it becomes much more important. There's a lot of people here that have been here a long time and do quite well and they don't speak, they speak Japanese enough to get around but they don't read at all. They can't read any signs or things but they do okay. There's nothing wrong with that too. It's just depends on what kind of life you want to live.
- Interviewer: I see. Okay. What about yourself? Have you assimilated yourself 100% into the Japanese?
- Anthony: Yeah, I would never say 100% but yeah, most of my friends are Japanese. All my business is in Japanese. Of course I have foreign friends that I hang out with sometimes. Yeah I would think assimilated, yeah.
- Interviewer: You wouldn't say 100% though.
- Anthony: Yeah 100% because you're never really accepted 100% in Japan I think. People will always treat you as a foreigner so you'll always have that little barricade between that and you can ... Of course there's different groups. Again when I first came here of course females are easier to talk to and they are more willing to talk. There tone is easier to understand so you can understand them.
- As you've been here a little bit longer maybe you make a few male friends and then, just now it seems like I'm getting to those kind of male friends where they are talking in ---- ben or their own dialect and their own kind of set of language, not talking to me and I can understand them. That took a long time for me to get to that point. There's all kinds of different sets.
- There's still sets of groups that I still can't talk fluently in. If they were talking about business or talking about politics you know. I'm still; my vocabulary is probably not good enough to handle some of those conversations. We don't get into those kinds of conversations so much.
- Interviewer: Do you think some people get confused about their life here? Do you think some people get lost?
- Anthony: I don't think so. I think people do what they want to do. I think certain people they choose the kind of life they wanted to live in and they get into that life and that's what they want to do. I don't think they are so confused. The people that do get confused are probably the ones that go home. The ones that stay here longer are not that type I think.
- I've never thought why hasn't this person ever learned Japanese? They are saying they don't understand anything because they just stay in their own little world. They would probably be doing the same thing back home in their own little world in a different kind of group. It's just that here it's a Japanese group and an English group.
- At home it might be a guys group and an intellectual group. It's kind of the same probably.
- Interviewer: Do you think it requires a commitment to live in Japan, you need to be committed to the people around you? I don't know if you've ... When people first come here Japanese tend to give them things a lot.
- Anthony: Right.
- Interviewer: If you continue to do that for a long time, probably those relationships won't last. Do you feel like you have to give back, like a commitment of giving and taking? Do you think it's always the giving?

- Anthony: If you want to keep those relationships, yeah, of course. If those relations, for some people those kind of relationships aren't important. When they get the gifts at the beginning they think oh, this is wonderful and they know they are not going to stay here long so they take the gifts and think oh, this person wants, they want to speak to foreigners so that's part of their payment for speaking to ...  
All kinds of relationships in any country are like that. There is give and take. Somebody's getting what they want. Both sides are getting what they want. A lot of people feel like that. I don't need to give back because they want to speak to a foreigner and I'm the foreigner so I'm giving that. A lot of people feel like that.
- Interviewer: If you want to be on a real friendship level with people of course you have to give back. Give and take.
- Anthony: Yeah, or you don't have those kinds of friends that give like that. It just depends on what kind of lifestyle you want to live. That's an interesting point because friendship can be really difficult here. A lot of give and take and expectations of what you're supposed to do with those people so yeah, there's a lot of that kind of communication, you know problems and things like that I think.
- Interviewer: What are some of the advantages or disadvantages of being a Western foreigner in Japan? Well start with the advantages. If you don't have any ...
- Anthony: No. There's a lot of advantages I'm sure. As you said, one thing people like giving you gifts or taking you places and you do get treated to a lot of different things. People want to share that Japanese custom, not just giving gifts and things, but sharing in their customs with you because you're a foreigner and because if you're a Caucasian foreigner you stick out more.  
That's their image of foreigners more than a Chinese image of foreigners or Korean image of foreigners, is European or American type and Caucasian style Americans. It's very easy to make friends like that because people want to have that kind of friend. There's some difficulties to it too. There's people that want to, when I first came here I had people who wanted to be my friend not because they liked me but because they wanted to show off that they had a foreign friend. I have this one experience where I met this guy on the bus. I invited him to my house and ...
- Interviewer: The guy on the bus.
- Anthony: ... and he wanted to learn English but he didn't want to take a lesson from me. I was a teacher so this is how I made my living. He wanted to learn English so he would come to my house and I think he was a little bit just uncomfortable with, he's not a very good communicator in general I think.  
He would come to my house with a notebook and start asking me questions about English. I said, "If you want to be my friend that's fine, but I'm not going to sit here and teach you English for free when this is my job. This is how I make money." It was very kind of uncomfortable and felt very strange. He just wanted a foreign friend.
- Interviewer: How many times did he go to your house?
- Anthony: Well after I told him I didn't want to, and I think he was a little shocked that I was so abrupt in telling him that I didn't want to just teach him English without ... I have a class and if you want to sit ... I might ask him the occasional question but for him to whip out a notebook and start asking me questions was beyond what I wanted to do.  
Actually he came in here a little while ago and talked to me again. He was still a little strange but yeah, I mean as you know there are people that just want a foreign friend. It's like having a Mercedes or something. It's a status symbol.  
You have the good and the bad. There's people that want to be your friends because you're a foreigner and there's people that want to be your friends because you're a foreigner that you don't really like that kind of attitude.
- Interviewer: Do you think there's less of that too the more you learn Japanese? People just because you probably speak Japanese to people at the beginning?
- Anthony: I remember my brother came here and we were walking down the street and people were saying hello to us and I had been here for quite a long time and I thought when I'm by myself they don't do that. When I'm with my brother there's something about his look of being a foreigner, that he looked more like a foreigner than I did, right? That's why they

were saying hello to us, where I'm walking now maybe my mannerisms, I'm not looking around and things. They can pick that out. They knew that he was a foreigner and when I'm walking down the street they know that I feel very comfortable here and they pick that up. They intuitively pick that out.

Interviewer:  
Anthony:

I take it when you're with your wife in public nobody really approaches you.  
Not as much now but yeah, before it used to be a lot. That can be a very uncomfortable thing where people will not speak to you directly. They'll speak to your wife to speak to you. Even though you're speaking Japanese to them they won't accept; in their mind the initial response is this person's a foreigner. He doesn't speak Japanese so I'll talk to his wife and they don't listen to you.

The words will just go right through their head and they won't listen that you're speaking Japanese and won't look at you in the eye. They won't speak to you directly. I'm sure you know the feeling. That's very frustrating when people just don't listen.

Interviewer:  
Anthony:

You read my questions here, maybe briefly. Do you think a lot of these questions you kind of think it's more about personality when you've been here that long?  
Yeah, definitely. You know that's what I said. Different people want to live here for different reasons and in different kinds of circumstances. It really would be hard to generalize everybody's view of what Japan is like or how people act to them because everybody acts differently to everybody else. I think it would be really hard to make some generalizations, a lot of generalizations; but of course you can make some.  
I think personality is really, really important. Some people just, they can fit in anywhere, right? They go somewhere and they can just fit in and then some people are going to complain about anything. No matter where they go; they could go to Eden, the Garden of Eden and they are going to sit there and talk about I can't eat the God damn apple, you know? What kind of rules, they've got these rules I can't even eat an apple. Different people are different and a lot of people won't like a lot of what's here or will complain about no matter where they go.

Interviewer:  
Anthony:

Do you think there's kind of like a power at finding that middle ground?  
I don't know whether it's finding middle ground, but there's definitely niches here in Japan so I always tell people you can come from a foreign country and you come here and you have a certain dream of something you've always wanted to do and it's really easy to realize that dream here because you are a foreigner and you can do stuff that you would never, ever be able to do back home.  
You can come here and you can do that. You can become, people become models where they would never ever be able to be a model back home. Like me, you can open up a restaurant. You can be fairly successful or a little bit successful, make a living out of it which you probably would never be able to do back home. Or become a DJ, or there's so many jobs like that that I see people coming here. It's something that they always wanted to do and that's why they've stayed here for a long time.  
They were able to realize that dream because they were a foreigner; where they can't do it as well as somebody else but because they can do something a little bit different than everybody else that they were able to realize their dreams.

Interviewer:  
Anthony:

Interesting.  
For me, I go to a department store and you have to sell and you watch everybody else how to sell and because I'm a foreigner and I can get past the, I don't know, the customs of having to say certain things to the customers. I can just say anything I want to the customers where other people can't do that.  
I have that advantage because I'm a foreigner that I can act differently and I don't have to follow all the customs and people will, they like that and they allow me to do that. I can sell much better sometimes than department stores and other people because I can smile at people and I can joke to other people.  
I can even tease them a little bit where of course if there was a young girl trying to say that to that person they would be shocked and they would go to the manager and say this person said this to me. Because it's me, I can do that. Yeah, so course there's.

Interviewer:  
Anthony:

Excellent, excellent. That's good. Do you consider Japan your home?

- Anthony: Yeah. Definitely. As you know I just went back for one year and I felt most of my adult life has been more than in America has been in Japan. When I went there, I really felt a little bit out of place I think. I felt more like Japan is my home than back home.
- Interviewer: It's always a test. It's kind of like a litmus test. You go back home and you feel what it's like there. It's kind of like a reverse culture shock.
- Anthony: Yeah, that was definitely like that. Just friendship, you do friendship in a different way here than you do there and it became how do I do friendship back there and what was it like? I taught a little Japanese back home to some university professors that were doing exchange programs over there. I found out that I wanted to hang out with them more than with my regular. Even though I'm back in America for the first time in twenty years, I felt more comfortable with those kind of people.
- I don't know if it was my problem or just that I like Japanese people more than I like American people's personality. I don't really know why. It was kind of strange for me to feel like that. I kind of searched out, looking for Japanese people. I felt comfortable making friends with them a lot easier than I did with Americans.
- Interviewer: The communicative patterns or the communicative styles of both are very different for America or Japan.
- Anthony: Yeah, definitely.
- Interviewer: It took you a long time to learn that while you were in Japan?
- Anthony: As I said, I never really worried about that. I always had the feeling this is me and that's the way it is. If they accept that, that's fine but then as you've been here longer and longer you tweak your personality a little bit. You take the good points and the bad points and the points you want and the points you don't want and that becomes the new you for that culture.
- You change your personality. Different languages you change the way you speak and the things you say in different languages. You're more humble in one language than in another language. You change your personality to fit that, but hopefully most people don't do it 100%. I would think you would want to keep some of your old personality.
- Interviewer: Do you ever feel stress at all?
- Anthony: Yeah, 24/7. Are you kidding me? I stress about relationships.
- Interviewer: I mean stress about just being in the culture of Japan. Of course business is a different thing.
- Anthony: If it was just me probably I wouldn't feel so much. I have a wife and then she has expectations and she has how she thinks I should be with Japanese people and I feel like I can get away with things where she feels I need to be more Japanese. There's that stress involved. If it was just me, I probably wouldn't feel like this is me and if they don't like it that's fine. I would probably still feel like that even though I would change my personality to become more, to be able to make more friends and be a more friendly person.
- I wouldn't throw things away but my wife would expect me to try to be more Japanese and fit in more to be more Japanese than I would. That creates a little stress I think.
- Interviewer: Do you have any dissatisfaction living in the country?
- Anthony: I looked at that and I kept trying to think of things that I, I'm not much of a complainer so I really don't have so much dissatisfaction here. The things that I do that I realize that certain cultures, cultures have a rule and there's a whole system of those rules. If you want to start tweaking little rules one place then it ruins the other rules. It ruins the culture in a different way. Sometimes it's probably better not to tweak those kinds of things. One example of that is Japanese follow rules and the rules are so important. There's a rule and even though it makes no sense in a certain situation they follow that rule. It's very frustrating from a foreigner's point of view, but there's a system that people follow rules and of course, it ends up being a pretty good system I think.
- There's one example. I went to play tennis one time. If you want to play at 10:00 you have to be there ten minutes before 10:00 to make the reservation. I got there and there was ten courts. There was maybe one court being used. I got there five minutes before not ten minutes before. I got there five minutes before. I said, "Can we play tennis?" and they said, "You are going to have to wait an hour and five minutes." I said, "But there's

ten courts out there. There's nine courts open." He said, "Well that's the rule." Yeah, but there's nine courts open. It's like, "Why is that a rule? I don't understand. We want to play now and you're going to make me wait for an hour." and he said, "Yeah."

We had to wait a whole hour even though no one was using those courts and he could have pretended like we came five minutes earlier, but no, he wasn't going to do that.

Interviewer: Really. Do you have any other antidotes like that one you just gave about living in Japan that would be different than American-style thinking?

Anthony: Well, I mean about ...

Interviewer: Well that tennis one was a very good one.

Anthony: Yeah. Well waiting in lines. It's part of a cultural thing. It's not a complaint or anything like that. Waiting in lines.

Interviewer: No complaints. You don't have to complain.

Anthony: Japanese people will see a line and they will go run to the line because they think it's got to be good because there's a line where foreigners think there's a line. I don't want to go there. I'll go another time. That's such a different cultural thing. I found myself now doing things like that. I don't mind waiting in line so much where I used to hate it. I just wouldn't do it. If there was any kind of line I wouldn't do it.

Interviewer: Have you ever felt directly discriminated against, Like this was blatant?

Anthony: There was one time. I don't know, I try not to judge too quickly or anything. I went to a Ryokan in Oita. There was a front and a back and I might have been to the back and I said, "Are there any rooms?" and they kind of shook their head and were like there's no rooms. They quickly said, "No, no, there's no rooms." Then we went around to the front and my wife went in and said, "Can I get a room?" and they said, "Yeah, we have rooms." I don't know if it was that there was just a misunderstanding. At that point I didn't speak great Japanese but I think that they at least would have tried or whatever. It seemed very, very strange that I had asked and they said no and then right away they said of course. They didn't even look at any books or anything like that. They said yeah we have a room. There's always circumstances sometimes you don't know, but that was a circumstance that I thought that was kind of strange.

There was another time I went to a restaurant and we asked could we get a seat and they said no we're not open right now and then they started asking questions like how many are you and who are you with. They started asking us questions like that so it was like, I think it was more of a language barrier where they didn't want to deal with it than maybe they didn't like foreigners or something like that, but very few instances of discrimination I think. If anything, it's usually in my favor if there's any kind.

Interviewer: Oh, positive discrimination.

Anthony: Yeah, positive discrimination where you get a lot more things. People talk about not so much now, but before if you were stopped by a policeman maybe just because he didn't want to speak English, he would just, go ahead. You can go. There's a lot of things you can take advantage of by being a foreigner. I really never felt ... If I felt there was a lot of negativity about it, of course I wouldn't be here.

Interviewer: Right. Do you think learning Japanese earlier on would have been a better choice?

Anthony: Looking back when you first come in, I planned on staying for a year. I just never thought it was so important. You don't know what you're going to do and if you teach English the whole time here maybe it's not so important but the longer you stay here and the better at Japanese you get, then you realize how much better you could be and how much better you can communicate with people if you spoke perfect, not perfect but really good Japanese. Yeah, I really wish I had gone back and studied.

Interviewer: You wish you had gone back?

Anthony: I wish I had not gone back. I wish I'd studied when I had first gotten here, yeah, definitely. I still think that maybe, I wish I could do it right now if I wasn't so busy, but yeah I'm busy.

### **007 Mark**

Interviewer: What was it like when you first arrived in Japan?  
Mark: I first came to Japan in 2001, I think it was July, July 14th. When I first came here, I was just graduated from College and my wife and I moved here because a week before our wedding in California, her mother broke her leg because a robber came into their house and actually as she entered the room, she saw the robber leaving with her bag and she chased after him. He pushed her out the window breaking her leg, so she unfortunately couldn't attend our wedding in California, so we got all the paperwork for me to come hear and live for a year, and during that time I had to work in their restaurant. While working in the restaurant, I slowly started getting jobs teaching English on the side and that's when the idea came about start our own English School.

Interviewer: All right, then when you first came here, you were already married.  
Mark: Yes, we had been married for a couple of months when we came here.

Interviewer: You live in a country area, is that correct?  
Mark: Yeah, more countryside. A lot of rice fields around us, still very urban. We can go shopping to any kind of store within five or ten minutes. There's definitely no worries about being too countryside.

Interviewer: Did you have a honeymoon period when you came or did you just get right into it?  
Mark: Truthfully like I said, when I came here within the first two days I was working in my parents restaurant and then just persistence from my father-in-law as well, "Well if you're here, you might as well teach English." So I'm like, "Okay, yeah." Slowly but surely we started getting students and that's when it started to help build my ideas for teaching English. Within the first six months, I'd already established my school and had about forty to sixty students.

Interviewer: Okay, good. When you first came, what was your original plan, just to stay for a year, right? That was it?  
Mark: Yes.

Interviewer: Then you changed it within the first couple of months?  
Mark: Yeah, very much so. We went through separate ideas of renting a facility to run the English School and then renting an apartment but just my chance, my father-in-law had purchased pieces of land, pieces of property here and there. There was a perfect piece of property to build on, so that's where one thing lead to another and we went from building a house to incorporating our English School and house together.

Interviewer: Oh, I see, okay.  
Mark: Main reason is to get the overall monthly rent prices down.  
Interviewer: Oh, cool. You've already answered a couple of the questions right at the beginning, which is...  
Mark: Oh, wonderful.  
Interviewer: Did you plan to stay long term when you came, which is no but it took you about two months to realize, which is actually a fairly short time compared to most.  
Mark: Very short.  
Interviewer: Also it sounds like you're very close to the family.  
Mark: Yes, very close to the family and while my wife was in California, she got a good chance to know my family and then coming here to Japan, her family's very close. Everyone is located very close, so yeah, we are very close to the family. They like to party, they like to drink beer and so do I, so. (Laughter)

Interviewer: That sounds good. Are you close to your family in America? Do you talk to them a lot?  
Mark: Yeah, very much so. One of the difficulties of coming to Japan was actually having to leave so much family behind. I come from a big family with about fifteen to sixteen cousins and they all have children now. While we are here in Japan and have sort of a small family, it's kind of lonely at times especially during Christmas and the holidays, but we always do a good job. For my two children

we have big Christmas events, Easter events and we make it the best we can. But yeah, I'm very close to my family back home. Beings that we are, so the sake of my children, we usually try to go back at least once a year. Usually during summer time.

Interviewer: How about in your normal life, do you use English more than Japanese or Japanese more?

Mark: In our household, everything is 100% English. For the sake of my children as well, ever since they were born, I had to really enforce English especially with my wife because she would actually revert back to Japanese. Which is no problem with that, but living in Japan, everything you do, everyplace you go you're going to be involved in 90% of a Japanese environment, so to keep everything positive in English, we speak only English in the house.

Interviewer: I see, okay.

Mark: Because I'm busy teaching, before my children go to school every morning, I run separate English lessons for them for about an hour so they can get proper reading, writing grammar down. Their verbal skills right now are awesome. It's just keeping their reading up to par.

Interviewer: Do you think it is important to learn the language in Japan, the Japanese I mean? Yeah, this goes both ways. I meet a lot of English teachers here, and the people who don't understand or speak Japanese, they'll tell you that you don't need it, but truthfully, you do. I was fortunate enough to be able to study for about a year while in college. Study Japanese, so I got the basics down, the basic grammar and then living with my wife, in California together, while we were there, we spoke a lot of Japanese which really helped boost my Japanese.

Once coming here, I was very fluent. If I wasn't, it would have made my job much more difficult because I have a lot of young students, because I do speak Japanese, I can directly speak to the parents and explain things to them. Overall life in general it has made it much nicer. I couldn't imagine living here without knowing Japanese, if that makes sense.

Interviewer: Yeah, I think it makes sense. Have you assimilated yourself 100% in Japanese society?

Mark: Yeah, very much so. When I first came here, I grew up in California, so I was into skateboarding, surfing and then occasional snowboarding trips during the winter time but coming to Japan, in his area, there's no skateboard, there's no surfing. The closest ski resort is about three hours away, so my brother-in-law, he actually introduced me to mountain biking. With that at hand, I incidentally made a bunch of friends, a big bunch of mountain bikers and they're all Japanese, so it's really helped my Japanese as well as make me feel very welcome here in this Country.

I have another friend who's been here for about the same amount of time I have, but he's never really broken out and made Japanese friends, so I think when I talk to him, he feels like he's never really fit into Japan. Other than with his family and his wife and stuff. With a hobby or interests, it naturally goes to play, so even if I didn't understand Japanese, it's like, Dude climb the mountain, oh yeah, let's do this jump. It's easily translated into a nonverbal situation, but you can still have fun together. Growing within that group, I've made a lot of very close personal friends over the years.

Interviewer: I'm not trying to second guess you in any way, but when you hear the word assimilation 100%, so you don't feel like you stand out at all or anything like that?

Mark: Yeah of course, I'm six foot one, six foot two something around there, I've got blonde hair and blue eyes so... (laughter)

Interviewer: In a countryside.

Mark: In the countryside.

Interviewer: You stand out, I'm going to play the field on that one...

Mark: I guess it's just my personality. I grew up in California where in the same classroom there were African-Americans, Asian people, Mexican people, so I've

never had the outlook that, that person is a foreigner. The people that I've seen as I was growing up is just people to me. Even though I am here in Japan, I don't feel like I stick out or I don't fit in. That also has to do with how heart warming and open Japanese people are. At least here in this city that I'm in, people have always welcomed me with open arms. I haven't had any problems in that situation. In my family as well. My wife's family, they're very open just down to earth people, that's really made me feel comfortable here as well too.

Interviewer: Well family sounds really important, I think you history of family at home and in Japan both have a good record, so it seems like you have a great cushion there.

Mark: Yeah, if I had bad ties with my wife's family, I would be frustrated and aggravated all the time, so it's really made it easy living here as far as getting along with them because, my father-in-law basically on your day off, you just relax and have good food and good drinks. He's happy so just following his suits made life very simple here.

Interviewer: Do you think people get lost in life here if they don't have a direction or?..

Mark: I can see where that can be very simple for a lot of the ALT's or people that come over here on a three year, four year contract and then they're stuck in a city if they don't have any friends, they don't speak Japanese, I can see where they would easily get lost in life, no knowing what their purpose is, what they're supposed to be doing. They're supposed to go to school, they're supposed to teach English, they're not supposed to speak Japanese to the students, but at the same time they want to study Japanese. A lot of the students are very apprehensive just learning English especially in the elementary schools and junior high schools. I can see where there could be a big void in a lot of people who are here by themselves.

Interviewer: Have you ever been personally discriminated against?

Mark: Yeah, after reading that question, I was thinking back and I can only think of one real incident that sticks out in my mind. That was when I was eighteen or nineteen, my first year...

Interviewer: That's in the States though right?

Mark: No, I'd been studying Japanese a little bit and I had a girlfriend at the time in college, she was from Tokyo, so her time or her visa ended and she moved back to Tokyo and then that summer vacation, I went to visit her for six weeks. While I was out there in Tokyo, we had a couple of incidence that felt discriminating, but I also didn't understand what was going on.

For example, we went into one shop, I don't remember what it was, but the grandma there, the old lady there, she incidentally said something like, no foreigners. No people allowed in here, so we were rushed out of the store and then before I knew what was happening, my girlfriend at the time was very sad and depressed because she was feeling the discrimination more than I was because I didn't understand Japanese at the time.

As far as myself, I've never let what people say go to my heart. I've always been the kind of person that takes a situation and once it's finished I just leave it behind and try to move onto the next situation and just keep my mindset, moving forward to something positive that I know of.

Interviewer: Have you ever had a situation where you really felt a very strong cultural difference that kind of had you question your existence in Japan?

Mark: The only situation I can think of is involving a lot of the rules and a lot of the laws here that are completely different than California or completely different than America. In many terms, very impractical in the way that I would naturally think of a situation. One incident was, I'd been living here for about six or seven years, I think, and I'd been using an international driver's license and every year I would renew my international license and the laws in California stated if I had a valid California driver's license I was eligible to have an international license. Then about three years after living in Japan, the Japanese law changed saying that you can have an international license for one year and if you'd like to renew that

you have to go back to your country for three months before you can come back into Japan with an international license.

I had been living in Japan for about six or seven years and go pulled over for speeding. Just five or six kilometers over the speed limit, but at the time I got a ticket, given a file, which we paid the next day. About two weeks later we got a call from the police officer saying that you're international license is invalid or something like that. That night after my English lessons were finished, we went to the police station and then they held me in custody for about a day saying that I didn't have a license and we were going through all these legal matters, I didn't understand the situation. It was a very bad situation but after everything was all done and said, the attorney realized that there were no English that we could look up on the internet and we called the DMV in America trying to get certification of this law existing.

There was no English records saying that this was a truthful law, so they let me go with no charges. The only thing they said I had to do is make sure a get a Japanese license as soon as possible.

Interviewer: Did you get the Japanese license eventually?

Mark: Yeah, while everything was going through before they even let me go, I had gotten my license. The situation, it still irks me today. When I was in police station I remember feeling helpless and powerless because no matter what I said, no matter what paperwork I showed them, they said I was wrong and that I was breaking the law. In my heart I wasn't breaking the law because I had a valid California license and a valid international license. It just really shocked me a showed me that Japanese people are known to be very polite and innocent but in reality the law is very strict here, so you have to be careful.

Interviewer: So stay on the right side of the law.

Mark: Hopefully, yeah. It also contradicts so many things that I see here in Japan. I could talk for hours about this.

Interviewer: Yeah, I understand. I have my own stories as well.

Mark: Aw, great, well maybe one day you can tell me.

Interviewer: I don't mean to move onto questions here. That was a great story by great example.

Mark: Aw, great.

Interviewer: Do you think it takes a commitment to live in Japan, like getting back to people who are not like yourself, who are not positive? Do you think it takes physical commitment to say I'm going to live in Japan from now on? To be happy or do you think it's just a natural thing that happens for a personality?

Mark: It depends on your circumstances of course. For myself, I have a wife that is Japanese so before I even moved to Japan I was already acclimated to Japanese culture, Japanese cuisine. Actually my grandfather was a karate sensei in America so we would have Japanese sensei's come over from Japan and we would put on dinner parties and stuff. Growing up I was very involved in Japanese culture a little bit as well. As for a commitment, I think anything and everything you do in your life takes commitment.

You have to have a little bit of diligence to get any success out of anything. If you're going to move to another country, you have to realize that you're in a different country with different laws, different standards. You have to have a huge commitment to be able to accept that and lose some of the things you think as natural for normal in your own personal standards because they are not accepted here in this country. I think the same would go for Japanese people going to America or other countries as well.

Interviewer: Do you think there are positive discrimination in Japan for western foreigners?

Mark: Positive discrimination? What do you mean?

Interviewer: The opposite of discrimination that would be something that is good for you, people help you more than if you were Japanese. They might not help you but because you are not Japanese they might help you more.

Mark: I get this funny sense with Japanese personality or Japanese people. I feel like people here in Japan are very open and very willing to help people they don't know. They're very willing to volunteer their time and effort for a simple cause to help somebody. Yeah, I've had a lot of people help me out of no reason whatsoever. Whereas in America, I think people are more generalized to help people they know and try to stick up for what you have to protect yourself more than trying to help other people. Just in general I would say.

Interviewer: There was one quite here by Daniel Kahl, did you see that quote?

Mark: Yeah, I keep my heritage of living in America very strong with me. A lot of my personal views and opinions on life come from how I was raised and the family I grew up in. Having that niche with your family is very important and for myself, I found other niches living here in Japan aside from my English teaching, my student and my family. I found little niches with photography and videography, mountain biking and camping and with this as a basis, or a niche, it's helped me say settled, or grounded here in Japan. It's given me a positive outlook into putting my efforts toward when I'm not working or spending time with my family. When I'm not teaching English and I'm in a completely Japanese environment, I think I become almost 100% Japanese more than I am American because I don't want to be an outcast. I also want to humble myself to be able to accept what the Japanese people are doing. In many cases could be totally different than something that we would do in America, even a conversation topic could be totally different than what we would talk about.

Interviewer: Do you consider Japan home?

Mark: Yeah, I've been here for fourteen going on fifteen years now. With that much time and effort put into living here and making a home for myself, yeah, I consider Japan very much my home. It would be difficult to leave Japan even though I'd like to go back to California someday, but there is just so much here, that if I did leave I would miss just as much as I miss California as I do now.

Interviewer: Did you experience a reverse culture shock when you go home?

Mark: Yes and no. It goes both ways for me. Going back home for the most part is total relaxation. Incidentally everything is English, so I don't have any struggles or anything at all. Driving down the street, I can read all the signs with no problems. I can go to a restaurant, order things and not have to worry about this mean this and does this mean that, trying to overly confuse things. There are other things that are really shocking to me, Americans now compared to when I was there, they seem to have more tattoo's and it's crazy. Big tattoos and big earrings and nose rings and that's actually quite shocking. As far as my family is concerned, no one has changed personally.

Interviewer: Do you talk to your family often, do you talk to them weekly?

Mark: Yeah, we talk weekly, monthly. I talk to my father at least once a month. My mother, we talk once a month through the phone or through skype. She'll email me vicariously and then I will email her back through Facebook and stuff like that. My grandparents as well, both of my grandparents are still living on my father's side and my mother's side. We talk to them about once a month as well.

Interviewer: Do you ever feel, when someone thinks that you're somebody that's new in Japan, like you just arrived yesterday? Does that bother you at all?

Mark: Yeah, that bothers me all the time. One of the pet peeves I have is that I'll be in a situation and I'll be for example, we're at the electronics store, and we're looking at something particular, my wife or myself calls on of the workers over there to give us some assistance and I'll ask a question in Japanese looking at the assistant in his face but then he instantly looks at my wife and answers the question to her in Japanese. Then I give my reply back in Japanese, my wife has said nothing but he still turns to look at her and speak Japanese.

Interviewer: Does this create any stress in general or do you just try to get around that?

Mark: No stress at all. Once it's done it's done. I'm over it.

Interviewer: Do you have any daily life problems? Any problems you have on a normal basis?

Mark: Truthfully no, I usually.  
Interviewer: It sounds like you don't.  
Mark: I usually deal with my problems personally. When I was a kid if something came up I was never the kind of person to actually talk about my problems with somebody. I would just face it and look for a solution. To where other kids they'd like to cry and whine about everything. Just taking that as my personality if you will, living in Japan, if anything has ever bothered me or had a problem with it, I confronted it straight there. At the time of the problem and I'm very straight forward even though that's not Japanese customs, if there is something I don't like or don't agree with, I'll ask questions as politely as I can. Just try to get a real understanding or reasoning and I don't like things to go over my head as well.

Interviewer: Do you have any anecdotes about living in Japan that would crystallize the whole experience? Something maybe you'd tell your family when you go home?

Mark: I guess Japanese culture in general and with my students as well, they tend to be very nonchalant with things. They don't really need a lot of detail. They don't really need a lot of information and they seem to be okay with that. The general idea in Japan is that if you continue doing what is good, eventually something good will happen back to you.

One funny story, is when I'd first come to Japan, I had to work my parent-in-laws restaurant, and coming from America where I did some restaurant work as well, by law you're supposed to wear sturdy steel toed shoes in case a hot plate falls on you or something. I came into work my first day with sturdy shoes on but everyone else was wearing sandals because you had to go up and down the stairs in and out of the rooms and every time you did this, you had to take your shoes on and off. Instantly I found myself in a very busy restaurant and I was running up and down the stairs in and out of rooms without any time to tie and untie my shoes. I was wearing my shoes half on, half off, just slipped on.

I was walking up the stairs to the big banquet room, where that night they had a party of about forty bankers in there and I was carrying a big tray of sashimi that must have had ten little plates of sashimi on it for ten people. Just as was going into the room, I was trying to slip off my shoes and somehow I stumbled and boom, I fell flat on my face and sashimi went flying all over the place. Rather than everyone looking in awe. I think everyone was a little drunk at the time as well, but they sort of cheered me on and said, "Yeah." I was totally demoralized. I didn't know what to do. I had to back down stairs to the kitchen and tell my father-in-law that the sashimi that he had just carefully prepared and elegantly arranged for these customers had been thrown all over the room. (Laughter)

Without any regard or any disrespect he just said that's okay, do what you have to do and he just made another ten plates of sashimi. I think that depicts Japanese culture very well in the fact that they don't dwell in a lot of misery. They are very positive at finding a solution and just moving forward and I found that to be true in many situations here.

Interviewer: That's a good story.  
Mark: True, if that was California, if that was a teacher or another situation, your boss would scold you and yell at you and talk about your disrespect and non diligence for the situation or whatever kind of work ethics you have or not. Probably give you some sort of punishment, like the sashimi, the ten plates of sashimi's coming out of your pay or something like that. Totally different as far as dealing with problematic situations I think. Which can be good and can be bad. I see some school situations where I think there is a lack of discipline here in Japan compared to America. Often times, as we see on the news daily there are situations that occur maybe due to that.

Interviewer: Do you think even though he's being patient with you, he's kind of holding back.  
Mark: Do you feel that way?  
Mark: No I don't because just even that night once we went back home and we were relaxing in front of the TV having some beer, eating some of the leftovers from

the restaurant, he didn't say a word, he didn't do anything, he was just laughing and cheery. That could be my father-in-law in general, of course another person might take the situation in different matters. No they have never brought up or talked about anything in the past and put that pressure upon me.

Interviewer:  
Mark:

What kind of person do you think ends up living in Japan for such a long time? I truthfully believe that if you're going to move to any country away from your own personal country, it takes a person who has interest in culture and wanting to understand a different way of life without trying to look back on what they thought as normal and trying to make that a standard in the new place because when you go to a new place or a new country you have to realize there are things that are very un-normal or natural from where you come from. You have to either accept that or have a lot of trouble I would say.

Interviewer:  
Mark:

If someone tries to apply their own culture to Japan, they would find that to be problematic. Do you think there are people who do that? That have been here a long time.

Interviewer:  
Mark:

What I mean about that is, if you're in a situation and you don't agree with something, you can speak out and tell everyone how you feel, but I'm notice that when you share your opinion or you're a very strongly bias to one sort of way of thinking, Japanese people tend to look down. They don't give you eye contact, and they totally avoid the situation. When any of my students or any of my friends don't like what I'm saying, they just ignore me. (Laughter) It takes someone with tough skin to live here for twenty years I would have to say.

Interviewer:  
Mark:

You do know people who don't have that tough skin but they're still here? I have a guy that lives kind of close to me, he's from Canada, we're not friends, his way of thinking is totally opposite to mine, but he's been here for about eight or nine years and he doesn't think that learning Japanese is a necessity, he thinks that every Japanese person needs to learn English. He thinks that his way of life or his way of thinking depicts his own situation. I don't agree with that. I feel comfortable around Japanese.

Interviewer:  
We call that ethnocentric. This was good, we go a lot of info here.

### **008 Carlo**

Interviewer: When you first arrived in Japan what was it like? Could you tell me ... How many years ago was that?

Carlo: I think I'm working on twenty-six, twenty-five plus. Yeah.

Interviewer: What was it like when you first came here?

Carlo: What was it like? I had been experiencing a lot of Asian culture before coming here already. When I arrived here, very pleasantly surprised. Coming from Taiwan, at that time, Taiwan was still very much in a transition stage, developing. It was little bit wilder, a little bit crazier.

Interviewer: Okay.

Carlo: Japan, in contrast to that, was very organized, very clean, very structured. It's still enjoying the boom of the bubble.

Interviewer: Oh really?

Carlo: I was just at the end of the bubble.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Carlo: I came by boat from Taipei and I landed in Okinawa and then I flew into (city name).

Interviewer: I see.

Carlo: A little bit different experience how I got here in the first place.

Interviewer: Okay.

Carlo: Why (city name) also comes into play. While traveling through Hong Kong and China, I met an American who was studying at S---- University and he invited me, he said, "Hey come to Japan. Come to this place called Fukuoka." Before-

Interviewer: Back then there was probably nobody that even knew the name, right?

Carlo: Nobody. Nobody.

Interviewer: Twenty-six years ago.

Carlo: I was thinking of going to Tokyo before I left, but he said, "Come to Fukuoka," it ended up being so close to Taiwan it made a lot of sense to do so. Another funny part of that, of course, is that we're talking twenty-six years ago, there's no email or nothing.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Carlo: He wrote me a letter back in Taiwan. I wrote him back, okay, I'm coming.

Interviewer: On those little tiny notices? Those little-

Carlo: A letter. An actual letter and grab a pen.

Interviewer: Right. When you first came was it kind of just exciting to be here? You said you had already had the Asian experience over in Taiwan.

Carlo: Yes, but it was exciting because it was the great Japan that everybody talked so much; everybody was so impressed with their economic progress and boom and pissed off at for doing so well.

Interviewer: That's right, during that time it was kind of like Japan and China now.

Carlo: That's right. Worse, I think. In America they were having a Honda bashing, car bashing, parties and events and things.

Interviewer: That's right.

Carlo: I was here totally excited to be here, for various reasons.

Interviewer: We call it the honeymoon period in cultural studies, did you have a honeymoon period when you first came, like everything was just great and fun and wonderful?

Carlo: I guess the answer to that is yes, but maybe yes twice. When I came the first time it was only for six weeks and I went back to Taiwan and then back to America.

Interviewer: Okay.

Carlo: Then when I was invited to come back to Japan after a year, maybe that's the honeymoon period you might be talking about.

Interviewer: Yeah. Probably. Even during that six weeks that you first came, that was wonderful enough for you to want to go back.

Carlo: Absolutely.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Carlo: Absolutely.

Interviewer: Then you came back to actually work or to ... I see.

Carlo: I was invited back, again, at that time the idea, the plan, was for the summer.

- Interviewer: I see.
- Carlo: During my first, first visit I hooked up with some people who owned a popular bar here called the I---- Bar and they wanted to open a school. We made friends and they came to see me in New York and said, "You should come back for the summer and run our school, whatever" and I agreed to. Yeah, but it was just for the summer. That's now twenty-six summers ago.
- Interviewer: The original plan was not to stay?
- Carlo: Not to stay.
- Interviewer: When did you decide that you were going to stay long term?
- Carlo: That's the funny question, I saw that in your interview, I don't think I ever did and that's kind of funny. I guess I am still on a honeymoon.
- Interviewer: Really?
- Carlo: Maybe I lean towards that now more than I ever did, but I think that frame of mind of never actually deciding I'm moving to Japan, I'm going to be here, I'm going to be here long term, and with that mindset decided, making the decisions you do to accommodate yourself here, I don't think I ever really, really did that to. With me, I think, it was mostly affected by my visa status; for about fifteen years I wasn't granted a visa.
- Interviewer: Really?
- Carlo: I had a tourist visa basically for fifteen years.
- Interviewer: Really?
- Carlo: Yeah, so I never felt permanent here.
- Interviewer: Is that because you were working on your own?
- Carlo: That's because of the way I ended up working on my own.
- Interviewer: I see.
- Carlo: At one point I had this humanities visa, basically a teaching visa, and I ended up opening my own bar as a business, with that via and immigration didn't really like that, so they punished me for a long, long time.
- Interviewer: I see. Okay.
- Carlo: Yeah, that coupled with other business issues with former business partners that didn't go well, that got made into a very negative or blacklisted with immigration, so even though the business exists, the company was registered and everything like that, but immigration would not recognize those things and not issue a business visa, an investor visa, which is what I was applying for at the time.
- Interviewer: Right. I see.
- Carlo: Therefore they just kind of kept me blacklisted for fifteen years. Every ninety days I was leaving the country for fifteen years, therefore the mindset of making this my permanent stay was difficult.
- Interviewer: That's really hard. When it comes to language, do you use mostly English in your dealings or Japanese? Do you kind of mix it up?
- Carlo: Because of my desire to go deeper into Japanese business society and my aspirations within that society, I try and use Japanese more. I could, within the business community, foreign business community or foreign community, just use English, sure. I can get away with that.
- Interviewer: Okay.
- Carlo: Even today I would say I still use a majority of English.
- Interviewer: Right, mostly English.
- Carlo: Yeah.
- Interviewer: Do you think it's important to learn the language?
- Carlo: I do. I kind of feel bad that I did not feel that way in the beginning and that I didn't dedicate myself to the language more in the beginning. I think it enhances the experience, the total experience of being here. You can get more accomplished. You can enjoy things more. You can understand things better. You can communicate your message better and that's so important. In the beginning I didn't realize how important that was to be able to communicate your message better.
- Interviewer: Right. Would you consider yourself a hundred percent assimilated into Japan? I know you probably saw the question...

- Carlo: I hope not.
- Interviewer: I hope not. I have a quote here from Daniel Kahl. Do you know who Daniel Kahl
- Carlo: I do.
- Interviewer: Do you think that niche is very important; that you get this comfortable niche where you can get things done?
- Carlo: Yeah, that main ground, I think, that separates us from them, if you will, us being the foreigners that come here with foreign experiences ... Japan, I think, gets through the day on trying to achieve or maintain sameness and stifle, to a certain degree, originality and maverick-ism, if you will. We get through the day with originality and creativity and those things, if they're put in the same room, are going to knock heads a little bit.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Carlo: If they're both respected by both parties to try to achieve whatever the goal may be at that time, then both parties have something to contribute to the task and that is a positive for everything, I think.
- Interviewer: It's almost like a technique to be able to balance that, right? You must have-
- Carlo: Totally. Totally. Even recently I was in a meeting with two Japanese bar owners, restaurant owners, as myself, and we were discussing an event that all three were invited to participate in; put up a booth, sell beer, do this and that. Their approach to the event, *naiyo*, the event profile that we were given, was these are the rules and they told me, "These are the rules we've been issued and these are what we have to follow because the organizer of the event said these are the rules and we have to" and I totally rejected all that.
- I said, "No, these are the guidelines we've been given and the event people are not experts in this field, in restaurateuring and all that stuff, even in event production, so our job, as experts in this field, are to examine these things and give them our best recommendations. If we agree with this it's cool, if we don't agree we should tell them why, but we should question all this stuff because questioning it now is the time to question it." Once the event is on and going, there's no questioning it, you have to roll with what's been decided. I was trying to convey that to them and that took a little bit of time. I don't think I did successfully anyway.
- Interviewer: But you do realize like oh, before you even open your mouth sometimes you must realize I have to be tactful at the way I-
- Carlo: Completely.
- Interviewer: You recognize that.
- Carlo: I do, but I also realize sometimes that it's to my advantage to not be tactful sometime and bark at them because I have that luxury to do so, being a foreigner.
- Interviewer: I see.
- Carlo: Actually in that particular meeting, too, I barked at them.
- Interviewer: Really?
- Carlo: Interesting, this is an experience that gets repeated in my life, throughout these twenty-six years I've opened and closed twelve, fifteen venues and I've been an event producer, whatever, I consider myself an expert in my field, so anytime that I'm approached with this condescending attitude of please the Japanese people, the Japanese way is, the Japanese custom, I correct them immediately. How long have you been in this business? I've been here twice your time.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Carlo: Just because you're Japanese does not mean you know anything about Japanese hospitality, that comes through experience, which I have close to thirty years of, so do not address me like that. You have to correct them, because it's so easy for them to think that just because they're Japanese they know more about any particular subject.
- Interviewer: In some ways you use, what's been labeled as the gaijin card, but in some ways they use the Japanese card.
- Carlo: Totally.
- Interviewer: They use the Japanese card, which kind of negates your opinion.
- Carlo: Absolutely.
- Interviewer: But you call them out. You call them out.

Carlo: Yes, I call them out. Strictly because you're Japanese you cannot say that you have more experience than I do or strictly because I'm a foreigner you cannot say I have less experience in that field. Really you have to count the experience. We're in a constant battle to stay alive.

Interviewer: Yeah, it's going to be tough to edit this one down to thirty minutes.

Carlo: To stay alive is hard.

Interviewer: That's interesting, because you used the word stay alive and I think that's a very common feeling among, especially foreign entrepreneurs in Japan. It's a constant struggle.

Carlo: Yes.

Interviewer: You've proven yourself quite often.

Carlo: One should also recognize the fact that if my business fails, I lose my visa, I'm in jeopardy of losing my visa.

Interviewer: Right. Oh, really. Have you ever met anybody here that you would consider kind of like why are they here? Kind of like they're lost? They've been here for a long time, ten, fifteen, twenty years, but they still feel like ... When you look at them you think maybe they don't belong here?

Carlo: Yes, I run into that a lot because unfortunately people like that will gravitate towards alcohol.

Interviewer: I see.

Carlo: In my business I will meet people that are lost, that have not been successful in assimilating here, who have not found their niche, who have not found their road, who have maybe had and lost in business, who have failed or see themselves failing. Of course, foreigners always have the option of leaving to somewhere; supposedly we do.

Interviewer: Supposedly.

Carlo: Right, supposedly.

Interviewer: Where do you go to?

Carlo: Supposedly we do. Those people who find themselves frustrated like that, yes, I see them, and often they get into trouble. They get into trouble.

Interviewer: They get into trouble.

Carlo: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think it's more of a personality, attitude, that keeps people from getting to that point?

Carlo: I think it's the ability to assimilate is an issue.

Interviewer: Okay.

Carlo: Opportunities, of course, that's ... At the end of the day, how many opportunities can you create or how many opportunities can you recognize around you. Depending on the infrastructure that has you here, a support group that you have here, are you married, does your family own the business that you married into that they can support you. If you married into a family that hasn't got a strong base that you can easily adjust into then you're kind of by yourself and that makes it very difficult. Another issue that I don't know if you've touched on or experienced this is the Caucasian Japanese experience and the non-Caucasian experience, that's very different too; very, very different.

Coming from the United States, my ethnic background is Latino, but I very easily fall into the black American category as well; if you wanted to kind of group us. Definitely I do not fall into the Caucasian experience. Now in America, the Latin experience and the black American experience is not that different or at least it's very similar in the fact that we feel to some extent disenfranchised by the government or by the system, if you will.

Interestingly enough though, because we go through that experience in America, we have experienced that disenfranchisement, so we come to Japan and there's similar disenfranchising parallels to America.

This is not our country, the system is not made for us in mind to succeed, but we're used to kind of that because we've experienced it in America. Perhaps the Caucasian experience, male Caucasian experience, can be very different than that. They're coming from, using America as an example, they're coming from a country whose system is designed to help them succeed or with their success in mind at least, and they feel that in that culture. Once they arrive in a country like this, a foreign country, not only Japan, a

foreign country, and they experience this disenfranchisement, it's shocking. I've seen that shock to the extent that they simply leave Japan. The female Caucasian experience- We call this ethnocentrism.

Interviewer: Carlo: Ethnocentrism, completely.

Interviewer: Carlo: Yeah.

Now the female experience is different and a whole different direction, but speaking of the male experience, yes, the male Caucasian experience here, they are shocked that they're not treated as they are used to back home. The minorities in America that may have experienced this in Japan here, we're not that shocked by it and we kind of bounce it off a little better. Yeah.

Interviewer: Interesting. I'm glad you've touched on that.

Carlo: Thank you.

Interviewer: Thank you for that. I appreciate it. Do you think it's important to commit to living here?

Carlo: To commit to living here?

Interviewer: You said you never really decided to do that.

Carlo: Because of my particular situation I've always felt with one foot out the door.

Interviewer: Yeah, actually so this is kind of a non-question then.

Carlo: No. No. No. It's a good question, do you feel commit? It's a good question because the Japanese respect the commitment and they recognize it and they look for it.

Interviewer: Oh, I see what you're saying.

Carlo: They look for it.

Interviewer: Okay, I see.

Carlo: In me they haven't seen it and I think this also could be one of the issues attributed to my problems here that outside, the Japanese community looking at me and the way I live my life here, and because they saw me going and coming for fifteen years, they never would label me as committed. I never married; they never labeled me as committed. I don't have kids; they never labeled me as committed.

Interviewer: I see what you mean.

Carlo: They're not quite-

Interviewer: Socially committed.

Carlo: No, I'm not. I never worked for corporation that would ... I work for Sony, oh this guy, you know?

Interviewer: Right. Right.

Carlo: No. To my surprise, even now, at the extent I'm described by many as an enigma.

Interviewer: As enigma.

Carlo: Yeah. Carlo, I've known you forever, whatever, whatever, but we don't know what you do. What do you do? I said, "What do you mean what do I do? I run this bar that we drink in every day." What do you do? How do you stay here? Where are you from? All these things. I'm shocked that I'm such a mystery to them, but I think part of the reason is that I've not done the things that they're looking for to describe deep rooted commitment into society.

Interviewer: Technically you have committed in many ways to your own self; too your success, which I think takes a lot of courage.

Carlo: I think I was stubborn, didn't want to lose, right? I was committed to winning.

Interviewer: It takes commitment though. It takes a lot of commitment.

Carlo: To win, yeah, because you can leave. Leaving now is harder, but back then, leaving, okay I'm out.

Interviewer: Right. Right. Right.

Carlo: Go back to New York, move on, pursue stuff, enjoy the Clinton years.

Interviewer: You would've been suffering through the Bush years.

Carlo: There you go. It's interesting though. There's a comment that I like to make that maybe in response to the very first comment you made about some of your colleagues saying foreigners of this type have no problems here.

Interviewer: Right. Right.

- Carlo: Being in Japan all this time is not free, it's not without its sacrifices. It's not free what we did here. Staying here was not without its sacrifices. We've missed out on many things back home, if you will.
- Interviewer: I agree.
- Carlo: My language suffers. English, even, suffers. I cannot communicate, arguably, I cannot communicate in English at the level of my education would suggest. My practice is down. My vocabulary is down. My communication techniques with the western world, interacting, has to be affected all this time. That's not free, that's a damage, that's a setback. The opportunities that were available have gone and past. I can go back to America, but if I apply for a job or something in America, I have very limited experience, working experience, in America in very limited fields. I'm fifty years old plus; how employable am I in this day and life and world. Yeah, so being here was not without its sacrifice.
- Interviewer: I see it. A very interesting quote. Was it worth it?
- Carlo: How does one measure if it was worth twenty plus years? Was it a good investment? Was it a good decision? Every day you ask yourself that. Every day, I think, people in my position we ask ourselves that, because we read the paper now and the shit is fucked up over there. Do we really want to leave and put up with that? Now, as adults, I'm not twenty something anymore, an adventurer or backpacker, the way I arrived here; as an adult we have different values. It's clean and safe here. We can make a living. We have friends around us, it's fun.
- Interviewer: Yeah.
- Carlo: How do you compare the pluses of *city name* with New York or other places that you might consider moving to? Can I do business here? Am I happy doing the business I'm currently in? Happy? Yeah. Completely satisfied? No, because my business is rough; it deals with intake of poison every day. It deals with a very, very, what do you call it, people-centric.
- Interviewer: Very relationship oriented.
- Carlo: Very relationship oriented and every day you're dealing with people full on. The best thing about the business is the people. The worst thing about the business is the people. I like to say pretty often that I'm in the middle of people all the time and they will, if I let them, they will love me to death. They will love me to death.
- Interviewer: Really?
- Carlo: Yes. I get praised and more than my share, but I'm always being, like crows, being picked at, in the nature of my business.
- Interviewer: I see.
- Carlo: Picked apart every day and I have to be resilient and block that.
- Interviewer: Right. Right.
- Carlo: Here and physically. Another drink, come on, you can do it, let's go. Physically and mentally I'm being challenged all the time, attacked all the time.
- Interviewer: Right. Right.
- Carlo: From the outside looking in, Carlo owns his own business, he rolls around in nice khakis, always in a good mood. That's in my nature to be in a good mood, I like smiling. The sun is enough to make me smile.
- Interviewer: Right. Right.
- Carlo: Again, the enigma, what makes this guy so happy?
- Interviewer: Man, very interesting stuff.
- Carlo: My time here, I've always been an advocate of networking. I've always been an advocate of group building and always been advocate of a foreigner who plans to stay here a long time should own his own business, so I've always been pushing that, because Japan does not offer us a real option.
- Interviewer: Right. Right.
- Carlo: Japan does a very poor of job in making the foreign community feel welcome, in giving us options of employment, to its own detriment, and giving us options on language, achieving and pushing us to be proficient language wise. By design, what Japan has done is made it that only the qualified professionals are the ones that they're attracting by

their visa policies. Therefore, just by design and because of that policy, the foreigners that are here, one has to assume they're very educated, well-trained, degree holding foreign nationals. Why would you let a group that special just wither?

Interviewer: Right. Right.

Carlo: Why not try and identify them?

Interviewer: This is very similar to what I'm looking for.

Carlo: Yeah. Why not try and see what talents they have and want to apply to Japan, because they've decided to stay here long term; through marriage or whatever other ways.

Interviewer: Right. Right.

Carlo: What a waste. Why isn't there, especially now in the age of the internet, a database that foreigners could voluntarily submit their information, their interests or their degrees or certificates, whatever their training, that can be looked at by the chambers of commerce or by different business groups that are looking for this kind of talent that exists. If you take the foreign community and you break it up to the roughly one percent of the whole country, within that one percent, within that million foreigners that exist in this country, a very high percent of very highly educated people.

Interviewer: When you go home to the states do you ever feel reverse culture shock?

Carlo: Yes, I've experienced it. Not every time, but more and more I do, but yes it's very evident. Being here this long I am part Japanese.

Interviewer: Right.

Carlo: There's some aspects to this culture, the society, that I immediately liked and that I adopted.

Interviewer: Right.

Carlo: I like its discretionary aspect to the culture, it's very discreet.

Interviewer: Discreet.

Carlo: Yes, I like that. I like discreet. I like the space they give people. I like their patience and tolerance when there isn't space physically.

Interviewer: Right. Right.

Carlo: I like the level of politeness when it's not intrusive to the goal. It can get so polite it's intrusive.

Interviewer: Yes, I understand. Yeah.

Carlo: Yes, I like their politeness. I go back home and I got to the bank, for example, and I go change a check or whatever it is and the teller girls like, to me, now that I've spent so much time here, basically throws the money at you. If there's coins you really get in the ...., like hey, you have two hands on a little basket, a little tray, it's an amazing the difference. It's an amazing difference.

Interviewer: New York is your home, but do you consider Japan your home?

Carlo: That's a tough question too, is New York still my home?

Interviewer: Is New York still your home?

Carlo: Yeah, is this my home? Twenty-six years here, now I have spent equal amount of time in both.

Interviewer: Really?

Carlo: It's a funny year for me. Is New York home? I have family there, cousins, old friends-

Interviewer: Is Japan home?

Carlo: That's a good question too, I'm not quite sure. I can't answer it yes off the top like that, because every day you're reminded that it's not your home.

Interviewer: I see.

Carlo: You get in taxi, oh we're you from? Every day you're reminded it's not, so it's hard to buy into my home. My adopted home? My current home? I don't know what I would call it, but the assault of the constant reminder that it's not your home, that you are a guest here.

Interviewer: I see.

Carlo: I could walk out the door any day and decide not to speak Japanese at all and be treated as oh, you just got off the plane just because of the way I look.

Interviewer: Right. Right.

Carlo: I'm constantly reminded of that. In New York that people are so used to seeing foreigners everywhere from all over the world, nobody's a New Yorker, everybody's a New Yorker.

Interviewer: Right, I see.

Carlo: Right.

Interviewer: They still tell you to get out of the way.

Carlo: Yeah, exactly. Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer: Everybody's told to get out of the way the same way.

Carlo: Exactly. Is it my home? I have hard time, personally, with home. What's home? It's where I live.

Interviewer: What kind of people do you think end up living here for like twenty years? Could you sum that up, because I mean I'm sure there's many types?

Carlo: I tend to say that the people who stay home are a little better than us. Yeah, we're the adventurers, we're dissatisfied with things, we're escaping from something, we're looking for something, looking for ourselves, and we leave. We leave, and that's heavy, because you don't just leave a country, you leave people, you leave family, you leave friends. You leave and you create distance, so the kind of people that travel and stay here, we're a brave people, resilient, dissatisfied, and flexible. We're very flexible.

I still feel I can pack up and go be flexible enough to live in another culture. At my age I prefer not to learn another language. Okay, move to India and learn Hindu. Okay, let's not do that. Yeah, the kind of people that stay or keep traveling for twenty years or go away and become an expat for twenty years, we're flexible people, we're adventure seekers. I came up with and it's kind of part of my mission statement for life, is that I always start it with ... I have a few points in it, but I always start it with, I'm going to live my extraordinary life.

I realized it when I went to China, when I was traveling through mainland China, the things that I was doing, I was immediately comparing them to what my friends back home are probably doing right now and what I'm doing; I'm walking the Great Wall and I'm backpacking and catching a boat right off the beach to travel into Shanghai next and go. That's an extraordinary experience; particularly compared to what my friends and family were doing back home and I liked it. I liked that my life was being shaped by extraordinary things and I promised to continue living an extraordinary life.

Interviewer: Right.

Carlo: Therefore a short answer to your question is what kind of people stay twenty years somewhere and travel; those who are in search of, and who appreciate, an extraordinary life.

Interviewer: I'm just going to finish up with the question about anecdotes.

Carlo: Anecdotes. Keeping it business related though, I'll give you-

Interviewer: That's good, keep it business ... Yeah.

Carlo: Maybe this is the root reason I ended up actually staying here and giving me the confidence to pursue the business and keep building the business.

Interviewer: Right.

Carlo: We had opened the bar, O----- opened. As I mentioned before I had the wrong visa for opening a business here, so I hurried up and tried to register a company and the idea was the company, register a company, and the company will open the bar and the company will hire me. That's the structure that I have to date.

Interviewer: Right. Makes sense.

Carlo: I researched what I had to do. Immigration, okay, you have to do this, you have to make a company and at that time it was much more difficult than today. You need, what was it, three million yen to make a company. Five million yen if you are foreigner and if you're hoping to get a visa from it and the money has to stay in there for like six months to protect against borrowing and just putting it in there, right?

Interviewer: Right. Right.

Carlo: It's your money. It ain't complicated, but I went through everything I needed and I went to the bank to open an account to put this money in I had collected and I'm sitting there with the bank representative one of the, not a teller, but one of the officers, and I'm telling him what I want to do, I want own a company, I'm going to open a bar, I'm going to be the best bar in town, I'm going to do this, that, and he was, "Wow, that's great. How much

money are you going to put in?" "Well, I've got this much I'm going to put in" and the guys all, "I'll give you a million yen."

Interviewer: Who said that?

Carlo: The bank officer, he got up, we went to the teller machine, he took out-

Interviewer: You mean his personal money?

Carlo: Yes, he took out a million yen from his personal account and gave it to me to deposit among the money I had to make the deposit for the company as capital money. Right there and then.

Interviewer: Is that an investment on his part?

Carlo: I guess, but he never asked for a dime of interest. Years went by and he came to the bar sometimes, he still paid his bill and then more years went by and he dropped in one day, he said, "Oh, my daughter's getting married, do you think I can have my million back?" I said, "Sure" and I gave him back his million and he went on his jolly way. Now mind you this was in the bubble years so money was different.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's right. That's what I've heard. Yeah.

Carlo: Money was different.

Interviewer: I have no idea what that is, I came after the bubble.

Carlo: Yeah, it was fun. It was easy come, easy go. It was live fast and hard. It left me with a great sense of generosity. It gave me a great sense of personal confidence of my plan and also how I can explain myself to people and inspire people with my ideas and trust this country. My God, this person trusts me so much.

Interviewer: And you just met him that day?

Carlo: That day. That day. That day. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, that's an awesome story. That's an awesome story.

Carlo: That gave me confidence to move on in the business and stuff and it made me feel good. The business was successful, particularly the first five years it absolutely exploded.

Interviewer: Right.

Carlo: It was easy go. You go the bank and .....

Interviewer: Right. Right. Back in the day though when a million yen was like a week of working.

Carlo: Yeah, no big deal. No big deal.

Interviewer: That's awesome. This is good. Do you have anything to add before we finish up?

Carlo: Yeah. Yeah. This might fall into the category of another anecdote, it kind of does.

Interviewer: Yeah, good.

Carlo: When the Kobe earthquake hit-

Interviewer: The Kobe earthquake, yeah.

Carlo: Yeah. I was sitting here watching it on the news going, wow, and the phone rang and a friend of mine called and he said, "Carlo, do you see what's going on?" I said, "Yeah, wow." Coming from New York and all that I don't really have that many experiences with earthquakes and stuff. My friend called me and he goes "Wow, do you see what's going on?" I said, "Yeah. Yeah. Wow." "What are you going to do about it?" "What do you mean I'm going to do about it? It's on the news. It's an earthquake, what do you want me to do about it?" He said, "What are you going to do about it? These people need help" and, "Okay, let's do something."

I rounded up the troops and some foreigners who also felt the same way. We collected money, of course, fundraising and trying to do this, but on top of that we also did, I think, at least two or three missions, I think, into Kobe. We organized a convoy in there. I was in Kobe two, three days after the quake. I assessed the situation, came back to *city name*, organized a group of ten plus cars, whatever it was, a truck with supplies. We went down to the heart of the incident, of the earthquake, and made camp into a junior high school. People would camp out inside the junior high school and the ones that didn't fit were outside, it was in the middle of winter. We created makeshift kitchens, a soup kitchen, and food, clothes, Bibles. We gave out all we could, but what sticks out in my mind of that time was, when entered the school ... The cool thing was when we were touring the area, one there was no looting. The place was horrible, it looked like a walking nightmare, the whole city, but there was no looting. There was no rioting. There was no crime on the street. There was a lot of calm. I respect that a lot.

When we went into the junior high school, here, bringing relief and rescue to these people, they're calm as hell in the school, relaxed, clean. No ruckus. They see me and they offer me food. This lady offered me a banana. You okay, you want to eat? You all right? I'm like, "What do you mean by all right? I'm here to save you." Again, a lot of respect for the Japanese people after that experience. Their composure. Their dignity. I think that experience, for me, defines the word dignity. They respect themselves. They respect their neighbor. They respect the city, the business. They're serious and sober in times that many people will panic. That also defines a lot of reasons I stayed in this country.

Interviewer: Yeah. I'm going to finish there. I thank you very much for your cooperation. I appreciate that.

## 009 Judi

- Interviewer: All right?  
Judi: All right.
- Interviewer: What was it like when you came here twenty years ago for the first time? What was it like when you first arrived?  
Judi: If I put it in one word, I'd say freedom. I felt really free. I moved up in F-----, in I----. Everything was new. Of course, we had that honeymoon period. My honeymoon period lasted the whole first year. I came with *eikaiwa* A--- transition to make, plus I was coming from a job in ... I managed a small financial service business that was high volume and there was a lot of responsibility there. It was hard work and stressful. Coming from that to here, teaching the *eikaiwa* which, like a club, we speak English, I really felt everything was so light and free.  
I remember there was one incident when I was walking home, I was here maybe three weeks and it was 9:00 at night and I was going to catch the bus, and I saw a high school student walking alone in the dark down the street. I just thought, "What is she doing all alone at night like this?" Even though I was there alone. I just had this realization like, "Wow, I'm in Japan," and I felt my whole body relaxed.  
I hadn't realized I had that tension. I used to carry pepper spray in the States because I ... It's mostly ... I had to carry ... I was a, security-related job, but I didn't want a gun. I had pepper spray. Just coming here was like, "Wow, this is great." It's like I felt really free. I felt like I was not paying as many taxes. Even though I made a little bit less money, I was saving more.
- Interviewer: I see. Why did you come originally, what was the original plan, just to teach English or wasn't that the original plan?  
Judi: My sister and her then boyfriend, but now they're married, they were planning a trip around the world, and I knew that I was not up for that kind of travel. I'm more of like a five-star hotel kind of person. I'm not big at traveling, but the idea of going somewhere different really appeals me. I have come out of a divorce just before that too, so I was ready for something new, different.  
My cousin had come here before me and she really had a good time. She was here two years teaching English in Tokyo. I had talked with her and I had a couple of Japanese friends and they're like, "Yeah, yeah." I was recruited through an office in Chicago for AEON and came my original plan was to stay for a year or two and then possibly go to Europe, which was just opening up at that time in the early '90s.
- Interviewer: Right.  
Judi: Right? Prague was like a hot place to go.  
Interviewer: You came 1993?  
Judi: '94.  
Interviewer: '94.  
Judi: Yeah. May in '94. I thought, "I'll be here a year or two, save some money," because at that time, you could, and then go on somewhere else for a while. I like the idea of long term too. I'm not ... I'm a home person, basically, which probably helped.
- Interviewer: What about ... How long did it take you to realize you're going to be here for a longer stay?  
Judi: Probably, a year, because then I met my to-be husband in F-----. We planned to move to Yokohoma, from F-----, together, so we made those plans together. I did go back to the States for six weeks during contract, between contract, and then came back and we started to live together then in Yokohama in '95.
- Interviewer: Right. Are you close to your family back home? Do you still have family that you keep in touch with?  
Judi: Yeah. I'm regularly in touch with my father. He calls regularly because he's got free dialing. I can't get my sisters to do Skype. I have two sisters. My younger sister and I used to be much closer, but actually, since my mother passed away about five years ago, I notice that we've drifted a bit.
- Interviewer: I see.  
Judi: They don't really do email. Again, they don't do Skype.

Interestingly, my father, because of a connection from here, one of my students went to do a homestay there, and one of his Japanese friends, he was spending a lot of time with her and they ended up getting quite close and now he remarried a Japanese woman who lives in the States.

Interviewer: Really?

Judi: Yeah. Isn't that weird?

Interviewer: That's pretty weird.

Judi: She's from F-----. It's like a whole new life for him and it's exciting for me because of the Japan connection and to see him so happy. We'll say, this is a family thing, I had noticed here that because of Facebook, I'm actually a little more connected with my extended family than I was before. All my cousins are on Facebook, so we are able to chat every now and then and share pictures, so that's nice. I wish my sisters would be on there though.

Interviewer: Do you use a lot of Japanese in your life or do you use more English? How do you ...

Judi: I definitely say, it's more English.

Interviewer: More English, okay.

Judi: Yeah, definitely. I'm trying ... I still study Japanese. I was studying a lot more before my son was born. He's twelve. The first five years, it was as much English as I could get in with him.

Interviewer: I see.

Judi: I started studying again when he was about five. I studied with a former colleague only about once a month. There was a question about how important Japanese is and I will say, I consider it important. I think people who can speak can just be more independent here and if they have to do something, they feel that they can. Whereas if you, people I know who don't speak and they have to rely on other people, I think it's kind of bad for your self-esteem after a while. It took me three years to where I felt like I can even speak anything, where, like go shopping and ask for something, but still, very low, beginner. Only now, I've realized I catch myself in these longer conversations with people in Japanese. I'm not satisfied with my Japanese, but I'm starting to feel, "Wow. Now I can ask questions about what I don't understand," kind of level. It's like, "Cool."

Judi: I don't get enough practice. I'd teach English all day. My colleagues are all English speakers.

Interviewer: Right. Would you consider yourself assimilated, one hundred percent?

Judi: No. I don't think that's my goal. I'm very comfortable and I don't feel like I need to be Japanese, if you call assimilation like being Japanese.

Judi: Yes, I'm definitely part of my community and a lot of people know me, and I have made an effort to do that. I volunteer at the library to read to children and at the school too, so a lot of the neighborhood, they've put my picture in the newspaper or in newsletters, and so a lot of people know me, but I don't know them. I have, I guess, a little fame. Even walking down the street, people will say, "You're -----," I'm my son's mother, they recognize me.

Judi: I feel, in that way, yeah, I'm assimilated. I'm very comfortable. I don't ...

Interviewer: Yeah, comfortable is probably a better word.

Judi: Yeah. I feel like I belong here. I don't feel like I'm missing out not being somewhere else.

Interviewer: That would be-

Judi: See, I feel like I don't have to be Japanese or I don't have to prove myself either. Actually, I shouldn't say that because there's another question coming up about that, maybe. When I volunteered at the library, I felt I did need to prove myself as a foreigner like I am committed to this. There's a question about commitment. I notice ... I think a lot of Japanese people are a little cautious with foreigners because of a lack of commitment in some cases.

Interviewer: I see.

Judi: Sometimes, I feel like I really need to show my all. Not to be Japanese, but just to show them, foreigners can be trusted, if you will, right?

Interviewer: I totally understand. Yeah, I understand.

- Judi: Yeah, I can totally understand that. I remember ... I studied Ikebana and I got a teacher's license and I taught in English. That attracted a lot of people. They like the fact that it ... In fact, foreigners and Japanese who wanted to use English.
- I also remember thinking sometimes when people would say, "You're so Japanese," but I never ... I sometimes was off-put by that a little bit. I didn't want to be considered like trying to be Japanese. Sometimes, you see the foreigners who will dress in a kimono and go out shopping or something. They're overdoing, in my opinion, the Japanese thing, like trying to over assimilate in a way.
- Interviewer: That's called appropriation. Do you think people can get lost in their lives here? Do you think they can ...
- Judi: Yeah.
- Interviewer: When I say, "lost," I mean, kind of confused or having doubt about ... You don't seem to be that way at all, but do you know anybody like that?
- Judi: No, I'm not. I know people like that. I mentioned that mothers group and some of the moms in there, especially they seem younger than me, like 30s.
- Interviewer: Could you explain the mothers group again? Because we didn't-
- Judi: Sure. There's a Facebook mothers group. It's called KA International Mothers group. It's actually is now, it's a secret group. They have a blog on Facebook also where they post general information, but it turned into a secret group of at least five hundred members.
- Interviewer: Really? It's a lot of members.
- Judi: Yeah. It really escalated quickly how many people were in. People would post problems or just ideas or what to do with their kids or language ideas that help with bilingualism, but it's slowly evolved into this griping session about husbands and in-laws. A lot of the discontent seem to be more in the countryside with a bit younger mothers. They have salary men husband. I think they feel trapped. It's like they don't work and they're with their child all day with nothing to do and their husband's gone all the time. Actually, in Tokyo, too, a friend of mine, who is about ten years younger than me, she complained because she never saw her husband. She actually left. She had ended up getting divorced and leaving. Other people too ...
- Just to compare, I'm in a Tokyo Mothers Group on Facebook and their group is a bit smaller and it seems, I hate to say, a little more educated. They are. They're just more civil and there isn't a complaining that goes on with the national group.
- A lot of it, I'd boil it down to the complaints or about their attitude. You mentioned about a lot of it is a happy marriage help?
- Interviewer: I mentioned that at the beginning, yeah.
- Judi: Right?
- Interviewer: That's what I've seemed to notice.
- Judi: Yeah. I think that really boils down to a person's attitude too.
- I sometimes wondered why ... Also, I can see this from the man's point of view because I'm the breadwinner and my husband is helping a lot at home and working part time. These women who complain, their husbands are working and bringing in the salary for them, and then they wonder why their husband isn't doing laundry. I just couldn't understand that request even.
- I remember I haven't been to the supermarket in ages, like five years, and I was buying nabe ingredients, only in for nabe, I was going to surprise my husband, it took me one hour to go through a supermarket to get ingredients for nabe because I was out of practice. I can totally relate to the Japanese husbands who don't want to go to the supermarket or they're not ready to help or they're tired.
- Anyway, I think that type of person can feel like they don't belong here or they're not sure what they should do or they don't know how to change their situation. One woman I talked to, rare case for someone who actually takes the advice. I told her, "Just do your own effort one hundred percent. Just focus on what you're doing and eventually, your husband's going to follow." She did that and she said it really worked, it changed. He started to realize, "Wow, she making such a big effort, so I have to make an effort too," and it seemed to help her.
- Interviewer: Yeah. Lead by example, basically.

Judi: Mm-hmm (affirmative).  
Interviewer: Yeah, that's good.  
Judi: Yeah. That's a lot of my own philosophy anyway, so I think it helps. It's attitude. If you expect other people to do everything, it's never going to happen.  
Interviewer: Right. Have you ever been personally discriminated against?  
Judi: I would say, I wrote the answer, "Probably, but not really." I thought of two incidents where maybe, you could say, it was discrimination. In my opinion, I think people are a little too sensitive about it, especially white westerners coming to Japan. They really have nothing to complain about it, if you ask me.  
One incident was I was out with my husband and a bunch of his friends who totally welcomed me into their circle. We were out in *izakaya*. My husband's a drummer, so it was after one of his shows. This new friend, who I didn't know, someone's friend came with us, and she was speaking to me in the most polite Japanese. It was a little hard for me to follow what she was saying and I really felt like she was treating me like with, distantly. Everyone else was much more casual and spoke very casual Japanese with me. She only came once, I think, like she wasn't maybe part of ... She wasn't speaking that way to other people. It's just me. She seemed very arrogant. I thought maybe it was because I'm a foreigner.  
Interviewer: That's a hard part.  
Judi: I don't think it was my own language deficiency because I thought I can understand. "Wow, she's using all these *teinei* endings."  
The other one was not with Japanese though. I went to an interview at a high school last fall, I think, it was. It was a position I had applied for a year and a half earlier and then I got, the person who was leaving was in contact with me for about a year. He's like, "Okay, I'm going to leave. Send your resume." I felt like I had a "in" on the thing like, "Wow, I've been waiting for this and I got the interview." Ten hours of preparation and then model lesson, and I thought I performed really well in the interview and as I was leaving, he said, "Well, we do have to put, post out publicly for this position." I was like, "What?" I was a little surprised.  
A week later, he emailed me to say, "You didn't get the job," so I asked for feedback. He said, basically, they interviewed two people and they wished they could've hired both of us. I have a feeling that they probably hired someone's friend and they just needed to ... Probably a male, because it's all males that interviewed me, and I'm usually not sensitive to these gender issues either. I felt, I wonder if they just used me, so they had somebody to say, "Okay, we interviewed two people, but we're taking this guy."  
I felt, I don't know if that's discrimination though. That's probably not. I feel ...  
Interviewer: It's hard to say. That's a hard one.  
Judi: I don't know if it's true. It's what I thought.  
Interviewer: It could possibly be true, if, especially, it was a country high school or something like that, it could possibly be true.  
Judi: Yeah. It was a little disappointing. I felt like, "Wow," especially having done so well at the interview and thinking I was the only one they were interviewing too. I don't think I'm very sensitive to that.  
Interviewer: Yeah, you said that. You don't sound like ...  
Judi: I notice that with the mothers group I was involved in, I felt a lot of people were overly sensitive about these people said or did and they didn't, they're just assuming that there was discrimination involved, but they don't really know. They never had a chance to question the person, so like the microaggression keyword that's going around recently.  
Interviewer: Right.  
Judi: I think it's a little overkill.  
Interviewer: I agree. I think it's-  
Judi: I thought. I try to ... I did a little cross-cultural training when I first came here too and reading up on it. They advise people, the experts advise people to ask a native person about the situation. I've always tried to do that because my husband's good with that and my mother-in-law. Instead of asking other foreigners or the complaining to other

- foreigners, you really need to discuss it with somebody in the culture. Maybe they don't even understand it themselves, but they might give you some idea.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Judi: The other day, somebody posted, it's either a movie or a video, about black men in America and try to break the stereotype image of them. The comment from someone, a foreigner living in Japan was "Just replace the word "black" with English teacher and we can feel the same stereotype." I wrote back. I'm like, "How can you even compare our situation with the way black people are treated in the United States?"
- Interviewer: It's totally different.
- Judi: It's totally different. We're put up on pedestals. I know a guy that left here who was so paranoid. Every time somebody laughs, he didn't speak Japanese, but it's like anytime someone laughs, they were laughing at him.
- Interviewer: Yeah.
- Judi: Yup.
- Interviewer: Have you ever had any situation that you would consider something that was like maybe complicated by a cultural difference? In this case, many people cite divorce or legal trouble or someone-
- Judi: For me, it wasn't that serious. At first, I couldn't think anything, but then I mentioned my volunteer work at the library.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Judi: Another foreign woman heard about this and she's like, "My son would love to do that," or "I would love for my son to do it," is more like it. I'm like, "Cool. The more the merrier." He's *halfu* and he was bilingual. When they came to see what was happening, the mom talked the whole time in Japanese, the son didn't say a word, didn't smile once. I just said to him directly, I said, "If you want to do this, the next time we meet is," the date and time, I told him, and I said, "Be careful because today, we have a special event on Sunday, but we meet on Saturday."
- Next month came around and they didn't show up. She sent me a message on Facebook which I got as I was running to the library and didn't really read. Anyway, to make a long story short, I said something like, "Your son is sixteen. Maybe you ought to let him have a little responsibility and step up. If he's going to volunteer, maybe he needs to step up instead of you dragging him along." Well, I didn't say it like that, but basically, that's the meaning that she ...
- She apologized a lot, but then her Japanese husband heard that I had said this and he was really pissed off. He called the library and complained and it turned into this ... We had to have this huge meeting about it. The library totally backed me and supported me, which I was really happy about. As we were talking, and I refused to speak Japanese, so I spoke English, and he was really angry about that. I realize what they were talking about and I said, "You know what, I think there's a cultural difference going on here that I would expect a sixteen-year-old to be a little more responsible because when I was sixteen years old, I learned how to drive and I had a part-time job." When you're eighteen, you're an adult at eighteen. He was like, "No." He's *kodomo*. He was ...
- Interviewer: That's right.
- Judi: He didn't want to say that was a problem, but the library people love that. They took and ran with it. They were like, "Yeah, yeah. Maybe there's this cultural difference going on." I do think, at least between me and the father, there was that difference of opinion about how much responsibility a sixteen-year-old should have.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Judi: Yeah.
- Interviewer: What do you think about the ... Do you think commitment is important here or do you think it's ...
- Judi: It is. I wrote here, like, I think attitude is more important, but obviously, to be part of a community, commitment is important too. I mentioned earlier about the library and having to prove myself, I think I needed to show that I was committed.
- I don't know about you, but I think Japanese in general seem to have a higher standard of what kind of effort you should put out for what you should be doing.

- Interviewer: In some ways, because you're bringing something that's different, while at the same time, utilizing their environment for that.
- Judi: Yeah. I think so. I think it says about personality too being important rather than cultural differences, I would've say, "Yes, that's true," the person's personality.
- Interviewer: Finding that middle ground is an important thing and you think that the personality is the one, is really basically what's determining that.
- Judi: Yeah, the person's personality, like being flexible. For me, I wrote, I want to do it on my terms. You mentioned earlier about finding the things you like and disregarding the things you don't or ignoring the things you don't. I think that's really true and I've done that. The things I love about Japan have been great. The things that I'm either oblivious to, sometimes I think I am oblivious to the things that other people complain about, that I hear them complain and I'll be like, "I never notice that." Maybe it's my personality rather than a cultural difference because I'm culturally different. Yeah, I think it has a lot to do with personality.
- Interviewer: Do you have any Japanese friends that you only speak Japanese with or do you mostly speak English?
- Judi: No. I can't think of anyone. The women at the library, some of them speak only Japanese with me. I speak mostly Japanese with them, but sometimes I'll speak English to them and they understand. A few Japanese teachers that I've had, speak only Japanese, but they're not friends. They're more acquaintances. Around the neighborhood, people I know only speak Japanese with me. I only speak Japanese with them. In terms of closer relationships, they're people, Japanese, who speak English pretty well or foreigners who speak English.
- Interviewer: I see.
- Judi: Yeah.
- Interviewer: What about your in-laws, are you close to your in-laws?
- Judi: Yeah. We get along pretty well. They'll visit Hokkaido, that we visit regularly. They always speak Japanese, so we only communicate in Japanese. My father-in-law was a little bit wary of having a foreigner daughter-in-law or even the girlfriend stage, he's kind of freaked out. The first time we met, we did *kanpai* with *sake* and then we were best friends. We're close enough too that we've argued and made up. You know what I mean? Like we're ...
- Interviewer: Very important stage.
- Judi: Right?
- Interviewer: Yeah. It's very important stage.
- Judi: Right?
- Interviewer: Yeah.
- Judi: We have that level of commitment with each other, that respect for each other. I think I did have to earn his respect. My mother-in-law too is pretty easygoing. She's an artist. She's paints. She's not the typical Japanese housewife either. I think that makes my husband a little more independent too than a typical Japanese son. He knew how to cook when I met him.
- Interviewer: Would you consider Japan your home?
- Judi: Yeah.
- Interviewer: You do.
- Judi: Yes, I do.
- Interviewer: What about, for example, does it bother you when somebody thinks you just arrived yesterday?
- Judi: No.
- Interviewer: That doesn't bother you?
- Judi: It doesn't. It's rare that happens though recently. There was a time, there was a new shopping mall, my son and I went to and had lunch there, and the woman was excited that these two foreigners, but my son looks very American, he doesn't look so Japanese, and she offered a fork. I was like, "Wow, that hasn't happened in a while." It doesn't bother me and I wonder why it bothers other people so much. In fact, yesterday, I had

lunch with my foreign friend who's been here twenty years too. She gets really pissed off as people assume she speaks English. She'll get angry with them.

Interviewer: Where is she from?  
Judi: She's from the United States.

Interviewer: Did she work ... She speak Japanese at a high level?  
Judi: She speaks at a high level. Yeah.

Interviewer: What I've noticed is that people who get upset at things like the fork thing or things, they tend to be the people who put a lot of time into learning the language more.  
Judi: Yeah. That makes sense.

Interviewer: They tend to be ... Because I'm a little bit that way. I don't ... I make jokes about it now because I'm so used to it. I'm more of that type. I like to make jokes about stuff. If someone says, "A fork," I would like maybe use it as, "Hey, how do you use this thing?" Say, "What is this thing for?"  
Judi: Yeah, that's a nice approach. She still gets visibly angry after twenty years.

Interviewer: I think because some people ... Again, it's personality.  
Judi: I haven't had ... I'm not sensitive to that stuff. I know of people who go through stages too like when they have kids, they will hate that term *halfu* and they're like, "Oh no, he's double," and they make a huge deal out of it, but after five, six years, then it's no big deal anymore.

Interviewer: Right.  
Judi: I don't think I was so sensitive to that, although somebody had said, someone gave me a lecture about that like, "Not, not." She wasn't being mean, actually. She's like, "He's not half. He's double." That was the first time I heard that. I'm like, "That's cool. Double," but it never caught on. I never continued using that.

Interviewer: Do you experience a reverse culture shock when you go home? Do you ever have that?  
Judi: I have. Actually, I have not been back in more than eight years.  
Interviewer: Yeah. Wow.  
Judi: The last time I was there, I really felt like it was a different country. I didn't feel like that was where I was from. Some weird things like the buildings, the way the buildings were ... I visited my family in Chicago at that time and everything seemed old and there were some strip malls being built and I looked and I'm like, "Whoa. Those things are never going to withstand an earthquake." I felt ... I went to a shopping mall on a weekday and it was empty and the word "vacuous" came up in my mind, where this is American culture. It's so bright and shiny with no substance.

Interviewer: Right.  
Judi: Right? It felt like that. I've had -  
Interviewer: It's strange because when you go back, how empty the buildings are compared to Japan.  
Judi: Yeah. Right? Yeah. I've also had recurring nightmares that I visit the States and I miss my flight back to Japan. I've had that more than once, like, "Oh no! I can't get to the airport on time."  
Interviewer: Really?  
Judi: I have had ... I felt like, feel the relationships I had in the States were more shallow. The last time I was there, especially with my sisters.

Interviewer: That could be age too though. That could be age as well though.  
Judi: It could be age and not seeing each other regularly or being in contact regularly too. I didn't feel like it was home anymore.

Interviewer: What about problems in daily life, do you ever have any problems in your daily life that you're dealing with work or nothing?  
Judi: No. Knock on wood here. I ...  
Interviewer: That's good. That's fine. That's good.  
Judi: I really have a pretty smooth life. I think, again, going back to personality, my approach is often to be proactive on things and if there is a problem, it's something that will just get better because we work on it. Everything is very smooth for me. I feel really fortunate. It hasn't always been like that in my life.

Interviewer: Of course not.

- Judi: When I was younger, it was harder. I think I maybe hitting my stride and I have a good synergy with my husband where if something needs to be done, one of us just does it. There's no complaining or like, "You didn't do it." We just pick up the ball kind of thing. We have a good ... That's kind of nice.
- I will say though, when I went from full time to part time, it was a really stressful job hunting. I started, again, being proactive. I started a year and a half early, starting to look for new work, putting out resumes, so for a whole year, it was quite hard doing ... It's like having a part time job just looking for a job. There was a little worrying about ... I was the breadwinner and we bought a condo in my name. The loan is pretty big, so like, "Wow. I don't want to have to move out."
- Interviewer: The prices of the loan, it's funny, because like you said, you understand how the men feel. I think I've heard men say that more than women in my interviews as well. You're the first woman that's ever said that to me in the interviews.
- Judi: Yeah. I felt it. I know I worked a lot harder because of that too. That's a good thing, right?
- Interviewer: Of course. It sounds positive.
- Judi: In the end, all the, everything fell into place and it was okay. Working at three universities at first, there was all new classes, three sets of paperwork, that was a little hard in the very beginning, but once I got into that pace of what I was doing, it's fine now. I've been starting a new year. This is the second year at these same universities. Now, it's smooth sailing.
- I will say though, just to go back to the previous question about dissatisfaction, I do think though that people who have problems, when they move overseas, they have bigger problems. Do you know what I mean? I think you can't escape from your problems.
- When I moved here, I tie up all my loose ends. I mentioned that I had just been divorced, but I tied up all my loose ends and I was ready to move on. I didn't feel like and I wasn't interested in finding a new boyfriend or anything, and then my husband appeared in front of me then. I wasn't chasing anything.
- I think one of the problems people have, they're dissatisfied or have trouble, is they're carrying around this baggage with them that actually gets worse when you go overseas. I've seen this with students both coming to Japan or going overseas to study, where problems just inflate incredibly when they go abroad. I think that leads to some dissatisfaction or trouble in life.
- Interviewer: That's a good one. That's good. I like that. They bring their problems with them.
- Judi: Yeah, they do. Ask, any psychologist will tell you, they get worse. They're going to be worse overseas. Even the kids who think they're going to escape their overbearing parents, go overseas and they have the worst time. They have so much trouble that pops up.
- Interviewer: That's interesting. That's good. That's better than the anecdote.
- Judi: Yeah. I can't think of ...
- Interviewer: That's all right.
- Judi: I've had a lot of different experiences here. I will say, the highlight for me, one of the ... I've had a lot of great experiences here. A few of them occurred in outdoor bath.
- Interviewer: I can only imagine.
- Judi: I went up with my husband, until the time before my son was born, we were at this onsen and his friend was there. I went into the outdoor bath and it was foggy like steam rolling up from the hot water and it was snowing and there was a sake bar in the bath, and my husband and his friend appeared. I'm naked, they're naked, but we couldn't really see each other, so it was okay. It was like, "Wow, this is so cool. We're out in this outdoor bath naked with snow coming all around and drinking sake." How, where else could that happen?
- Interviewer: I know.
- Judi: I'm a bit of a bath enthusiast too, so that's another ... I used to tell people the two reasons that I stayed in Japan so long were my husband and the bath, but I don't know which order.
- Interviewer: Those something we get addicted to. I know that. That's for sure. Absolutely.

Judi: I enjoy them very much. Now that we have a nicer bath, I don't go as often. We went to F---- to visit my new stepmom family last fall, and we were at this really old onsen. I think a lot of foreigners would be creeped out by it because it was so old and that's ... It was unusual, but I could enjoy all of it, like, "This is so cool," and went out to the other bath at dawn, and it was like the epitome of wabi-sabi. It was quiet, rustic, peaceful. I'm alone. It was like, "Wow. This is like an epiphany moment."

Interviewer: Right. That's awesome. Cool. What kind of person do you think ends up living here for twenty years? Are there some words you could use to describe people like that?

Judi: This one's hard. Do you want me to read the answer I wrote?

Interviewer: Sure. Go ahead.

Judi: This is a hard question.

Interviewer: This is the last question.

Judi: I wrote, my additional answer is there are various reasons for staying, of course, like family, your job. For me, it's that I've been able to accomplish my goals and feel comfortable. I enjoy the freedom of being a foreigner and doing my own thing. Some people get stuck here and I don't see any way or they don't see any way to change things or move on. I feel like I can make my own way here. Teaching too, teaching is a very highly respectable job, respected by people. I can make a livable wage. I can't imagine living at this standard of living in the United States. The times I've gone back and just to see what housing costs, especially being a teacher with a foreign husband too, paying for healthcare.

Interviewer: I can't imagine.

Judi: I can't. I just can't imagine going back. I think that people who are more proactive, well, I'm talking about myself now, but people who are more proactive and pro-oriented or take action-type people, I think, are more successful and more happy here.

Interviewer: That's a good point, I think.

### 010 Tim

- Interviewer: What was it like when you first arrived here? Could you just explain it quickly?
- Tim: I came over on the JET program at the end of July 1989. The first three days we flew ... I was living in Boston. We flew from Boston to Minneapolis, picked up more people and landed in Narita. I had never been to Japan before so I was kind of overwhelmed. We stayed in Tokyo for three days at the Keio Plaza Hotel. That was the same hotel at which President Bush, the first, had famously gotten sick.
- Interviewer: Oh, that's the same one?
- Tim: Same one, and we actually had our brunch and lunch in the room where he got sick. We would dubiously go and kind of point it out. It was kind of like a surreal moment, because it was like oh, I'm in Japan, but it's kind of like New York City.
- Interviewer: Yeah.
- Tim: Except I don't know what anyone's saying. I was really jet lagged. It was just really bizarre. I would be up at six o'clock in the morning and it was incredibly hot compared to where I had come from. After three days, we all got kind of divvied up. This is the orientation we went through.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Tim: People would tell us what to expect in Japan, and then I went off to the rural town where I was. I went all the way back to Kansai on the *shikansen* for the first time and again, I was just being dragged along. I didn't know what was going on.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Tim: There wasn't ... It was kind of like bang, bang, bang, bang. You just have to go with the flow and I was really, really tired at least for the first month I think. Then when we arrived in Kansai it was even hotter. It was more humid, and I went to a country town, and I was brought to a teacher's dormitory which is where my supervisor was there, and then me and that's it. They said, "Okay, there's no class for the month of August so you don't have to come to school." They left me there. I was kind of stranded in the middle of this country town without knowing the language, without knowing where to go shopping, without knowing anybody at all physically and I was even told to go to school. I was really kind of abandoned for three weeks.
- Interviewer: Really?
- Tim: It was kind of like yeah that's major culture shock.
- Interviewer: You would say in the beginning when you first got here it was stressful more than it was ...
- Tim: Oh, yeah.
- Interviewer: ... Any type of enjoyment.
- Tim: It wasn't enjoyable at all.
- Interviewer: Really.
- Tim: To be quite honest, in a way looking back it was ... In a way helpful for my later development as a person and language wise, but in the first three weeks it was really I lost hair actually. I had to figure out how to take a bath. I didn't have a shower. The dormitory was 60 years old and I only paid 5,000 yen a month for it, but I was living with the bugs and there was centipedes everywhere. The gas heater, you had to crank it up and let it warm up the water for half an hour. It was just a big kind of blue square bathtub, and yeah, I lost hair. I lost a lot of hair the first three weeks seriously.
- I was 27 when I arrived and a lot of the guys in the JET program came straight from undergraduate university. I was already kind of five years older than them. I had been to grad school. I had been working. I did graphic design for a couple of years. They would be like, "What's your major?" I'd be like, "I'm working in Boston." They would totally ignore me. Even five years at that age was a major difference. I was like the outsider in both situations.
- Interviewer: I would say it's easy to think you didn't really have a honeymoon period did you when first came?
- Tim: I didn't have a honeymoon period at all. None.
- Interviewer: Wow. What was the original plan? You just came to do the Jet program?

- Tim: I had a friend in Japan who was on the Jet program in Saitama, and he said, "Why don't you give it a try?" That's what I did. I didn't come to Japan to stay permanently, but I did come to deliberately change my career.
- Interviewer: I see. When you first came, you weren't planning on staying for the long term?
- Tim: No, no, no. I was thinking about two years. I knew that a year wouldn't be long enough. I thought maybe two years and then I can get into some kind of teaching program back home and then I'll have some experience by then.
- Interviewer: How long did it take you to realize you were going to be here for the long term? How long did that take?
- Tim: I think by the end of the second year.
- Interviewer: I see.
- Tim: See, I had actually ... The Jet program at that time was three years maximum and then you're out. I renewed for the third year, because a family member died at the end of my second year and that was kind of additional shock that made me want to take some extra time before I made that decision to leave or to stay. I got into a grad program. I got into University of Massachusetts Boston for teaching TESOL. I delayed entrance for a year, and they were fine with that until I figured out what I was doing. Then someone offered me a university teaching job and I stayed.
- Interviewer: I see. Okay.
- Tim: That's really the reason why, because I decided to take the job.
- Interviewer: I see, okay. What about family back home?
- Tim: Yeah.
- Interviewer: You had a fairly large family.
- Tim: Yes, I'm the oldest of ten at one point and like I said, one of my brothers died when I was in Japan so there's eight of us now. Probably because I was the oldest ...
- Interviewer: I'm sorry, you said there was ten and now there's eight?
- Tim: Now there's eight.
- Interviewer: Okay.
- Tim: My baby brother died a long time ago when I was kid, and then one of my brothers died when he was 16.
- Interviewer: I see, okay.
- Tim: I was 28 at the time. I was in Japan so there was a part of me that wanted to go home, but I mean really I hadn't lived at home at that point for eight years. There was literally no room. My room was given to somewhere else. I had no where to stay. I'm from the countryside and if you don't have a car, you're kind of screwed.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Tim: I'm not going to go back to the US with no job, with no teaching qualifications and then live in the country side with no car.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Tim: With nowhere to stay so really it wasn't a catch 22, but I really didn't have a reason to go back except that my family was there. Being the oldest, they already had other kids to deal with. I was kind of forced to be independent more or less.
- Interviewer: Right, right.
- Tim: My family was okay with that.
- Interviewer: Were you close to your family back home? Are you close to them?
- Tim: Not really.
- Interviewer: Not really, okay. You have such a large family, you're not that close.
- Tim: Yeah, I mean it's hard to say not close, because they're family, but not close enough ... We don't talk a lot. I don't think ... My parents have actually called me here in Japan exactly three times since I've come. That's it, and they've never visited because they have no money.
- Interviewer: I see.
- Tim: Yeah, it's all entirely up to me to keep contact.
- Interviewer: I'm wondering, you have a normal life in your everyday life? Are you using more Japanese or more English when you ...
- Tim: It depends.

- Interviewer: Depends?
- Tim: I just changed jobs two years ago. At my previous job, I used Japanese all the time even when I was teaching, because the students hated English and their English level was so low that I had to use Japanese. My colleague would say, "This is a Japanese school, you have to use Japanese," even though they hired me to teach English, even though they hired me to be ...
- Interviewer: That happens, yeah.
- Tim: That happens, and my current job, the attitude is exactly the opposite. I use Japanese with staff members, but actually their English is quite good. I use Japanese with my teaching colleagues so actually they're perfectly bilingual. With the students, I use nothing but English, because I was told to do so and the students want me to do that.
- Interviewer: I see, okay.
- Tim: I use a lot of Japanese when I do martial arts, because ...
- Interviewer: Of course, yeah.
- Tim: ... They don't speak English. It's not that they don't want to, it's just more natural and I want to keep up my language ability.
- Interviewer: Right, right.
- Tim: It's kind of a mix.
- Interviewer: Do you think it's important to learn the language to be comfortable?
- Tim: Absolutely. Absolutely. I don't understand who have been in Japan 30 years and can't speak anything. I think it's insulting frankly. You live in someone else's country, you at least have to meet halfway. At least make the effort to do basic communications so you can go to a restaurant and order food without pointing at stuff. I think it was important for me especially being kind of thrown into the countryside, I had to make friends and there were no non-Japanese people around so the only logical alternative is to make friends with Japanese people.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Tim: If hadn't learned the language. I can't expect them to learn mine. That's not fair.
- Interviewer: What about assimilation? Would you consider yourself 100% assimilated in Japanese society?
- Tim: I don't think it's possible for non-Japanese ever be assimilated 100%. I strongly feel that way. We are isolated. We are set aside especially if you physically look different. That's why there's so much in the media about white people have blonde hair and big noses kind of nonsense, because it's obvious you're obviously different. Even I've got two daughters, my wife's Japanese, and the first time we brought them to the nursery school, one of the kids pointed and said, "Are you a foreigner?" *gaijin, gaijin ka?* My daughter said, "What's a *gaijin*?" She was four years old, and there's always going to be that sense of you're different.
- Interviewer: Right, right.
- Tim: That's part of Japanese culture I think. I'm not dissatisfied. There have been studies done, management studies, business studies, why Japanese businesses find it hard to globalize internationalize it's because this sense of *otherism*. They cannot fully accept a non-Japanese person even someone who's grown up in the country because of this kind of closing ranks idea. You're not us, you're not us, you're not us. It's ingrained into the Japanese culture.
- Interviewer: What about ... What do you think it takes to become to that environment? What does it take to actually enter that environment with that?
- Tim: Friends, you have to have Japanese friends.
- Interviewer: You have to have Japanese friends?
- Tim: You got to have Japanese friends, and you have to have something in common with them and you have to have a long history. The long history part takes time. People famously say that Japanese is in-group, out-group but that's not all of it. That's a certain part of it, and that's true in most cultures. There's also this *senpai-kohai* relationship and if you don't grow up in that hierarchy, especially high school and university, they don't know how to deal with you, because you're not their *senpai*. You're just another person.

I can't say I deliberately joined martial arts to get that sense, because I was just interested in the techniques, but when you do that and you begin to go up the ranks, they have no choice but to go, "Oh, you're my senpai. You're my senior." I've got a fourth degree black belt in Kenpo, and I'm a teacher now. I'm expected to teach. In the beginning the kids were like, "You're not a Japanese person." Then I'm lucky, because it's a teacher. My teacher says to the younger kids, "He's your senpai, do what he says." I kind of got into the system that way. With that group of people, I'm very, very comfortable. It's a challenge at the workplace because I was hired because I'm not Japanese. Even with a doctorate degree, my colleagues sometimes have difficulty with me. Am I your senpai? They're 50, I'm 43, they don't really know if I'm the sempai or kohai thing at all, because I didn't go to a Japanese university, I didn't go to the high school and I think that's a lot. That's kind of how do you deal with somebody inside the group situation is challenging in Japan. Even in my current workplace where everyone in my department is bilingual, because that's kind of our focus, we want to raise bilingual students. I deliberately start, when I am engaging someone in conversation in Japanese, I deliberately start it in Japanese. In a way, it's because I'm kind of a control freak I have to admit, but I want to show them, "Hey, I can speak your language to a certain degree," and then after we talk of it, they can kind of judge my ability and if they want to switch to English that's fine. If they talk to me in English, I'll talk to them in English but if they stay in Japanese, I'm happy to stay in Japanese.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Tim: That's kind of language negotiation and identity negotiation is needed. When I meet total strangers, especially with my kids, it can be challenging because they don't know me. At least my colleagues know me, but there is a time frame involved too.

Interviewer: Right. What about ... Have you ever met people here in Japan and you feel like they're kind of lost their life? There was that article yesterday that everybody's talking about now.

Tim: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, western guys complaining, "Oh, you guys have it easy, because you're white." Yeah, I've actually it is the white guys, especially the guys I see ... I've been here for 15 years now, and I came after the bubble burst and to me, that is kind of a dividing line and people do talk about it a lot, if you came to Japan before '93-94, a lot of especially western guys who came to Japan at that time never learned the language and in a way, it's because they didn't have to. They weren't expected to, and they were deliberately othered in that sense.

Those of us who came afterwards, the situation has changed. There are more Japanese people who do speak English. It is true actually. There are more Japanese who have a more international sense, because of things like the internet for example and they expect us to speak their language to a larger degree, and especially the hiring situation has changed, because schools don't have any money any more. I mean really they can't afford to hire some guy who can't hold his own. The expectation is that I have to use Japanese.

There's also because the older guys can't speak Japanese, it limits their social context. Every time I've gone out with my Japanese friends, there's always a group of three or four 55 year old white guys in the bar who can't speak Japanese except some kind of *katagoto* type stuff they learned while drinking. All they do is drink, and a lot of these guys got divorced. They had family problems, they don't have any Japanese friends, and they don't have anywhere to go. They can't go back home wherever home is. I really feel like if you want to call it a lost, they are lost a lot of these guys. I feel sorry for them, but it's probably just too late. I don't know. I don't know maybe it isn't too late, but they might feel that.

Interviewer: People who have learned the language tend to have learned in the first four years or so.

Tim: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Early on.

Tim: After four or five years it's really rough, because you're working full time.

Interviewer: Also, you've gotten used to being without it.

Tim: Yeah, it's true.

Interviewer: So you learned how to live without learning the language.

- Tim: That's very true. Well, a lot of ... Especially the older guys, I have a friend who is 54 actually. He's living in Hokkaido, and he first came to Tokyo, because that's where a lot of guys come, because they're hired by a language teacher by I don't know NOVA is gone now, I mean those were the main companies. They would stick you in a major city, because that's where the money is.
- Interviewer: Right, right.
- Tim: A lot of them never learned Japanese because they didn't have to, especially in Tokyo. Those are the guys who really feel lost I think.
- Interviewer: Yeah, I can imagine. What about yourself personally? Have you ever been discriminated against?
- Tim: I can think of two specific instances. One is not really discrimination, just kind of really out there in your face sort of attitude. The other one is I think real discrimination. The first one, I'll talk about the real discrimination because that's easier. I was in the JET program. I was set up with a teacher's dorm, I didn't have to do anything. Then I went looking for an apartment in K---. The first one again was easy, because the company had one and I got set up immediately, but when I got the university job I had to leave the company apartment.
- Interviewer: Right, right.
- Tim: I tried to find a place in K--- and they wouldn't let me stay. I even went with a Japanese friend my same age, and we would go from place to place in downtown K---, and they would say, "No, the landlords don't allow foreigners." That's illegal actually, but the real estate company would just take one look at my face and say, "No, you can't get an apartment." My Japanese friend was stunned.
- Interviewer: What year was that?
- Tim: 2002.
- Interviewer: 2002.
- Tim: 2002, just blatant discrimination. They would say, "No, foreigners can't get apartments through our company." It took us ten tries and we found one company, and even this final company said, "We have to check with the landlord to see if foreigners are okay." My Japanese friend said, "You know that's against the law." They said, "Well, technically blah, blah, blah." Eventually they said, "Look, this guy's got a university job. He's got a graduate degree, he can speak Japanese, he's fine." But that happened every time I tried to get a place. It happened two more times. The landlords would just openly say, "We don't allow foreigners." I don't have any rights here. It's not like I can go to a court and sue you. I don't have any money and I wouldn't win anyways. They would just say, "You're not a Japanese person." I gave up. It was really, really hard to find an apartment. Especially if you're unmarried.
- Tim: Yeah, yeah, I wasn't married. Once I got married that was easier, because then they would just say, "Your wife can do it." I want to go back to the second thing I mentioned. Sure.
- Interviewer: Not blatant discrimination, but when I was living in the country, I think it was one of these designated cities that are not really cities, about 33,000 people combined in an area really the size of downtown Osaka so pretty sparse. I was walking to the train station this one time right near where I was staying and a business guy was coming up and he was wearing a business suite and he just kind of stared at me coming up the path. He just stared at me with an open mouth, and after a couple of minutes, we're walking towards each other, I just said, *konnichiwa* then he responded in English, "Why are you here?" I said, "Excuse me?" He said, "I'm from this town and now I live in Osaka, I expect to see foreigners in Osaka. Why are you here?" Then we talked a little bit in English and his English was fine, but his attitude was like foreigners belong in Osaka not in my hometown. It kind of struck me that's not open discrimination, but it's very telling of the attitude.
- Interviewer: Also, it's a poor translation on his part. He's just translating *nande*.
- Tim: Yeah, I think ...
- Interviewer: ... He wanted to really wanted to say, "What do you do here?"

- Tim: I think so. He wanted to know why I was there, and eventually it did come out I'm teaching English. He was like, "Oh, that never happened when I was a student." It's not really discrimination, but that was the feeling I had the entire time I was in the country.
- Interviewer: You immediately feel different.
- Tim: You immediately feel like "*nande koko ni iru no?*" kind of stuff. It's really kind of uncomfortable.
- Interviewer: My next question just kind of goes off on the discrimination thing again really.
- Tim: Yeah.
- Interviewer: It just says have you ever had a situation or problem that was complicated by what you think was a culture difference? That could be anything from I wrote here divorce or legal trouble. For example, one person got arrested because he was using an international licence. He was arrested for two days. He was put in jail, stuff like that.
- Tim: Yeah, I don't really think ... It's hard to say, because obviously there have been lots of situations and problems. I haven't had any illegal issues. It's hard to say where the culture stops and the person, and especially you know ...
- Interviewer: Right, do you think some people can be sensitive to that though? Like just blame cultural difference things immediately?
- Tim: I think a lot of people tend to blame cultural difference immediately and I have on occasion. It's hard to resist when you go, "Oh, this is a miscommunication. It's because you're Japanese and I'm American." Even if that's not the case. It's very hard especially when dealing with my wife. It's very hard to understand okay, is this because you're Japanese? Is this because my Japanese language usage was not proper? Was it because you're a woman and I'm a man? Was is because you're just who you are or is it just because you're tired?
- Interviewer: Or is it all of the above? All of the above.
- Tim: All of them. A combination? It's really, really hard to say, "Yes, this is definitely because you grew up here." It's very hard to recall a specific situation in which just because it happens on a daily basis. I think most of the culture differences that are clear in my mind right now is child raising, and that's because I have two small children. Especially when the babies came back from the hospital. Typically in America, you have a baby crib or a bassinet, some kind of physical box shaped thing, that's were the baby sleeps, right? That does happen Japan. People do have baby cribs, but it's really, really rare. The more common thing is to have a baby futon which is the size of a desk and the baby sleeps between the parents usually with the mom and that really threw me. I was like, "Okay, that's really cool. I know that's the way things are done here. Are you going to roll over and crush our baby?" That didn't happen. My wife and I are not that physically big anyways. That was really hard, but I accepted it because at least the kid is still in the room as a baby and that's common.
- The problem happened when the kids got older and I was like, "Okay, they are a year old now. It's time for a room." My wife is like, "Oh, they're only a year old. How dare you put them in a different room?" In the US, they insist. Six months, separate room, they insist and doctors even today insist on this. It turns out it's a relatively new thing in America only dating about 80 years ago. 150 years ago everyone stayed in one room. Everyone literally stayed in one bed sometimes. The American culture changed and the Japanese did not. Even now, it's kind of what people complain about. My wife sleeps with my kids until they fall asleep and then she comes downstairs and we talk and then we go to bed. To me, I'm like, "Look, my oldest is almost six. Surely she can go to bed without somebody next to her." She can't. She won't close her eyes if one of us is not there. I have done it on occasion and that to me is a clear culture difference and it has caused in the past some arguments late at night. I'm like, "Leave them alone. Let them go to bed." My wife is complaining, "She's crying at 11 and you're not helping." I'm like, "Let her cry." To me that's a clear culture difference. I've heard it repeatedly from my friends.
- Interviewer: Right, right.
- Tim: I have to say, I'm stubborn on that one. I'm not giving up. I'm not sleeping with the kids.
- Interviewer: Stand your ground.
- Tim: I'm standing my ground. I'm not sleeping with the kids, but I gave up and let her do it.

Interviewer: I see.

Tim: She agreed to stop complaining about it.

Interviewer: Well, that's an agreement.

Tim: Yeah, that's an agreement, yeah.

Interviewer: The next question is do you feel you need a commitment to live in Japan?

Tim: Yeah.

Interviewer: Some people are always on the fence, they might leave, they might not leave, but they still look for new work here.

Tim: Yeah, I think to a certain degree it is important. I like the word investment. I am invested in this country, and part of it is because I have kids. Even without the kids ... See, without children, you have a lot more mobility job wise obviously. It depends on your partner. In this case, my wife is Japanese, but she has a lot of experience living overseas. When we were first married, she was like, "Hey, let's move to Australia, why not?" Now that we have kids, it's more complicated. We also built a house a couple years ago. Again, it doesn't mean 100% I will never leave, because she's perfectly willing to say yeah if the opportunity arises that we have a chance to live somewhere for better living conditions, but I decided when I got the university job at least for the time being I was staying and then we got married.

Interviewer: Right, right.

Tim: Especially once I got married, I'm like, "Okay, I'm going to stay wherever my wife wants." That was my commitment. I think it's necessary if you're clearly just bouncing around from job to job to job, that impression is very strong with Japanese colleagues. They know, oh, they're like, "You're a mercenary basically. You're a sword for hire. You'll go wherever the job is." In a certain sense, that can't be helped, because that's the way jobs are. If you're not from Japan, and you don't have a spouse and you don't have kids, they know that and they will be like, "It's okay that you're not working here next year." You're like, "Yeah, I'm going to go back to England or I'm going to go back to America." That's happened to some of my friends. They're like I don't have a reason to say. They feel disconnected ... They don't have a sense of community. I think that's the main thing. They don't have a sense of being a member of a large group, just me, me, me, me. There's nothing wrong that. It's just the way it is for some people. It's just not the way it is for me.

Interviewer: Do you think there are any advantages of being kind of different here?

Tim: Yeah. You're forgiven for making social faux pas, you're forgiven a lot of things. In a way, that's bad, but it is ... There's a lot more flexibility for me. In my workplace, my colleagues will be like, "You might want to get a bed in your office, because sometimes we stay overnight." I'm like, "I'm not doing that." They just say, "Okay." Kind of like we realize you're not Japanese and you won't put up with this bullshit. I'm like, Yeah, I won't put up with this bullshit. I won't stay overnight. Forget it." They go, "Okay, fine." They accept that. When I tell my committee members, "Look I got to go home. My wife's working late and her work is more important today, we're just talking in circles and we're going to have a meeting next week. I got to pick up my kids." They're like, "Okay," and I go. If I were Japanese they probably wouldn't ... It's not that they wouldn't accept it, but it would be more difficult.

Interviewer: I don't think the person would even ask.

Tim: No, the person wouldn't even ask. They would just sort of sit there. I'm a noisy guy. It's also part of my personality.

Interviewer: It's funny you mentioned personality. Do you think this is more about personalities than it is about cultural differences? Some people just don't kind of ... Their personality just doesn't quite fit.

Tim: I think it can be, but I have Japanese friends who are very outspoken. They have managed to fit in the system. Obviously, my little world is academia, but academia tends to attract outspoken, brash people even in Japan. You see this in the committees. You go clearly that guy speaks his mind, oh clearly that guy sits there and does nothing. It's much more prominent with men than it is with women, but even then there are women who are outspoken in the workplace. That's a personality thing. I think there hasn't been

- a stronger tendency for non-Japanese to be more outspoken and in that case, their personalities do seem to conflict more often, but it's not 100% mutually exclusive.
- Interviewer: Right, right.
- Tim: It's just the tendency for Japanese workers is to ... What? To subdue their emotions, to hide their personalities, and to try not to especially in the *senpai-kohai* kind of thing to not cause a conflict.
- Interviewer: Right, right. Did you happen to see the quote I have here from Daniel Kahl and the question?
- Tim: Well, I remember reading about Dave Spector. Now he's a producer, and he was talking about when he first came to Japan. He went to school here. He learned a couple different dialects. At one point he said his goal was to learn one Japanese word a day which he gave up, because that's not possible in any language. His attitude was when he first arrived, they were like turning to him saying, "What do Americans think about blah, blah, blah?" He would think, "You know, it's just me, how can I talk for all Americans?" That's kind of the role they expected him to fill, because that was the time period he came. He was the only white person they knew. I think that has largely disappeared, but there is element still.
- In a way, it can be an advantage for a non-Japanese when they turn to you and say, "You're from China, how do Chinese people think?" It's not that the questioner doesn't literally think all people think like you. They're just looking for some sort of connection they can make, some sort of understanding. In a way, it's an opportunity. When people in my workplace, when my students even, they'll say, "Well, how do Americans feel about guns? We know you all love guns." I'm like, "Well, listen. I don't have a gun. My family doesn't have guns, but some of my friends do. Here's how it is." It gives you an opportunity to explain in more detail.
- Interviewer: Right, right.
- Tim: There are cultural differences, but there are individual differences too. It's an advantage for us in a way not being Japanese. We have that kind of window of opportunity to explain more. Middle ground, yeah, I'm not expected to be a Japanese person because I can't. I'm expected to understand Japanese culture which I try, but even then I don't like saying this is Japanese and this is non-Japanese, because everywhere is different no matter where you go.
- Interviewer: Right, right.
- Tim: I live in Kansai. When I go to Tokyo, that's a different country.
- Interviewer: Right, right.
- Tim: That's a totally different world. My colleagues understand that, because they've moved around. My students don't. Again, it's an opportunity for me as an outsider I have this outsider-insider perspective. I think it's a strength being in the middle is a strength.
- Interviewer: Okay, that's good. How is your relationship with the Japanese in-laws? Your Japanese in-laws? Do they ...
- Tim: Yeah, I've been very lucky. They're a great bunch of people. Partly maybe because of who they are that's why my wife got married to me.
- Interviewer: I see.
- Tim: When ... Let's see. They have mostly a medical background. They're clear middle class. They're a smart family. It's because of her grandmother saying, "Look, here's some money. Travel around Japan while you're in high school. Here's some money, travel around southeast Asia while you're in university." My wife going, "Well, okay. I want to go visit Australia." Just going on her own and her family does that. That's kind of their attitude, they're very, very open. It doesn't mean they can speak English perfectly, and in fact, I usually use nothing but Japanese with them. They have exchanged letters with my family in English, because my family doesn't know Japanese. They're very happy. My family sends them gifts and stuff. They've never actually met my family which is a shame, but yeah, I'm pretty close I would say. I've been very lucky with them.
- Interviewer: That's good. That's always a really important part. Would you consider Japan your home?
- Tim: It is my home.

Interviewer: Does it bother you for example when someone says, "When did you get here?" Like they think you got here last week or something.  
Tim: Yeah.  
Interviewer: I mean it's your home, but you still get that on the side, right?  
Tim: I do. I do. Yeah, it does bother me when people look at my face and then go, "Where are you from?" I started saying, "I'm from N----." That's what I started saying. I'm from K----, I'm from Japan, because I've been here 15 years now, going on 16.  
Interviewer: That's just a way to cope with it though. I think it's a good way to cope with it.  
Tim: It is. You know I'm not going to get angry at them, because they don't know me.  
Interviewer: Right.  
Tim: I guess it's understandable that they would look at a white face and go, "Oh, you're not Japanese." What bothers me is when they look at my daughters and they go, "You're halfu." I'm like, "Which part?" Top up? Top down?  
Interviewer: Yeah, the children and the marriage thing is something I would love to get into, but unfortunately it's a huge ...  
Tim: I know.  
Interviewer: ... It's a huge separate ... I mean it could just go on forever, right?  
Tim: Yeah, it could.  
Interviewer: I mean children's stories especially.  
Tim: Yeah, it could. Japan is clearly my home, you know?  
Interviewer: What about going home to the States? Do you feel culture shock like reverse culture shock?  
Tim: Every time.  
Interviewer: Every time?  
Tim: I didn't ... The first couple years was okay. I think the first three years when I was a ALT in the Jet program, I think I went home four times maybe which was a lot and expensive too. Partly because I left all my stuff with my roommate in Boston and he was moving and he was like, "Get your shit out of here." I had to go back there and then throw all of myself into a U haul and then drive it to upstate. Then I had no connections to Boston, because he moved to DC. I have a friend in the area, but he's married. He's got kids too. I mean every time I go back now, because I don't consider myself to be ... I have permanent residency in Japan. I've been debating whether or not I should change my nationality actually.  
Interviewer: Really?  
Tim: I'm of two minds. I don't like what has happened in the US since 9-11. I think that really was a dividing point. I kept a diary, especially the first three years, and I remember writing in my diary this changes everything. This is a turning point and when I go back to the US, I'm astounded by the level of sheer idiocy to be quite honest. People have just gone off the deep end in many respects and I don't want to be part of that anymore.  
Interviewer: Right.  
Tim: I don't have that sense of yeah, I want to move back here. I have that sense of yay, I like visiting but there's no way I'm going to live here. It's too dangerous for my kids. People have gone ape shit crazy and I don't want to expose them to this level of violence and derision. It does bother me. Is it culture shock? Yeah, I guess it is.  
Interviewer: Do you have any dissatisfaction in Japan?  
Tim: There's always going to be a certain degree. I think I'm never going to get over this feeling of difference. As an outsider, I'll be outside the system to some degree. It's kind of a weird feeling, because starting in two weeks I will be the *hancho* in my neighborhood. They're totally cool with it. I'm like, "I'm not Japanese." They're like, "Well, you live here. You're fine. You're our *hancho* now." Again, we have a nice neighborhood. We moved in to the area, they deliberately made five new houses, we bought one. The guy who built them deliberately aimed it at families that had one or two kids, because they wanted to have more kids in the area. The older people were like, "Thank God, you moved in. Now it's not just a bunch of retirees." They were worried the community would collapse. Again, we're very lucky to be in this area. There's always a tiny bit of dissatisfaction, but I'm generally very satisfied with my situation.

Interviewer: Your satisfaction seems to be really high. The average is 7.4.

Tim: Oh, yeah, a little bit above.

Interviewer: I wrote here, I was asking for anecdotes. I've got some really good anecdotes.

Tim: I got two. I'll give you two.

Interviewer: Give me two, two's good.

Tim: Okay, first, my first year in Japan and the second one from last year actually. The first one, I had just moved into the country. I was still my first year at the high school, trying to figure out what was expected of me as a teacher, and typhoon came. This is '99 October-ish. Now, typhoons usually don't cause problems in Kansai, because of all the mountains so the southern part of W--- gets nailed, but where I am, we might get some heavy rain but that's about it. They were kind of worried, because the previous year, '98, was a major typhoon that wiped out some of the temples in the area. They told the kids to go home. The teachers are still there. This is like two o'clock in the afternoon, the skies are getting dark, and the teachers are all there.

I started asking the guys sitting around me, the English teachers, why are we still here? The students all went home. They totally set me up, they said, "We don't know why. Why don't you ask the *kochō*?" :"Okay, how do I ask him?" "Okay, here's the phrase you ask, "*Taifu no keiho ga deta node, kaettemo ii desu ka?*." That's how I learn that kind of phrase. *deru* what that meant. I learned *keiho* from that. They made me practice it over and over again. I went and the *kochō* is sitting at his desk in the big, you know, teachers room. I went up to him and I said that phrase and he looked me right in the eye and he said totally deadpan in English, "No, students may go home, but teachers must stay. It is the Japanese way."

I went back and the teachers said, "What did he say? What did he say?" I said that, and they just started slapping their knees going, "That Japanese way, that's funny."

Apparently he constantly said that in meetings in Japanese and he thought it was so hilarious that he would constantly say the Japanese way, because they thought it was complete utter bullshit, yet they wouldn't go home. To me, that is a perfect description of the attitude that is we know it's bullshit, but we can't say anything. We will go along with it, because we're expected to go along with it.

Interviewer: Right, right.

Tim: The thing is, this high school principal had been an English teacher and they didn't tell me that. They totally set me up.

Interviewer: That's funny, because you know it's often a phrase *gaijin* card that's often brought out. Typically the Japanese have the Japanese card.

Tim: They do. They use it. They used it on me.

Interviewer: So what was the second story you have?

Tim: The second story is not quite as funny, but it involves my kids, because I have two kids now. One's five, one's three. On the weekends we go out to parks and we go shopping and what not, there's a lot of older people around our neighborhood like most places now. They talk to us. When you have kids, people just suddenly talk to you. This is much different. When I was in ALT, people would randomly talk to me in English on the trains and stuff and now that I have kids, they just immediately talk to me in Japanese. Especially older people who wouldn't normally do that.

We were going shopping and getting out of the elevator or waiting for an elevator, I can't remember which. There was an older couple who was coming on or coming off. They just saw the kids and started talking to us randomly, and I think they were probably 65-70, and the man said to my daughter, the five year old, *nihongo daijobu?* or something like that and she did her kind of embarrassing thing and then she grabbed my hand and said *daijobu yo?*. He said, "Can you speak good English?" She said, "I can speak English." This went on for a couple of minutes and then he turns to me and turns to my wife and asks how long I'd been in the country and I said, "Fifteen years." *nihongo daijobu..!* blah, blah, blah. This is kind of argument discussion I always have, your Japanese is fantastic because I've been here 15 years.

Interviewer: Right, right.

- Tim: Then as we're leaving and my kids go, "bye-bye" the older Japanese guy says "Auf Wiedersehen". Then he corrected something, oh, that's german.
- Interviewer: It's probably a doctor or something.
- Tim: Yeah probably, and my daughter is like, "Daddy, what does that mean?" I had to go, "That means goodbye in German." She said, "German?" Ah.
- Interviewer: What about people who have been here for a long time, what do you think type of person has been here for 20 years? Is there any type of like ...?
- Tim: You have to be determined. You have to be persistent, but you also have to be flexible.
- Interviewer: That often comes up.
- Tim: Yeah, I mean if you are the type of person who says, "I can't handle this, it's too much," if you don't have the kind of determination to stick it out, and say, "Yeah, I'm going to make this work." There are obstacles especially the language, especially because it tends to be expensive to live here in many respects. Coming from America where I was coming from, arriving in Japan going, "Oh my God, it's three and half bucks for an apple." Why is it \$4 for a grapefruit? If your from Australia and you go, "Oh my God, why is bread cheap so here?" Everything is incredibly expensive in Australia these days food wise. How come it costs \$8 for a beer? In Japan you can still get it relatively cheaply in some areas.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Tim: Yeah, I mean you have to see the good with the bad. You can't just go everything sucks, you know? I don't know what's going on. Another thing is if people come here expecting to see Blade Runner, they're going to be in for a big disappointment, because Japan ...
- Interviewer: I think it's changed now a days.
- Tim: It is.
- Interviewer: It was Blade Runner in our day, but now it's like One Piece or something.
- Tim: One Piece, everything is anime. Everything is going to look like Naruto or something.
- Interviewer: Right, right.
- Tim: Well, it doesn't, okay?
- Interviewer: Outside the Shibuya it's not there.
- Tim: Yeah, that's why it really bothers when I saw the western media, I was livid when 3.11 happened. All the kinds of bullshit that happened online, and a lot of it was just lazy reporting. They sent some guy to Tokyo, and then you see a report like 'Tokyo has been abandoned and there's no food anywhere and people are panicking and running in the streets.' Because they talked to some yahoo who panics and locked herself in her apartment for two weeks.
- Interviewer: Right, right.
- Tim: There's no food shortage. What are you talking about? There's no panic. It's all in your head.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Tim: That's the kind of person that doesn't survive here.
- Interviewer: Exactly.
- Tim: When they go oh, Tokyo is the world like no it's not. A lot of people I think if you were going to American and you went okay, New York and LA, and that's it. You're missing 99% of the country.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Tim: Or if you go to England and go to London that's it, it's the same kind of attitude. If you're are the kind of person who goes Tokyo and that's it, you're not going to stay long. You won't make it.

### 011 Tom

Interviewer: When you first arrived in Japan, what was it like? This is the first time you arrived in Japan to live.

Tom: That's right.

Interviewer: What was it like the first time you arrived to live in Japan?

Tom: Okay, it was '87. I bought the cheapest ticket I could find which involved like four, three stops just in Canada alone.

Interviewer: That's a lot of stops.

Tom: Landed in Tokyo at night. They didn't have the Night Express yet so I had to find the bus. I didn't know anything about Japan, and my friend who had set me up with the gig had told me that, "Everyone studies English for six years. You'll get by, don't worry about it." I land at night with the jet lag of death, not knowing anything. I couldn't read anything. I couldn't speak any Japanese, except like *sumimasen*, and that was about it. I experienced a little panic as in, "How in the heck am I going to get from here to Shimizu, or Shizuoka prefecture," which was where I had to be. I didn't even know how to get out of the airport. I was clueless, pre-internet days, right? He couldn't hook me up with instructions. I saw just a line of Japanese people standing for something. I didn't know what they were waiting for because back then all the signs were in Japanese. You said you've been here for seventeen years?

Interviewer: That's right.

Tom: It was already getting a lot better by then, a lot better, but in '87, it was crazy. It was like landing on the dark side of the moon linguistically. I just took my chances and I went up to the line, and I addressed the whole line. I said, "Excuse me, does anyone here speak English?" Of course, there's no response for a very long twenty, thirty seconds, and finally this college-age kid, I call him kid, I was barely a kid myself. I was twenty-four. He sort of timidly raises his hand and said "Yes." I went over to him and said, "I have to get to this place called S----, S-----." He said, "I live in S----- and I'm waiting here for the limousine bus to take us to..." I totally lucked out. He was a total score. He set me up with the bus, and got me on the shinka, so we rode the shinkansen together and then I found my way on the donko somehow from S---- to S-----.

Interviewer: Do you feel like you had that cushion period when you first came? They call it the honeymoon period. Did you feel like you had that, or was it straight to work?

Tom: It was straight to work. First of all, there were only like ... In S----- Prefecture at the time, the population was about the same as it is now, about four or five million people. At the time, there were only something like 60 registered non-Asian foreigners in the whole prefecture of four million people. Half of those guys were the Mormon kids coming in for the year, so there was a community of 30 long-term non-Mormon missionary *gaijin* in a prefecture spread out over a prefecture of four million people.

Interviewer: I've heard that.

Tom: Everyone knew each other. It was the bubble era, so the *eikaiwa* was just going through the roof. We were getting just goofball money, 10,000 per hour for man-to-man stuff. It was crazy. It was wonderful. I just fell right into this. As a *gaijin*, six foot four and 24 years old, landing in the middle of a city the size and importance of, say, Baltimore if you're going to compare it to an American city, with 10 other *gaijin* kind of like me in the whole place, I found a situation where people were taking care of me just because I was an item of interest I guess. I never worked more than about 15 hours a week, probably, for the first eight years I was here just doing the self-employed *eikaiwa* thing, so there was that. What about the original plan? What was the original plan when you first came? It was to come here, learn Japanese, go back to New York, and then be some sort of a **bilingual hot** shot or something.

Interviewer: You weren't though.

Tom: You know how those kind of plans end up, and I ended up marrying a really nice girl. It was the girl mostly who was the most significant life course deflecting element in the story.

Interviewer: Did you plan to stay long-term when you first came?

Tom: No.

Interviewer: No, not at all.

Tom: I thought I could master Japanese in about two years, maybe have some adventures, and then go back and hit the pavement in Manhattan at 27, 28 years old as a, like I said, bilingual superstar or something.

Interviewer: How long did it take you to realize you were going to be here for the long-term?

Tom: Probably within the first year I guess, yeah. It was just a super easy lifestyle. You could hardly call that work what we were doing back then with this *eikaiwa* stuff. The money was good, and it was easy. There were beer machines everywhere on the street. It was just a freaking paradise, you know? All of my adult responsibilities and stuff, I left them all behind at the airport, so there was a bit of classic *gaijin*, white male, Peter Pan thing going on, but then I got married and started to feel a little responsibility and started getting my act together in my late 20's, and that was that.

What did I think of Japan? I thought the nature stuff was nice, the mountains, and Mount Fuji, and all that. It's real nice, but the man-made stuff ... Strictly Polish steel mill town kind of. Just really freaking grim, and I've never, never gotten over that rejection feeling towards the grey corrugated metal, like all of that everywhere. Where'd you say you live again?

Interviewer: I live in Fukuoka.

Tom: Alright, so I imagine there's a lot of that going on there, but probably not quite as bad as S-----. I've heard some good things about that city, and especially if you live down in the downtown area, you're going to have the blade-runney side of Japan in there also. There's no blade-runney side to Japan where I am and where I've been for the past 28 years. It's all factories or pachinko parlors. Anyhow, coming from a guy from Manhattan it's pretty tough, so I had a lot of hobbies.

Interviewer: Are you still close to family back home?

Tom: Oh, yeah.

Interviewer: You are?

Tom: Pretty much daily mail with my mother. I'm almost embarrassed to say that, and my sister too, yeah.

Interviewer: Oh, daily, really?

Tom: Yeah, my mom and sister in the daily mail is pretty much ...

Interviewer: What about in your average everyday life? Do you use Japanese more than English?

Tom: Oh yeah, probably for speaking, yeah. At home it's a real mish-mash, half and half kind of thing.

Interviewer: Really?

Tom: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you speak more Japanese on a daily basis?

Tom: Yeah, at school too.

Interviewer: You teach in Japanese?

Tom: I teach probably half of classes in Japanese. My *zemi* in Japanese, all this administrative stuff I'm doing, obviously, is Japanese.

Interviewer: How important do you think it is to learn all this? Do you think there are other people that don't learn this?

Tom: That don't learn Japanese?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Tom: If you don't learn Japanese, or if you only learn half-assed izakaya Japanese oral skills, and you never take on the kanji and all of your ... You'll never amount to anything here than a trained poodle, basically. When I came here, that was one

of the first things ... I was lucky. Not every *gaijin* is this lucky as when you land here, and you don't know your ass from your elbow, and everything's weird, and you know the drill you did it yourself ...

If you're lucky, and you land yourself, what I would call, a *gaijin* mentor, a guy who knows the ropes, a guy who's seen the various story or life trajectories, the different *gaijin* lifestyles conduct people in, and can tell you the stuff to watch out for and the stuff to do ... I was lucky enough to have a guy like that. He told me ... because this is literally like a week or so after I had gotten here, he said, "You don't have that much work right now. You're not that busy. Start doing the Japanese right now and push yourself, and don't learn it from those books where it's written out in Romaji. Learn Hiragana right now, this week. Starting now, make some cards." I did that, learned the Hiragana, and the I jumped right into the *kanji* because he said, "If you don't climb the *kanji* mountain right away, you'll always find an excuse for putting it off, and you'll never do it. If you never do it, you'll never be anything more than basically what you're doing right now, which is being a trained poodle in *eikaiwa*."

Interviewer:

Tom:

Oh, I need to hear that.

Now, they've got all this great stuff for the iPad and all that. Oh man, it's wonderful! If I had had that stuff 30 years ago, my life would've been so much easier.

Interviewer:

Tom:

I know, but at the same time, if you had it, you might not have become as fluent because .....

Maybe so, and if I had lived in a place where I had more *gaijin* drinking buddies I could go out with every night, my life would've been very different.

Interviewer:

Tom:

That's true too.

I was pretty isolated most of the time. Some people might say I still am, but at least I have a family, and I have the internet, and Facebook, and all that, so I don't feel as "dark side of the moon" as I used to when I was here.

That makes a huge difference with Facebook and things like that.

Tom:

Oh, yeah.

Interviewer:

Tom:

Have you assimilated yourself 100% into Japanese society?

How would you def- ...

Interviewer:

Tom:

Assimilate means to become 100% basically Japanese and forget about where you came from.

No, absolutely not, no.

Interviewer:

Tom:

I figured...

I could say, yeah, emphatically no, but I know ... One thing here, and this has since been reinforced by various stuff I've studied as an academic, as a researcher, living here has given me a very, very distinct sensation of the "phoniness" of human interactions in the sense that people wear masks, and the way that your thinking patterns, and the things that you're able to communicate to each other, people, how much they are limited by words and by shared schematic knowledge and things like that. I learned all that very viscerally and physically during my early years here.

The stuff here is just so different from where I came from. Even down to ... and this is something I talk about with my students in intercultural communication classes, even the structure of the self. Every sentient being has, first of all their brain forms a working model, never perfect, never even close to complete, model of "reality," right? To navigate that, you have to have a working definition of "where are you" and "where the rest of everything else starts." You have a borderline, myself and not myself. I think that westerners, probably Americans especially, have radically different self structures than the Japanese do. This is germane to every human relationship that you have with Japanese people in your daily life here: your students, your colleagues, your friends ... I don't have many of those by the way, Japanese friends. We can talk about that later ... family, all that.

I don't know any *gaijin* who really has assimilated. There are a lot of them that say that they are, but I think they're fooling themselves. We get reminders through ... You may know the David Arudo phrase which is now infamous, the microaggressions. That's a little gentle, or sometimes not so gentle, nudge from our hosts, "Don't forget who you are. Good fences make good neighbors." I've always been extremely sensitive to that, maybe occasionally sometimes to a fault, but again, not as bad as David Arudo . Pretty early on I was like, "Okay, so those are the ground rules. I'll never fit in here completely. Now, knowing what I do know about the kind of stresses and stuff that the Japanese go through in their daily life, I'm not sure that I would want to be able to fit in here." Even if I could, which I can't, it looks like a pretty raw deal for- ...

Interviewer: What do you think about, for example, that quote that I have there. You're kind of getting to this point, I think, that the quote says, the Daniel Kahl quote. He said that he'll never be as good as the Japanese when they speak Japanese, but they'll never be able to copy his originality. He's kind of speaking about a middle ground. He can't really be 100% American, but at the same time he ... Yeah, what do you think about that type of thinking?

Tom: Yeah, sure. You've got lemons, you make lemonade, and there's a certain amount of lemons falling in my lap as I've been here. I'm not so pretentious to think that I would've had a gig as good as I have now if I had stayed in America the whole time. I probably would've kept being a goofball for a lot longer than I did by moving here, and who knows what I'd be doing now.

Interviewer: Have you kind of drifted away from the typical American personality to kind of a mix of the two necessary personalities?

Tom: I don't know if I ever had that in the first place when I was in America. I've always been a bit of an eccentric, a bit of a loner, a high functioning extrovert I would say. I didn't ...

Interviewer: A high functioning introvert, or extrovert?

Tom: Yeah, introvert, so I've never really felt that I belonged in anywhere that I've ever lived in my life. I've always felt one or two steps removed from the things .....

That sort of relayed to what I was saying earlier about how Japan gave me a very visceral, and very sensation and vivid picture, of what I said before, the "phoniness" of social interactions. In order to maintain your status, and in order to not be run out of town on a rail or lynched, you can't always say what you want to say or what you're thinking. You definitely can't do that. You always have to have some consciousness of your position, your situation, your status vis a vis other people. More or less, you say the things that are going to let you navigate with as little trouble as possible and hopefully get you some good things.

Interviewer: This is in the workplace you're talking about, right?

Tom: No, this is every- ...

Interviewer: Everywhere, so you said you have very few Japanese friends.

Tom: Yes.

Interviewer: Could we get into that, the part with the Japanese friends?

Tom: Yeah, okay, all right, and this goes back to what I was talking about with the ...

Interviewer: I'm sorry, I don't mean to interrupt you.

Tom: ... about the structure of the self thing. When you become a friend with a Japanese person, that's a really serious commitment. Again, going back to the structure of the self thing, I think that the Japanese have one additional step, or one additional border sort of between myself and the rest of the world thing. That additional border that we don't have is there, their primary identification group. They might even have a few at the same time. They'll have a family, and then they'll have their circle of tight friends, and to really be friends with a Japanese person, you have to be in one of those tight circle things. It might even be only a circle of two, which I guess you wouldn't call that a circle. You'd call that a line segment or something. I don't know, but you're in this thing, in this relationship with a person where the depth of that, and the strength of that, exceeds anything

that you're allowed to do with anybody else, and if your counterpart senses that you're backdooring him or something, which is what the Japanese would consider it if you're going out trying to get other friends, they would interpret that as a betrayal, and you'll be ostracized.

Very early in the game, the way I would make friends back in America other than my college buddies, or the guys I went to high school, or something ... Outside of that my relationships were fairly superficial. I have a lot acquaintances, a lot of, "Hey, yo bro. What's going on," and maybe have some beers or something like that. You know, "Hey, my girlfriend's pregnant. Can you give me \$1,000 for an abortion," kind of thing. That kind of a friend. Yeah, there were only a handful of guys like that.

Interviewer: Even a hand full is a lot of people.

Tom: Yeah, but you know, like in college, or high school, or whatever, you're like Wednesday you hang out with your buddies. You know, "Tomorrow I want to go off to the Star Trek Commission with these guys," and no problem with your usual guys, but here in Japan you say, "We're friends today, but tomorrow I'm going to go off with Yama this time and do whatever." Your Japanese counterpart is going to be crushed by that, and they'll very close to violently reject you. As I was saying, very early on, I realized how different the ground rules were in making "meaningful relationships" with other people and how much commitment was involved. I was like, "Nah, I don't really want to give up that much individual autonomy in order to make those meaningful relationships," so what the hell. You got to draw the line somewhere.

Interviewer: What about the in-laws. Your in-laws are Japanese in-laws.

Tom: Yeah, you know, we're not tight, tight, but when we used to live closer to them we saw them a lot more often, but yeah, they're okay.

Interviewer: What about Japan in general? Do you consider this your home?

Tom: Oh, God ... No, no, no, permanent visitor. Yeah, America's home, always will be. I'm never going back. It's pretty grim, but it's the truth.

Interviewer: So, you feel some stress in that then?

Tom: Oh, yeah. Sure, yeah.

Interviewer: Is that stress related to the distance from New York or is it related to the actual existence in Japan?

Tom: The existence in Japan, the difference, the time before the physical ugliness of the infrastructure and that kind of stuff, and the differences in the structure of the self, and the borders, and the ground rules from human relations. All of it adds up to a constant dull roar of cultural stress.

Interviewer: You had mentioned microaggressions earlier. How do you feel, like someone sees you on the street and they think you're still a new arrival, like you just came to Japan recently. Do they talk to you in that type of- ...?

Tom: They give you the dumbass treatment, yeah. I'm so used to that by now.

Interviewer: What do you do? What's your reaction, though?

Tom: I don't tell them otherwise. I just let them make asses out of themselves in my eyes.

Interviewer: So you just ...?

Tom: If I get a chance though, and this is something I enjoy doing a lot ... This is my own back blast, push back microaggression: when someone's going off like that, I'll just let them keep going, and then I'll find a spot where I can insert a blurt of Japanese, and then you know. I'm sure you've done this too. I don't know any guy who's never played this trick on a Japanese person who's giving them the dumb gaijin treatment.

Interviewer: That's too cool. I would do that.

Tom: It's so much fun. I love it. The way I look at it ... I don't look at it as ... Well, I am teasing them a little bit, but I can rationalize that in thinking that I'm teaching that person a lesson.

Interviewer: You know, it's funny because people often ask me, "Where are you from," and I say, "I'm from Chuo Ku."

Tom: Yeah, I do that too, S----

Interviewer: I think a lot of us do.

Tom: Then you get that ... You know, yeah. "Oh, you mean where was I born? Yeah, okay."

Interviewer: Actually, you grew up in New York, so you're used to being in kind of an ethnic area like I was. I was in a grey ethnic area so, "Where are you originally from," is not that bad of a question because our families were all either second or third generations.

Tom: My mom's a wasp and my dad is all mixed up. My family name is Jewish.

Interviewer: I knew some Asians that grew up in ethnic Asian areas in Canada, felt the same way. Wasp types tend to be a little more sensitive about ...

Tom: About getting the weirdo treatment?

Interviewer: Yeah, they do. They tend to be because they never got it before they came to Japan.

Tom: Right, well yeah, the white people, especially the wasps, they've never been on the shitty end of the stick before. That is a freaking eye opener man when you get that. What I was saying, get the shitty end of the othering, verb form there. You get the shitty end of the othering stick for the first time in your life. You get this white person, you know, you walked through the Roxbury back home, or for me that's the Bronx or Harlem, and you get the resentful stares from the blacks, or Latinos, or whatever, and you're being othered and in an unfriendly way too, but it's resentful. When you come to Japan and you get the othering that ... There may be some resentment in there depending on the person, but there's also, in so many words, you're being treated as dirt, literally as feces, as something that that person doesn't want to be near.

You're something dirty, and with the first time you get that, that was just a huge, huge revelations for me. I was pissed off, but I also thought, "Oh, my God. Have I ever done that to somebody else without realizing it?" Holy shit, if I was in America, and didn't happen to be white, and I got that kind of treatment or feeling, you know, move away, move one seat away in the subway car or cross the street when you're coming the other way. If I got that regularly, I would have a chip on my shoulder the size the Rock of Gibraltar, man. I was like, "Wow, man, that's what that feels like. Holy shit! I better consciously make sure that I never treat anyone like that again for the rest of my life." That's something I think about everyday, and I'm very careful about treating people with respect and not being condescending or making people feel, again, that they're filth from relative to my position.

I just think that the Japanese people growing up here in this bubble of theirs, this stressful on one hand but comfortable on the other hand bubble of theirs, they don't grow up with that sort of empathy, or a chance to develop empathy, about different others. They don't get the lesson of what it feels like to be treated like filth unless they've gone overseas and had a bad *ryugaku* experience or something.

Interviewer: Is there anything in daily life that you would find a bit ... Something that's always popping up and troubling you?

Tom: No, not in my situation here.

Interviewer: Okay, good.

Tom: Not in H-----. The ugly industrial greyness aside, one nice thing about here, H-----, is that there are like 40, 50,000 conspicuously not Asian foreigners living in this area of about one million people, you know, the Brazilian car parts worker. One really nice effect that that has had on Hamamatsu is that it's gotten the Japanese people living here used to foreigners in their midst. It's not a big deal. It's not something to run can call your mother about if you see a gaijin walking down the street.

Interviewer: Right, that's a really good thing.  
Tom: That's a very good thing.  
Interviewer: Just to slip into the last two answers here, two questions I mean, with something like that you were just talking about, do you have any anecdotes about that type of situation? You've already kind of given a few.  
Tom: The bad ones.  
Interviewer: Any is fine, good, bad.  
Tom: Of getting bad *gaijin* treatment you mean?  
Interviewer: No, actually, you can give any good stories, bad stories, it's all up to you. I have collections of both.  
Tom: I guess I have a sort of an a cute anecdote. I don't know if this is going to be of any use to you. It's about getting lost one time out in the suburbs and the ordeal I went through trying to find a bus stop. The whole story hinges on the word "bus," and two or three weeks, maybe a month, into my stay here, and I still didn't know Japanese for shit.  
I had gone out to a class or something out in the suburbs, so that's also a relative term when you're talking about the city of S-----. I'm away from the city center, and I had to get from there into the city center to get the train to go back to where I lived because I had another class back there. Alright, so I had left the person's house where I had done my business, not toilet talk, and she said, "Oh, to get to the bus, you just go down there, and there, and there."  
Yeah, okay, in my head I'm thinking, "Yeah, I'll find it. No problem." I go out, I promptly get lost, and I don't know any Japanese, as much as you can pick up here in a month. I don't know how to say "bus" in Japanese. You see where this going already? Alright, so I'm thinking to myself, "All right ..." In the month I've been here I had picked up that they take a lot of English words, and they change them around because of the pronunciation and all. I'm thinking, "Okay, how do you spell 'bus'?" B-U-S, right? B-U-S, I know that B-U in Japanese, that's a "boo," and "S" is a "soo," "Busu."  
It's the middle of the day. All the men folk are off at work, so the only people walking around in the streets are women. I look around, and I already had many experiences where I had walked up to a Japanese person on the street and just got the whole panic breakdown reaction and the person runs. I'm looking around and I think, "All right, I'll pick someone who looks fairly cosmopolitan. Maybe they have a couple of overseas trips under the belt, and ultimately they won't be so afraid of me."  
I see a very stylishly, pretty good looking, woman in her 40's, rather well-off obviously, very proud looking, walking down the street. I go up to her and I do the move that the old men do, the *sumimasen* move. I picked that up too. I go like this, "*sumimasen*. Busu, busu." and she let out this, "Oh, my," or something like that. She stomped off. I think, "Oh, my God. She looked like a doctor's wife, but even the doctor's wives are *gaijin* haters! Jesus, why the hell did I move!?"  
I think, "All right, I'll look for someone who's maybe not so haughty looking." I'm walking around for five, ten minutes, and then I see a mother with a baby carriage and a small child. I go up to them, and I do the thing again, "Busu, busu," and the woman said, "Oh!" The kid starts laughing, so that really messed me up. She picked me up, and then pushing the baby carriage, ran away. Now, I'm just totally melting here. I'm sitting here, "God, what have I done?" I'm looking at my watch. I have to get to class and everything.  
I said, "Alright, I'll look for some high school kids. They've just most recently learning English, and maybe I'll have better luck with them." I see a couple of girls. I only learned a bit later that they were bad girls because they had brown hair, and in '87 the only Japanese who had brown hair were like punks and no-good-nicks. They were wearing the long skirts, the one all the way down to the ankles. They're supposed to be in high school uniforms, right? Back then the bad girls would wear them long rather than short. I didn't know all this until later

though, so I go up to the three of them walking along, and I do the "busu" thing, and then the leader's like, "Meh, *kono yaro*." I'm thinking, "Oh, my God. Am I going to get in a fist fight with some girls here?"

I don't know, for some reason with them, but not with the others, I got the idea of doing the hand gestures thing of a bus, you know, a bus steering wheel. I'm doing this like, "Bus, busu, busu?" Then they're like this, "Ah! Basu, basu! Ah-hah!" Then, they hooked me up with a bus station, or the bus stop, and I was able to get to my class on time and rescued.

Interviewer:  
Tom:

Just for the transcriber of this, the word "busu" means "ugly."

Ugly, right, yes, busu, so I was calling all of these poor women "ugly." Oh God, what a classic *gaijin* goof.

Interviewer:  
Tom:

That's such a good story. Just the last question, what kind of person do you think ends up in Japan for 20 years?

I think that most of the lifers tend to lean towards the introvert side. I think one reason why Japan would feel attractive to a person like that is that, and also because we don't commit to those deeply intertwined Japanese relationships, people are going to respect your space here a lot. They're not going to get in your face very much. If you want to be left alone, they'll leave you alone. That's comfortable. Another type would, I guess you could say, would be kind of romantic type disillusioned by the money grabbing, rat race stuff. This, again, would be especially an American context. Yeah, also maybe sort of eccentric people who they know that they're really not going to fit in anywhere that they live, so they might as well be in a clean, and comfortable, and safe place. Yeah, in general yeah, they tend to be rather sensitive, introverted, probably more on the more intelligent as opposed to the less intelligent side.

Interviewer:  
Tom:

Do you think there's a specific personality trait that works in Japan well?

Yeah.

Interviewer:  
Tom:

Introverted, obviously.

Yeah, don't be a hustling go-getter. That might work in some very specific milieus or venues in Japan like Tokyo business or something like that, but in general, coming into the scene as a macho alpha male kind of American, you're not going to do well here. You have to learn to really reel that stuff in.

Interviewer:  
Oh, this is good.

## 012 Dorothy

Interviewer: What was it like and in just a few words; could you describe what it was like when you first came to Japan?

Dorothy: Okay we're talking about ancient history.

Interviewer: How long have you been in Japan by the way?

Dorothy: Well I first came in 1982.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dorothy: We're reaching back in memory, because I came to S----- because I came to H----- prefecture it didn't fit at all my image of Japan because we got our images from the movies and I thought every house had a little garden with a ... What do you call the little ...? The thing that drops water (bamboo rain catchers), and bonsai trees and all of that .When I came to S----- completely different, very modern, lots of ... of course tall buildings just like any major city and the noise, without the politeness before I came.

I was overwhelmed by the politeness, how cultural people were, how much they welcomed me. That was at the beginning, I was new and I was new to them and I was treated very much like a guest, I would say almost like a queen.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dorothy: Invited to people's homes, invited, invited, invited. I was much younger, I was new, that is not the case anymore.

Interviewer: When you first came here you did have that honeymoon period where it felt special.

Dorothy: I'm not talking when I first came; I'm talking about the first five years.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dorothy: Or even when I returned. No I didn't really experience that honeymoon period that a lot of people are talking about and so I didn't have the huge drop off that some people have. I was a teacher in The United States, a high school, junior high school teacher and I decided I wanted to live in another culture.

I wanted to live specifically in Asia because Europe is so similar to The US in many ways and I wanted to live in a more modern place as well, with all the modern conveniences, so Japan was the choice and H----- was specifically the choice because of it being much cooler here. I wouldn't be able to live in other parts of Japan.

Interviewer: Your original reason for coming to Japan was to teach then, that was your original plan.

Dorothy: Well I've always been a teacher. I didn't come to Japan to teach.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dorothy: I'm a teacher who came to Japan unlike ... I hate to say it this way but I'm a real teacher, a lot of people who have come here to teach to get ... That's the way they earn their living but for me teaching is my life and then Japan was the location I chose to teach, so it's maybe it's a little bit different from someone.

Interviewer: Right so how long did you teach in The States before you came?

Dorothy: Well as a full time teacher junior high and high school teacher, I taught for seven years but I have taught part time much more than that.

Interviewer: I see okay and I'm sorry you were in Japan for how long?

Dorothy: Altogether I believe it's been about twenty seven years.

Interviewer: Okay right so did you plan to stay for the long term when you first came?

Dorothy: No when I first came I had thought I'd stay here for a few years. I actually ended up having a boyfriend and stayed a little bit longer. He was not Japanese he was Thai from Thailand.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dorothy: A graduate student and I ended up staying here longer than I had initially expected, I thought, "A couple of years."

Interviewer: How long were you here then when you decided to stay, but probably for the longer term, for the long haul?

Dorothy: I never made a specific decision, it was just something that evolved because of having friends here, having work here. Even when I lost jobs I immediately got jobs immediately after. I'm talking about the transition period was one day from one job to another because of my contacts, so there was never a specific decision to stay in Japan this long.

Interviewer: I see.

Dorothy: It just happened.

Interviewer: Do you have any family in America, in The States?

Dorothy: Well my family almost everyone has passed away while I've been in Japan and that's been quite hard. My parents have both passed away in the past ten years or so and I've gone back for that. Now I have only a sister and her son, my nephew and other relatives that I'm not close to.

Interviewer: I see, okay in your daily life do you use more Japanese than English or English, more English than Japanese?

Dorothy: Well that's difficult to say. In the classroom I use primarily English except in fairly low level classes so I would say what I use the most every day is English as a second language.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dorothy: I do not use English as a first language very often because I am not in contact with other native speakers very much.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dorothy: A lot of my friends, Japanese friends can speak English but again it's not English as a first language so my primary language of use here is English as a second language.

Interviewer: Right, so your life satisfaction score would be around what?

Dorothy: My life satisfaction has nothing to do with Japan. I have my own spiritual beliefs; please do not confuse that with religious beliefs.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dorothy: I chose to be happy and that has nothing to do with Japan.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dorothy: Or not Japan.

Interviewer: No, no that's good.

Dorothy: My satisfaction with my life has absolutely nothing to do with my being in Japan. I chose to be satisfied and to be happy. I've just lost a cat and I'm still choosing joy and I think that has to do more with age than with Japan or anything else.

Interviewer: Okay, all right, so how important do you think it is to learn the language to live in the country?

Dorothy: I think it's extremely important and I really regret that I did not spend more time learning Japanese before I came, or in my early years here. I haven't spent time studying Japanese I would say for the past ten years or more and so my level of Japanese has not increased, especially in reading. I really urge anyone who is planning to come to Japan to learn the language, learn as much Kanji as you can, get as much vocabulary as you can.

Interviewer: Do you think that doing that early on is very important, when people first come?

Dorothy: Yes I think it's essential to do that as early as possible because otherwise you're losing out on a lot of communication, you're missing what is written around you, what is being said around you and I have missed out on a lot because of that.

Interviewer: How would you rate your Japanese level? What would you put your ...? I think I wrote down listening.

Dorothy: Give a scale?

Interviewer: I had a scale on the basic information sheet; it's from one to ten for listening, for speaking, for reading, for writing?

Dorothy: Okay listening I would say about seven, speaking between five and six, reading probably a four, writing it can be maybe five

Interviewer: Actually what you said about before, "How it doesn't matter that you're in japan," it's actually a big point that I'm going for; it's for people who've been here a long time.

Dorothy: Okay.

Interviewer: People, who tend to be happy, tend to think that way. Do you think you assimilated yourself to a Japanese society one hundred percent?

Dorothy: Not at all.

Interviewer: Not at all.

Dorothy: No I am totally not assimilated; I stand out like a sore thumb, when I try to be Japanese I really have to put an effort into it. It does not come naturally. I can do all the *keigo*, I can do all the politeness but it always feels very artificial to me and I'm always forgetting to do that, so my assimilation is about twenty percent.

Interviewer: Draw your own lines I think.

Dorothy: Another problem is that you are constantly reminded that you are not Japanese; how many times a week. I have lived here for twenty seven years, I can't tell you how many thousands of times I've been asked, "Where are you from?" You're constantly reminded that you are not one of us.

Interviewer: I don't....

Dorothy: That shows a little bit of dissatisfaction with being here, but those kinds of othering questions, have you heard the term othering?

Interviewer: Of course yeah.

Dorothy: Yes those kinds of othering questions drive me crazy and I have certain responses that I give to that so again anyone who comes here has to be expected not just the first week, not just the first month but after twenty seven years to still be asked, "Where are you from," and assuming that you're not from here. I was asked that this morning yes.

Interviewer: By the way ....

Dorothy: In my neighborhood.

Interviewer: Which leads me into a question?

Dorothy: I say, "Oh I'm from over there," and they say, "Yeah but where are you really from," sort of thing.

Interviewer: Do you think some people can get lost in Japan; they have this bubble around them? Do you feel people can be that way around here and instead of mixing with Japanese they can put themselves in a bubble where ...?

Dorothy: You mean as a protective device?

Interviewer: Kind of, I guess you can say that.

Dorothy: I imagine there are people like that. I think one thing that you have to remember is that the people who choose to live in S----- or in H----- are not the people who live in Tokyo or other well-known places. This is more the outskirts, not *inaka* but it was frontier land, literally frontier land and so the people who choose S----- and H----- are little bit more unusual than those who chose to live in the well-known places, so I don't run into that as much here.

Interviewer: Have you ever experienced a real ...? I don't know, I wrote the question here as a, "Have you ever experienced a situation or a problem that was complicated but what you thought was a cultural difference?" What I mean by that is I wrote here something like a divorce or legal trouble, something that you could have back home but because of the cultural differences it made it much worse than you probably expected?

Dorothy: Well I would say on a minor level, my most recent experience was having to get a driver's license but being over seventy there's more required. You have to be there for three and a half hours taking tests and all but I didn't experience discrimination.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dorothy: There was already age discrimination but that was for the Japanese as well.

Interviewer: Did you get your *momoji marku* did you get the little mark that ....

Dorothy: I passed with flying colors.

Interviewer: Did you ..., that's awesome.  
Dorothy: Yes.  
Interviewer: No major situations where there was this huge cultural problem?  
Dorothy: Well I think it's more the language thing. No I lost two different jobs. In one case it was the place that invited me back. I think there was a lot of misunderstanding because none of them could speak English, nobody on the staff could speak English very well and my Japanese was far from fluent. It's much better at this point and we didn't speak through interpretations, so there was a lot of misunderstanding and after inviting me back they let me go after three years.  
Interviewer: Oh really.  
Dorothy: This was when I was ... The same place I had worked for five years initially and then invited back for three years and then they said, "Your contract is not being extended." I think I was too American because I had my ideas which were I still think correct ideas of how the program should be run and they had other ideas and I think they felt I was abrasive. In the end I was let go and I think it's mainly because the staff couldn't deal with someone as strong as I am. One of the stupidest things I did before I came to Japan is I took assertiveness training.  
Interviewer: Well it's ...  
Dorothy: Actually I don't really assertiveness training.  
Interviewer: A total oil and water situation right?  
Dorothy: Yeah, so I think that was one of the worst situations and my next job where it was an American program, but under a Japanese company I also had difficulties. The boss could not ... Not my boss, not my direct boss but the owner of the Japanese program or the bosses there could not speak a word of English.  
We had a lot of misunderstanding and it was not because of my being American but because of the language and also because I am a very assertive person.  
When I think something is right I know how to word it when I'm in English, I don't know how to word it with someone who doesn't speak English.  
Interviewer: That's a technique. It can be hard.  
Dorothy: Again I use the word, I came across as abrasive.  
Interviewer: I wanted to talk about that quote there, that I sent you from Daniel Kahl, so I'm often trying to find if other people have found this and then they find a comfort zone.  
Dorothy: Okay well this is a little bit different but one place that I'm in, where I do belong is in the chorus; I'm in one of the highest level choruses in S----, I'm in S----- Symphony Chorus. We have to audition every three years. We sing classical music just by way of background I'm a soprano, not an American. I think the other people in the chorus appreciate my presence partly because I am able to come out and say things that they are not comfortable with.  
I'll give you a specific example. There was one time when we were singing a piece and we were expected to memorize it, it's Carmina Buran by Carl Orff in case you happen to know that piece. I knew that we would not be able to memorize it before the concert and so we were in the final month of rehearsals and that's when the maestro ... We have a rehearsal conductor but the maestro comes in and he was rehearsing with us and at the end he said, "This will be memorized."  
I was in the back row and I shouted, "*muri desu*," and then I looked around, joking like, "Who said that?" There was a little bit of a laugh but not hilarious laugh just an uncomfortable laugh, but I know that other people felt the same way but nobody dared to said it. Nobody dares to say the emperor has no clothes and I think they appreciated my saying that because in the end we did not ... We used our music, we did not have to memorize it and nobody else would have dared to say that because you do not stick out like the nail, like the proverbial nail.  
Interviewer: You think there is that middle that you fulfill? You can ...

Dorothy: You still fit in and you still cooperate as much as you can, but there's an element that you can get away with because you are not Japanese.

Interviewer: The *gaijin* card as they say.

Dorothy: That's what it could be called right.

Interviewer: Do you consider Japan your home?

Dorothy: Yes I do right now.

Interviewer: You do.

Dorothy: I think I probably will return to The US and it's mainly because I need to be in an English speaking environment when I get older. Being in the hospital was very trying because I was functioning and I was functioning but in Japanese all day long and that can be formidable and lonely as well. I get starving for the English language, but definitely S----- is my home. Now I can't say all of Japan but Sapporo is definitely my home. "Where're you from?" "I'm from S-----," and I'm dead serious about that.

Interviewer: S----- .

Dorothy: I am really from S-----, I have lived here longer ... I've lived here one third of my life.

Interviewer: Have you experienced reverse culture shock when you go home? Do you have any ... ?

Dorothy: Definitely yes, the first time I went back after being here for five years I wasn't expecting it, I didn't know anything about reverse culture shock. My family treated me the same way as they did before, not realizing that even though I looked the same outside I was completely changed inside and there was no way I could get across to them that I'm a very different person and sometimes have trouble functioning when I go back, even for short periods now.

I just don't know how to do things because gradually things will change, ATM machines and the like, and then there'll be cultural references and they just talk about these celebrities as though you're supposed to know who they are and politicians as well. I don't know who they are and then I feel like a dunce.

Interviewer: The longer you're here that's very common for that to happen.

Dorothy: Then you get frustrated because there's a Japanese phrase you want to use or a cultural reference you want to use and you know nobody is going to understand it. With my friends here I can say, "I'm feeling very *genki* today." I can't do that at home.

Interviewer: That's true, so at the end of the questions I have a request for anecdotes, now antic dotes is a very broad word and some people don't ...

Dorothy: Okay.

Interviewer: Quite yet, I don't know if you have any of those, if you have an anecdote of both but ...

Dorothy: Oh my goodness I have so many.

Interviewer: Give me your best three.

Dorothy: Okay one is the first time I got invited to a wedding here I was invited by one of my students and so I had a boyfriend as I had told you. I asked, "Can he come to,' because in The US if you go to a wedding you take your spouse or your boyfriend, or whatever. I had no idea that here only the people who get invited go to the wedding, even people who are married go by themselves without their husbands or wives and she hesitated and I at that time because I was still ... it was only my second year here maybe.

I still did not understand that the hesitation meant no and she finally said, "Yes," and it wasn't until quite a bit later that I realized what a faux pas I had made by taking him to the wedding. We both enjoyed it but it meant she had to cut out another guest from her list and I didn't know that.

Interviewer: Oh I see. Weddings and funerals you can make a lot of faux pas in Japan especially.

Dorothy: Well the funerals, I asked a great many questions from my students before I went and I watched everything carefully so that I actually did everything correctly.

Interviewer: Did you take your boyfriend to the funeral? Did you do that?  
Dorothy: No.  
Interviewer: I'm sorry.  
Dorothy: Actually yeah I know, those have happened more recently.  
Interviewer: Yeah the..  
Dorothy: Okay at the funeral again we're talking about the *gaijin* card thing one of my oldest is a male of seventy five years old died and I went to his ... I think we went to the wake okay and I didn't know his wife but she and her two sons were standing in line and everybody was walking by them in their black clothes. I had black on too.  
They were all bowing to her and I went up to her and I had this sense, "She needs to be touched," and I took both of her hands and she just started crying for the first time. Her son spoke English. He was standing next to her and he said, "He loved your class," and I said, "We loved him to," and that was so touching. I was the one who could do it. I was the one who could pull it off. It was so cold with everybody just bowing and I was the first person who touched her and maybe the only person who touched her and that's a very positive story.  
Interviewer: It's a good one. I liked that one. If you could use a few words just to ... What kind of person is here for longer than twenty years? Could you describe that type of person? There might be several types in your mind. I'm just curious what you think about that.  
Dorothy: I think the people who live here, the people who are my friends and who have lived here for a long time have had intercultural experiences before they came with that background who are open to diversity will have better experiences here, and are the ones, are the kinds who will choose to come here.

### **013 Nick**

interviewer :

Nick:

Did you have like a honeymoon period when you came?

Yes I did. When I came at first, the honeymoon period was like 3 years, when I was on the JET the whole time.

Extremely long time.

Yeah. It's great money, good fun, very unusual experience living in Japan.

Obviously when you come over you are ... There's not so many foreign people here, so you do stand out, especially being an early 20's white guy.

Were you in the JET Program in the countryside, or were you working in the city? I was in the city, in K----, in K-----. It wasn't a big city, but it was a relatively nice place to live.

What was the original plan when you came?

When I came over I planned to stay here for one year. Came over, my university degree was in computing science. My plan was to come over here, study Japanese, get decent Japanese then go back over to the UK and get a job with say Nintendo, or Sega, one of these companies. Of course I enjoyed the JET Program, it paid well, so I stayed for three years. I didn't really go back into IT so much.

When did you realize you were going to stay for long-term?

When I got married to my wife. The reason I've stayed for such a long time is because I'm married to a Japanese lady, and her family are over here, so we have to look after ... Her mother's quite elderly, so we need to look after her.

How old is her mother?

Her mother is 78, may be, 78 or so.

Are you close to family back home in your country?

Oh yeah, definitely.

UK, right?

Yeah. I think, if I could, would I like to go back to the UK? Obviously, your parents are getting older, so it would be a guess, or a 50-50 stay here, or go back, stay here, or go back, because obviously you have family over there as well.

Do you feel like you have kind of that on-the-fence feeling? Like, "I don't know which way to ..."

Pretty much.

What's the timeframe you think that could happen in, within the next few ...

We'll see how it goes in the next year, really.

So it depends on the next year?

Pretty much, yeah. If next year's good, we'll stay here.

Is that mostly work, that it's dependent on?

Yeah, pretty much. I guess work, really, and the weather. If it stops raining.

In your regular life here in Japan, do you use Japanese more than English? Or do you use English ...

I'd say 50-50. In my previous job up until this March 31st, at work it was pretty much all Japanese. When I was doing it would be ... Obviously the balance was in favor of Japanese. Now I'm back in a little bit of English teaching, so yes, 50-50.

You own your own school, right?

Yeah.

Do you speak Japanese with your wife, or in English?

Again, it's 50-50, I think. When we first met it was mainly Japanese, but recently, I guess I've got to the level in my Japanese when I'm not so interested, really, in studying it that much more, I've been doing it for a long time. I probably realized that I'm never going to be a native speaker, kind of the enthusiasm of study kind

of worn off, so now, my wife also works at an English school, I'm kind of helping her out by speaking English to her, texting in English and that sort of stuff.

interviewer :  
Nick:

How important do you think it is to learn a language to live here?  
I don't think it's ... I think you should learn the language if you live here. I don't think it's important. To give you some examples I suppose, got a guy that works in my English school, he's come over here the last year, been here for about a year, just over a year. He came over with these Japanese girlfriends, two Japanese girlfriends, they speak Japanese obviously. Because he's got these girlfriends, he said "No pressure to learn Japanese at all." But he's so entirely reliant on his girlfriends. He basically can't do anything without these girlfriends helping him to do it. You can get by like that if you want, even if you're single you could have a group of English-speaking friends, a sort of support group. But, long-term, I think it would be frustrating. There's so many things, for example, like recently, getting insurance for a motorbike. You phone up an insurance company, they don't speak English, which is kind of surprising really. You'd expect a big company to have English-speaking operators.

That's not a problem, but for me, for sure, it's okay, I can get by. When it comes to money, when it comes to important things, contracts, et cetera, I would like to be able to ... It is important to speak Japanese, and be able to to read Japanese. Basically what you're saying, speaking Japanese gives you more independence to move while you're in ...

interviewer :  
Nick:  
interviewer :

Absolutely.  
You've worked in a Japanese office environment. Of course Japanese was important. Did you also feel like you had to understand culturally what's going on? I know this is an obvious question, but ... That's something that's also very important. Not just for our language skills, but also understanding.

Nick:  
interviewer :  
Nick:

Oh yes, very, very, very different. The whole *ue-no-kata*, the people above and the people below ...  
The hierarchy system.  
Yeah, it's really important. I've been here for a while, so, working in the office, I kind of understood that, and went along with their system. But if you'd just come over from the UK or America and you go into a Japanese office, it depends on your character. If you're very flexible, you'll be okay. If you're inflexible, then forget it.

interviewer :  
Nick:  
interviewer :  
Nick:

So flexibility is an important characteristic?

Absolutely.

Would you say you take on the traits that you need to take on, and then you protect ... Do you ever try to protect who you are, in the sense of "This is just me?"

Nick:  
interviewer :  
Nick:

Yeah, every day.

You do that every day?

Every day, especially in a Japanese company. Every day, going into the morning meetings, *chorei* ...

interviewer :  
Nick:

Tedious? From a Western standpoint.

Yeah, exactly. The meetings, very different to Western meetings in a Western company.

interviewer :  
Nick:

Some of those differences, could you mention what they are?

Yeah, for example, we went over to the UK recently for a ... It was this company for kind of promoting K----, and at that point we did various visits to the Japanese embassy and the CLAIR office in London. For these meetings we took over the executive vice president of our organization, went over to the meeting, over to the companies. We visited these places, and we spoke ... I saw we spoke, the one person in the meeting, the executive vice president of our

company spoke. It was basically an hour meeting, but we didn't actually make any progress. It was just *aisatsu*, and greetings, and being very polite, and saying "Thank you for helping us last year." But we didn't actually talk at all, or get anything done. It was just politeness, passing over a gift. To be honest, can I say that Japanese meetings are a little bit ineffectual? I think so, compared to the British and American style.

interviewer : Do some people get lost in their life here? Do some people, for example, they don't know why they're here?

Nick: Yeah, I think probably, yeah. It's so easy to come over and become an English teacher and stay here, enjoy going out to drinks, bars, chasing ladies, and just get into that cycle of doing that. It's become so easy that yeah, probably.

interviewer : Some people could enjoy that for the rest of their life, then yes. But I guess there are possibly examples of, maybe after 10 years or 20 years they start to realize "Oh God ..."

Nick: What have I done? Yeah, exactly. We're all going to talk about English teachers quite a lot, because that's what I've been for a long time. But yeah, you can come over and be an English teacher for 17 years, for example. Just recently I met a guy that was doing this, 17 years teaching English, same school, same Eikaiwa, and he decided to go back to the UK. He's been here 17 years, no career progression, no progression, just the same sort of thing, same every day kind of thing. Which I think in the UK or America, wherever you came from, you would be looking at getting your career progressing up the ladder, et cetera. In a lot of jobs for foreign people here, that's maybe not available.

interviewer : Have you been personally discriminated against in Japan?

Nick: I was thinking, I read that question before. Probably when I came over initially, I felt a lot more discriminated against. The old men "Why is he speaking to me in English and not Japanese?" Looking at my white face and assuming that I don't speak Japanese. That's the kind of, and speaking to you in English, and that sort of thing. I think initially, when you're trying to learn Japanese, you feel discriminated against a lot for that sort of thing. But, I reckon there's a point where you just get over that, and now it doesn't really bother me. Discriminated against, it's more not so much ... I couldn't really think of any negative discrimination, but positive discrimination, I suppose, you'd have to say the jobs would have been ... For example I worked in a bakery, just a very short time. Tough job. I think one of the things is that, I realize that Japanese people, they work so hard for not a great deal.

Okay, good jobs pay money, but your average Japanese person really works hard. I sort of worked in a bakery, that kind of job, to see what the lifestyle's like. Any discrimination has been positive. For example, I'm the tall foreign guy, so put him in the front at the counter so people can see him. It's mainly positive discrimination. The only other discrimination thing would be when you're just walking about, for example coming here this morning, and you can kind of feel people looking at you, because you stand out a little bit, not so much now, but ... You stand out more than I do, I think. Because you're taller.

interviewer : Maybe, I wear stupid tracksuits, I don't know. But yeah, sometimes you get that. But mainly positive discrimination, you could look at little things, many people do pick up in little things, but ...

Nick: Do you think that has more to do with personality than it does the actual situation?

I think so, probably. Definitely. If you're a very positive person you can look in and say "Okay, this is discrimination, but hey." I know one guy from New York, who's incredibly positive, and just takes everything. Doesn't speak Japanese, I

think he's not very interested in learning Japanese. He's just enjoying his time here.

interviewer :

Nick:

interviewer :

Nick:

How long's he been here?

One year, two years. A short time.

Enjoying himself?

Oh yeah, married with kids. But just enjoying the whole Japanese lifestyle, there's things that you can do here that you can't do in America. If he was back in America, he's a 40-something, so if he was back in America, he would be living with his family, not out drinking, just standard family life. But over here he's like a young guy again, it's a nice place.

interviewer :

Nick:

Have you ever had a situation ...

Oh, one more discrimination thing, one more example. We were talking about the motorbikes, this is sort of a recent thing. Yesterday, or two days ago, my apartment building, I went to park my bike in the building. I was all set because I'd seen big bikes in the building before, and I spoke to the caretaker, and he said "Oh, no, sorry, it's only 50cc bikes, so you can't park here." I was like "Ah." Well, what can you do? I was really disappointed, but, anyway, okay. We'll see what we could do. Went back to him yesterday and said to the caretaker again "Look, did you speak to the head of the residence association?" And he said yes he had, the maximum's 125ccs. I was getting pretty angry, because what am I going to do? I'm going to have to rent a bike park, what am I going to do? Just at that time the head of the residence association walked out of the elevator. His office is next to our apartment building. When he came out of the elevator, I said to him, "Look, 400cc bike, it's kind of stupid."

I was very polite to the guy. He said ... 70 year old guy sort of thing, used to work in America, he likes the Western kind of things. He said "Yeah, okay. 400cc, how big is it? Do you have a picture? Yeah, okay." So he said yes, score. We spoke to the caretaker later, and he was saying "Yeah, probably because you're the foreign guy. He's being nice to you, but if it was a normal Japanese person he probably would have just said no." So, positive discrimination in that case, in a good way.

interviewer : Do you consider Japan your home?

Nick:

No, no, I am still S-----. When I think about my home, it's summer in G----, in a nice house with a garden and a garage. Not my apartment in H----. To give you an example, again, the motorbike thing, these are just recent examples. I went to MYMY school, graduated with all the Japanese people. I was part of the class, so I graduated there, yay, you know. Went over with all these people to the next door license center.

We all queued up at the number 15 booth to get our licenses and stuff. Next to it there's the booth for foreign nationals wanting to change their license, from say a Thai driving license to a Japanese license. There was maybe 4 Indian people, or Indonesian people. It was a big queue at the place where I was queuing to get my Japanese license, my Japanese bike license. As we were waiting, the foreign license place became open. The guy that was working there started calling people over, "Come over to my place, just to make the queue go down faster." I was waiting there to get my Japanese license stamped sort of thing. He calls, I went over to the Japanese side part, and spoke to the guy who was mainly dealing with foreign people getting their license. He asked me ... I've given my driver's license, my nice, gold driver's license, which is Japanese.

He asked me, "Okay, what country are you from?" I said Britain. He said "Where's your license from?" I said Britain." He said "Yeah, but where was your license issued?" I was thinking "Hang on, this has got nothing to do with my biker's license, which is going under my Japanese license. I was just about to get

angry, and he sort of realized "Oh, sorry, this is your Japanese license." That sort of situation where they see a foreign person and they assume that they have not done the Japanese sort of thing, that did sort of annoy me.

interviewer : Has this caused any stress, does this sometimes cause stress?

Nick: It used to, it used to be a stressful thing. Now things just wash over me, pretty much.

interviewer :                      Depending on the day?

Nick: Yeah, exactly, depending on the day. Even that day, I was feeling good that day. To be honest, I was feeling really good that day, and that did put a little bit of a ... interviewer : A damper?

Nick: Yeah, a little bit of a damper on it, you know? But yeah.

interviewer : When you go over to the UK, do you have any reverse culture shock?

Nick: Oh yeah, tons. First of all, it's a boring thing, they drive so much faster in the UK, it's impossible to keep up with two people in the motorway. People in the UK, it's the politeness, the safety in Japan. You're back towards the UK, you just notice things. People are not as polite, it's not as safe, people are more ... It does take a lot to get back into the UK, sort of way of living. Yeah, to be honest, Japan's a great place. For all its slight negatives, the safety parts of living in Japan, as I say, the positive discrimination, they make up for all the little things.

interviewer : What kind of person do you think it takes to live here for a long time?

Nick: I don't know, it's difficult to say.

interviewer : It is difficult.

You'd say on one hand, the people that don't have any ambition, and they stay here for a long time, they're working in *Eikaiwa*, it's easy, it's very simple. Maybe they were ambitious before they came here, but they kind of lost that and stayed here for a long time. On the other hand, there's a lot of really enthusiastic people that are pushing on and making a lot of different things with their life, meeting lots of people and ... Yeah, certainly in F----, if you're career driven, F-----'s not the place to be in my opinion. Again, people in Tokyo, Osaka, different story. I know a lot of people that have lived here a long time, moved to Tokyo, and they're doing really well, just doing their business and stuff.

interviewer : How's that anecdote coming up?

Nick: When you talk about money, the kind of story I said yesterday, this is the sort of thing I tell people, yeah, I did tell people. When we bought our apartment in Hakata, we bought the apartment basically with cash. We went to the estate agent, you know in Japan ... I don't know in America how much cash you would carry around with you. In Japan, when you're buying a flat or an apartment, for us anyway, the process was go to the bank, get out about 30,000 pounds, which is quite a lot of money, 30,000 pounds cash.

interviewer : 30,000 pounds, woah.

Nick: Yeah, that sounds like quite a lot of money.

interviewer : That's quite a lot of money.

It is, yeah. You're getting 30,000 pounds out in cash, take it from the bank, walk from the bank to the estate agent's office, sit down, with the buyer on the other side of the table, the lawyer and the estate agent, and basically deal with cash over the table. We carried cash from the bank to the estate agent's, put the cash on the table, counted it, real estate agent went to the seller, other went to the lawyer, and then that was the deal done. In the UK, we would never walk around with that kind of cash. You'd do a bank transfer.

When I was cycling one day, I cycled past a police *koban*. A policeman came out, he saw I was a white guy. He went up to me and he asked me if I could speak French. Initially I was thinking, "Well, great, it's a policeman, he's going to

want to check my bike, et cetera." But no, he came out and he asked me if I could speak French, because he wanted to practice with his French on me.

### **014 Joseph**

Interviewer: If you had to use 1 or 2 words to describe the feeling that you felt when you first came to Japan, what kind of adjectives could you use just to describe that feeling?

Joseph: It was quiet.

Interviewer: It was quiet?

Joseph: It was quiet, yes.

Interviewer: Japan was quiet, really?

Joseph: Yeah.

Interviewer: It was kind of a rare observation. Where were you?

Joseph: We were at south of Osaka.

Interviewer: Okay. In the countryside?

Joseph: Yeah. It's a country side. It's a small village on the sea side. Most close to the train station but it was also close to the sea and the port. We stayed in an old house with my ... that time, I was not married yet to my wife. We stayed with the father and her grandmother. So the house was big but only the 4 of us.

Interviewer: Are there any words that you could use that could describe your feeling?

Joseph: My feeling ...

Interviewer: Of course the area was quiet like you said.

Joseph: Yeah. It was ... I was used to be ... a Chinese environment. Big, big city and a lot of unfriendly people. So it was kind of a family, taking me in when I first got here. At that time, it was how I felt and I felt that they were trying to help me to get into the society

Interviewer: Oh I see. Okay.

Joseph: Because I was about to get married with my wife so it was like a ... greeting me in the family

Interviewer: Did you have a honeymoon period when you first came?

Joseph: Not really. No.

Interviewer: Never had that?

Joseph: Not at the beginning. No.

Interviewer: Actually, you came with your wife?

Joseph: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. So that would make sense.

Joseph: Some years later, we had that. Some years later we had the possibility to go around, just the two of us.

Interviewer: Just to enjoy yourselves?

Joseph: Yeah

Interviewer: Okay.

Joseph: But the beginning was a lot with her family so I was a little bit not really that free. When we went out from the house, we got our home in Osaka, then it was better

Interviewer: I see. What was your original plan when you first came?

Joseph: I didn't have one really

Interviewer: No plan?

Joseph: Not vaguely a plan. No.

Interviewer: Okay.

Joseph: I could not speak Japanese at that time.

Interviewer: Okay. Did you plan to stay for a long time?

Joseph: No. I didn't plan to stay for a long time.

Interviewer: When did you realize you're going to be staying longer than you expected?

Joseph: After my kid, the first kid was born.

Interviewer: I see. Okay. Are you close to your family back in Italy?

Joseph: Not really that close. As close as my sister. She lives close to them ... to their house. I was not close when I was in Italy. I left home at 19 and never really worked in Italy. Apart from helping my parents with their business.

Interviewer: I see. Okay. So you use Japanese in your daily life.

Joseph: Yes. Everyday.

Interviewer: Do you use Japanese at work a lot?  
Joseph: Work, yes.  
Interviewer: What percent do you think you use at work?  
Joseph: I would say 60% Japanese and then ... sorry, just at work? Just at work would be 60% to 70% Japanese and then the rest would be English and some Italian.  
Interviewer: There are some customers in Italy that I spoke to.  
Joseph: Okay.  
Interviewer: But that's maybe 10%, 5%.  
Joseph: So Japanese is necessary for you job?  
Interviewer: Yeah. I couldn't do without it.  
Joseph: Okay. Do you think it's important to learn the language? To live here?  
Interviewer: I think it depends on what you do. I know of a very few people that can ... that are successful in Japan without speaking Japanese. These 2 people that I know are not living in Japan as residents, they come very often. They are responsible for business of the company that is in Japan. And 1 is my boss and he stays in *Iwaki*, he is constantly travelling, of course, he stays a lot in Japan but he's always going back to Israel or ...  
Interviewer: Ohh. I see.  
Joseph: Then there is a guy I met when I was in Osaka. He's American. He owns a company, his own company's a chemical products. He's also a CEO, very young, very smart person but he doesn't live in Japan. He's here for business. Because the company's in Japan. If the company wasn't in Japan, he wouldn't be here. So these are the only people that I know are successful doing something in Japan without knowing Japanese.  
Interviewer: In general, you would say it's important to learn the language?  
Joseph: Yeah. The more you know, the better pay you can get. You need to be a link between Japan and overseas so you need to be good at both.  
Interviewer: Would you say you've assimilated yourself 100% in Japanese society?  
Joseph: Well I've made my space ... I wouldn't say 100% like ... there's still things that I don't really like ...  
Interviewer: Could you explain that more?  
Joseph: There are things that I still do and I want to do my way. That is not ... would not be done the same way if I was Japanese. But people understand that because I'm not from the culture.  
Interviewer: So you feel the Japanese around you, even though you do something a little different. You found ways to have them accept that?  
Joseph: Yes.  
Interviewer: Do you think they accept that naturally? Have you seen other foreigners could do things their own way but are not accepted by the Japanese?  
Joseph: Well there was another person I work with. He was doing ... he was selling cell phones. He was selling at the shop. He would have a very strong sales talk and very ... a middle east guy from Egypt. He would have, sometimes some quarrels with customers because he would not do ... sell or do sales talk or treat customers as Japanese person would do. And sometimes he have issues with some customers but in general, the flavor that you get from different style of person that you cannot find in a Japanese person is appreciated and then it's accepted.  
Interviewer: You could see that some things might not mix well?  
Joseph: Yes of course.  
Interviewer: So there's some kind of a balance between the two?  
Joseph: You need to know how to style yourself. I mean, you need to ... it's like when you go to a restaurant and you want to eat Chinese or Italian, you know that it is not enough taste as a Japanese, but the person, the Japanese person that is going and eat Italian will going to have a different taste. So try not to offend people.  
Interviewer: Always the goal. It's always the goal.  
Joseph: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you think some people can get lost in Japan?  
Joseph: I met 1 person recently. He got divorced here in Japan. He got married in Italy with his wife and came to Japan and he had an idea of coming to Japan. Maybe as stereotype of a life in Japan. And he got a little lost. He couldn't get along with his wife and it not like the type that kind of work he found in the beginning. He kind of more or less accept the work he's got now. And he's found a new girlfriend. And so I hope he's kind of come back in track but ...

Interviewer: How long has he been here?  
Joseph: Very short. A year or just a bit more. He just came here with the wrong idea. To live in overseas. But this guy, maybe first time overseas living. Not off of his father's money, you know.

Interviewer: Have you ever felt personally discriminated against in Japan?  
Joseph: When I first started this job that I have now at the very beginning. There was a pay level issue because I was hired as a manager and my pay grade would be ... I was discussing this pay grade with the former boss. Of course there was all the older people that worked with the boss for many years before. And the company before was privately owned then entered in a group, international. So the pay grade was adjusted to the standards of the bigger company. For some reason, there was one older engineer that got to know my pay grade, he was upset by that. Because he felt that he had many years of experience and the boss was not looking after him. Instead, he was giving money to the new comer. And that was bad. That was very bad. But that's not discrimination issue because of racial discrimination. It's like a position kind of conflict that I would say in any company. I think so. Yeah. It didn't sound like it's discrimination but if it was the opposite that they were paying you less just because you were not Japanese, that would have been ...

Joseph: That, I would feel ....

Interviewer: Have you had any cultural difference that you felt was so difficult to deal with that it made you almost want to go home or made you want to leave Japan?  
Joseph: Yeah. The first year was difficult to work here in Japan. I had to do sell to customers at the cellphone shop and I could not speak really Japanese. And also people are not that patient. They want to just walk in a shop and want to buy a phone. As soon as they understood that I could not speak properly, they would just ignore me and look for somebody else. That was kind of harsh in the beginning.

Interviewer: Language issue though, right?  
Joseph: Yeah. Well I just can't talk to customer so they will like, okay ... they don't want to stay there and teach me Japanese because they just want to pay the phone bill whatever. It was tough but forced me to learn the language.

Interviewer: But an experience like that made you work harder?  
Joseph: Yeah. I have to. Otherwise, they will just let me go.

Interviewer: Do you think living in Japan requires a commitment to live here?  
Joseph: Japan as a country is not that different from any ... if you are any foreigner, it's not that different from the others. So I think the first thing you need is a necessity to go overseas, to live overseas, that means that the life you will get overseas has got to be better than the life you get home. It's a necessity of finding a better life outside your country. And the second is family that makes you stay in the country you are. Because of the commitments you have with your family members. Third is just the passion for anything. Maybe in Japan you have somebody that likes eating things, like there's a lot of food around. Or doing things. There are many, many hobbies you can have. But I don't think that's just because of Japan. If you want to live overseas, you need to have these three elements.

Interviewer: Do you think there are any advantages to be a western foreign person in Japan compared to, for example, Chinese or Korean?

- Joseph: If you can sell yourself, yes. You need to be able to sell yourself. Your qualities. When I first got my job in a cell phone company, I was hired because I was a foreigner and they were trying to give an international image to the company. The company now is not working anymore in Japan. The company was a foreign company and they wanted to give this international image.
- Interviewer: I'm asking you many questions here, do you think many of these questions just could be answered by looking at people's personalities rather than, for example, cultural differences between Japan and Westerners. Do you think it just comes down to personality?
- Joseph: I have said this in the other question. I don't think there is a formula for living in Japan but there is a formula for living overseas. It could be personality because you need to make a lot of effort from what you ever need because it's more difficult when you go overseas. Everything is more difficult because you need to learn a lot of new things.
- Interviewer: I give you these questions here and there's a quote from Daniel Kahl, do you think that finding that middle place or that middle space is important?
- Joseph: Yes. Because you can never be able to do the same things as the people that lived here. In the same way, it's not possible. Because it's just you are cut in different way. So you need to find a way to use your qualities that could be language, could be a technical knowledge. There's another guy, I was telling you about. He was working in Italy and he's technically knowledgeable about electronics and now is doing work on batteries. He's using more of his technical skills rather than language skills and also managerial skills because he's now in this, not only looking at the technical side but also the commercial side. And if there was no commercial side to what he's doing, that would be only technical. And that wouldn't be much reason to keep him in the company instead of any other Japanese person because he's just slower in reading the material or understanding things. It just would not make much sense.
- Interviewer: He has his own personal qualities that makes him worth it?
- Joseph: Yeah. He's got this qualities and he's using them. And the company is accepting the fact that he's got some defects in his skills but those are ... he can make up for those in other way. And that is profitable for company.
- Interviewer: And basically, you're on the same situation, right? Do you feel like you fall inside spaces well?
- Joseph: Yeah. If I could not speak English or Italian. Or if I didn't have this ... if I was not the link between Japan and ... if I was not working marketing, then I would probably ... because I have the qualities that I have, I would probably be working in the production. And I think it would be kind of difficult for me to keep up with the other people doing things the same way they do. Because it would be more difficult for me to do that.
- Interviewer: Do you have any Japanese friends who you only speak Japanese to?
- Joseph: Yes. I have 1, 2, I would say a couple of male friends. I got to know them because of the kids going to same school. They go in the same kindergarten then going to same school. Kind of family friends.
- Interviewer: Are these people you meet on a regular basis?
- Joseph: Yeah. Sometimes we go out with the families. All the kids and everybody. There is a city hall. They organize some fair for kids sometimes, so we meet there. We like to eat, this guy got a sushi restaurant. So he's a *shokunin*. It's just pleasure to see him working.
- Interviewer: Really. Is it an expensive place?
- Joseph: It's an expensive place. Only went a couple of times. So when we go out, we go out to a different places. Last time we go to this Chinese place that was an old place made by a couple, a Chinese couple and taste is kind of nice.
- Interviewer: What about male Japanese friends? Do you have any male Japanese friends that are not connected to you or your family?
- Joseph: No.

Interviewer: Are you very close to your in-laws? To your Japanese in-laws?  
Joseph: Yeah. I would say so, yes.  
Interviewer: They live in Osaka though, right?  
Joseph: Yeah. Now they live ... now we moved ... so ... but they come here very often.  
And we go for New Year's eve.  
Interviewer: Do you consider Japan your home right now?  
Joseph: Well I consider Japan my second home.  
Interviewer: Your first being ... ?  
Joseph: Italy.  
Interviewer: Italy, of course. Has it ever bother you if you're in a station or on the street and someone thinks that you are a new person in Japan. They talk to you as if you just arrived?  
Joseph: Yes. It does bother me. Usually, old, very old people though. They are like that for younger people or people my age. It's usually like people from 60 years old or 50 years old. I think it's a ... like an age group that is just still living in the past. And even though they have a different knowledge level, just it's just that they did ... when they were born, it was a different period then which is different from now.  
Interviewer: Do you feel stressed?  
Joseph: I feel stressed because of the work I'm doing now, which is ...  
Interviewer: Which is natural  
Joseph: Well it's just crazy, I mean, you have all this people from all over the world and they all want, you know ... we want delivery and advise and all these stuff. Ahhh.. i don't think ...  
Interviewer: It's not.....  
Joseph: I don't think so because I don't deal with Japan, with the customers. I deal with different ... the production. I mean, I think the stress is related to the fact that I have to be in between ... take information from one point and then transmit it to the other and then again the other information from ... back. And you also have responsibilities for that. So you don't just accept the fact that you transmit information and then you're done. You are seen as a decision maker or responsible for what is going on. That's the stress from work  
Interviewer: That's pretty much more work related it sounds like  
Joseph: Yeah. It's not customer related.  
Interviewer: What about ... do you ever feel ... I don't know if you ever go home a lot but if you go home or when you go home, do you feel reverse culture shock at all.  
Joseph: Yes. Sometimes, yes.  
Interviewer: Any samples?  
Joseph: I just go on to any restaurants in Italy. It's hours just to get the food you want. I don't have my Italian driving license anymore, I have to change it to the Japanese ones. So I cannot drive, I need to have somebody drive me somewhere. The food is not as varied as here. There's much more variety here. Anything I want to eat, I can eat. I like food.  
Interviewer: Do you ever have any problems in daily life?  
Joseph: I wouldn't say problems. I think that's problem is like a, too serious, as like for work. I have issues. Right now like I've got physical issue, because I've got a hernia. And I need to fix that, it's painful. Issues, there's one that I mentioned before ...  
Interviewer: I think you did, that's right.  
Joseph: This ...  
Interviewer: That's right, okay. I got that already. That's right. Do you have any anecdotes that you can give me about life in Japan? A story that would ...  
Joseph: I was trying to think of something but I don't ... I can't think of something like it's gonna be, like this is life in Japan. I don't like that kind of stories. I think they are ... we are talking about the anchoring effect. I think there was a lot of people

that want to believe that there's something like this. And maybe on purpose I'm trying not to find ...

Interviewer: Ahh I see. Okay. What kind of person do you think it takes to live in Japan for, say 20 years?

Joseph: You need to be patient. You need to have commitment to the place you are, so that would be either business or profession. And of course family, I don't think that ... I don't know anybody that has no family. Without family you can't live so long in Japan. You need to have a commitment, yes. Either in your business or something that you do like maybe not business related.

You need to be patient just to work out any issue that could come out. Don't get upset because last time I was taking a couple of ... a few customers from Korea, from Malaysia, from Thai to our seminar, and I was taking them to the hotel, check-in. On the second day, I went to pick them up from the hotel and then I have to charge the parking lot of the car. And I have to charge it on the room, so I went there to the front desk and probably I didn't explain myself properly at the beginning. So I could see that the communication wasn't going on very smoothly. The people behind the counter started to find difficult to understand the simple reason. Like I want to charge the parking fee, I want to charge it to their room, right? After a few minutes I started getting upset because it's something that should be easy to do and I couldn't understand why these 2 guys couldn't understand me.

So I lost my patience and I didn't scream or anything but you could see that I was upset because the customers are waiting and I need to get this done quickly. So then, the seminar was starting and I could not wait, waste time. So I was starting to lose my patience but what I need, I just reset like I have things in my hands I just put them down and said can I start from the beginning again. And everybody was like, okay let's reset and let's go once again. And then suddenly, everything was clear.

It is something that I learned with the years here. When you see that you're not getting what you need or you're not getting the communication across. Instead of keep going on the same way and getting more upset and making other people upset, you just need to have the patience and the intelligence to understand that you need to reset and start again and everybody will understand what you want.

So its ...

Interviewer: Yeah. I want to say that was a great anecdote.

Joseph: They have a lot of these but then ...

Interviewer: Well see, that is important because what you're saying is that patience is a valued quality in Japan, right?

Joseph: Yeah.

Interviewer: And pretty much everybody says that, why and how important patience is compared to their own country

### 015 Ann

Interviewer:  
Ann:

What was it like when you first arrived in Japan? In just a few words?  
Yeah, Well, it was very exciting really and I came to learn the language. So, everyday learning new words and I found that quite stimulating.

Interviewer:  
Ann:

Okay, so it was kind of a, well it's stimulating. It kind of stimulates the brain cells when you first come, I guess. I guess you could say that.  
Absolutely yeah, and you know it wasn't just the language. It was getting familiar with the country and the customs and meeting lots of people from different, other different countries as well.

Interviewer:  
Ann:

Where you always in the S----- area?  
No, I spent the first four years in N----, and then two years in Tokyo, and then came to S-----. This is where I've been since 1990.

Interviewer:  
Ann:

Okay, it's fun, enjoyable?  
I was just thinking then, my first answer was exciting and it's really ... it was all of those things, but I was also very very lonely. Homesick.

Interviewer:  
Ann:

That's interesting, so it's kind of a mixture of feelings there.  
Yeah.

Interviewer:  
Ann:

So the honeymoon period, how long do you think that lasted?  
I actually don't ... I have no idea I think I started getting really annoyed with Japan at some point, for sure. I don't quite remember when that was and I don't know that it just happens on one day or one month or something. I think there was still so many things about Japan that I loved and enjoyed doing. At the same time bit by bit I was perhaps getting a little bit more dissatisfied with certain aspects. For example, the whole *gaijin gaijin* thing that drove me nuts. For a very short period of time and still does.

Interviewer:  
Ann:

Yeah, you're also, I noticed you're blonde on your picture.  
I was gonna say you didn't tell that from my voice did you?

Interviewer:  
Ann:

Yeah, yeah so it must be harder, I would imagine it must be harder in that situation.

Interviewer:  
Ann:

Well you stand out more, that's for sure. I think there are, I'm sure any foreigner would attest to this that being a foreigner in Japan gives you some definite advantages and some things that are, quite frankly you wouldn't be able to appreciate or experience in your own home. At the same token with it, comes dissatisfaction and whences.

Interviewer:  
Ann:

So, why did you originally come to Japan?  
I studies Japanese at university, I actually majored in Japanese and after uni I got a job at a hotel, this was in the 80's middle 80's. It was very, yeah we were one of thirty students to learn Japanese at school. Anyway, it was the boom era for Australia. Japanese tourist everywhere and I was working at the hotel and so one day a tour group walked in and I couldn't understand a word they were saying. So, six months later I was in Japan.

Interviewer:  
Ann:

Oh I see, okay. So then was the original plan just to work for a short time, or?  
Well yeah, I mean in my absolute nothing naivety I thought that six months would probably narrow my Japanese for me. I could come back home again.

Interviewer:  
Ann:

Yeah I see. So you didn't plan to stay for the long term then?  
No, I had a six month return ticket.

Interviewer:  
Ann:

Oh I see, oh you did. So when did you realize you were going to be staying longer? Do you remember ...

Interviewer:  
Ann:

Around about ... actually it was not long before I was due to come back.  
Oh really?

Interviewer:  
Ann:

Up until that point, up until about five or six months I was ready to go home. Like I was really enjoying Japan, but those first six months you were saying about the honeymoon period, those first six months I found quite trying really.  
Oh really.

Interviewer:  
Ann:

I was in a home stay and it wasn't going well and things like that. It was about five or six month mark that I moved out and that's when I started to stay. I had

found a boyfriend, yeah things started looking up. That's why I stayed, I was having fun.

Interviewer: So that's when you planned to stay longer?

Ann: Yes.

Interviewer: And that kind of up turning into many years I see.

Ann: Yeah I just kept renewing every, basically I'd say I'm going to be here for another year and I kept saying that for five or six years I think.

Interviewer: And then it took you five or six years to realize that it's going to be longer than that?

Ann: Well actually I was, I've been, it was when I was in Tokyo. So I'd been in Japan around about five years and there abouts, and I decided to go to Europe next. I lived in Europe, and then I met my husband so.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Ann: That was the end of that.

Interviewer: Are you close to your family back home in Australia?

Ann: Pretty close, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: So you talk a lot?

Ann: Yeah, I don't ring them, but my dad rings me a lot.

Interviewer: Oh okay, that's good. In your normal everyday life do you use more Japanese or English? How would you ...

Ann: Yeah, up until ... yes for the most part of my living adult life here in S----- I would've used more Japanese than English, but over the last couple of years my social life has developed a lot and probably now it's about half half.

Interviewer: Do you think it's important to learn the language to live here?

Ann: To learn Japanese you mean?

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you think it's important to learn Japanese or?

Ann: I think you don't have to do it and you can still live here, but yes I absolutely think it's ... yes if I ruled the world, they'd all learn Japanese if they lived here.

Interviewer: If you had to describe what the difference, what really the difference of learning Japanese and not learning Japanese. How would you say the life styles are different?

Ann: Well independence apart from anything else. Having to be reliant upon other people's good graces or other people you know to help, other people to help you out, do all sorts of stuff. Independence would be a big thing. Meeting and interacting n a meaningful level with real Japanese people, if you know what I mean. Not the *gaijin* groupies, and the people who don't speak English. They haven't really been overseas, they don't know anything bout the rest of the world. Their totally ensconced in their own. Those people you can't communicate with if you don't speak the language.

Interviewer: Right, right.

Ann: So, I find a lot of foreigners who have been here either for a very short time or who have been here for a long time and haven't really gotten anywhere with their Japanese. They have a bit of a skewed view on Japan. They just seem to see the surface and you get a lot of people making judgments. They look at an action or ... they make a judgment on it that is quite frankly wrong. They haven't got the advantage of talking to the people.

Interviewer: So would you consider yourself a ... the word assimilated is often used, but assimilated means that you become basically Japanese. I'm guessing by just talking to you that's probably not true, but would you consider yourself 100% assimilated into Japanese society?

Ann: No.

Interviewer: So ...

Ann: I think as a foreigner have I assimilated well into Japanese society, am I comfortable living here and what have you, absolutely yes. Have I lost my own heritage, certainly not. I still consider myself, first and foremost an Australian and then a *gaijin* and whatever.

Interviewer: Right, right. So, how do you think it's all done? Like how do you think you can have that balance between being who you are and what you came to do in Japan? What do you think are some key points?

Ann: I think most foreigners would experience that situation where a certain aspect of Japanese society on comparison with the same aspect in your own society is more favorable, and there will be other aspects of, you know, community life what have you, where you would prefer your own home countries way of doing things. So, nearly about every foreigner you talk to that in Japan talks about how wonderful it is that people are polite and nice and don't scream and carry on and you know, crime rates are low and things like that. I think we all feel like that we're a little bit of this and a little bit of that, and personally ... first of all I use Japanese not just in my social life but I also use it at work with clients.

Interviewer: Right.

Ann: And staff members, and so particularly with the clients, I can't just be a gaijin speaking Japanese. I have to be ... I'm not a Japanese speaking Japanese, but I'm a *gaijin* speaking Japanese with a cultural awareness or sort of taking up on the Japanese cultural values at the same time. So I think that foreigners, many foreigners, myself certainly switch backwards and forwards between the different identities according to time and sort of purpose and what have you. I don't actually find it terribly difficult to be really honest with you but ...

Interviewer: You know I have to ask all the standard questions like the next question for example is have you ever been discriminated against, or have you ever experienced microaggressions? Which was also a frequent term that's been used by some people.

Ann: Well maybe women are more susceptible to ... maybe women are more sensitive towards micro-aggression. Whereas with men you have to hit him over the head with a beer bottle or something. An answer to your question, active discrimination only happen, and I mean where the person was doing it out of ill will has only happened to me once or twice. I don't even know if you'd call this discrimination. It was more racial slurs and verbal abuse. In both cases I was called an American, so that was actually nothing to do with me anyway, but they didn't know that.

Interviewer: Right.

Ann: It was to do ... one of them was to do with the war. The war from the 40's, that war.

Interviewer: That war, the war that they'll never forget.

Ann: Yes that's it, that's the one. So, yeah maybe two times in twenty years, I reckon the answer could probably be safe to say there's no active discrimination. Very few people who do, I feel treat me in a discriminatory way would even recognize or admit or acknowledge that they were doing that. I don't think they see it as that necessarily and I certainly don't think that in most cases they're meaning to be anything other than friendly and, yeah.

Interviewer: Which is the micro-aggression.

Ann: It, yeah, that's why micro-aggression as it comes out is because it's nebulous and it's safely insignificant and innocuous and it's none of those things because it happens on such a regular occurrence but it's very hard to fight against without coming across as you know, know it all arrogant loud foreigner.

Interviewer: Some people can laugh it off, I've talked to a lot of people who just laugh it off, but ...

Ann: Yes, I used to too. So I also think there's a ... right I have no doubt that you're right about different personality types, and some people just roll with it. Other people are more sensitive about it. I would have said five or six years ago that I was actually quite easy going about it. You know, I considered it a bit of a community service to go through the whole thing so I'm, and you go through phases. I mean, you were talking about the honeymoon period before. I mean, I would've at that time been delighted by people being so interested in me....be

getting to talk about myself, I would have loved that. Then I remember going through a phase that's absolutely and utterly abhorred that was in Nagoya. So that would have been around about year three or four, which might have been the answer to your question about the honeymoon period, when did it ... So I think that you do go through different phases, yeah, and it for me these last four or five years have been, I've been very aware of the micro-aggression and very aware of not wanting to be that guy.

Interviewer: Have you ever had anyone, any type of situation before where that you feel it was complicated by a cultural difference? For example, in this case I wrote an example like divorce, legal trouble or there's other people that talked about accidents or being arrested or where they really felt face to face with the cultural difference of how things would be done in their country.

Ann: Yes, I'm sure there would be many things, a couple of things that spring immediately to mind are both a previous boyfriend and my husband's parents didn't want me dating their sons.

Interviewer: Okay.

Ann: In the case of the first boyfriend was the direct reason for us breaking up.

Interviewer: Okay.

Ann: My parents in law came around very quickly by the way but they initially mom in particular was dead against it. That was one thing.

I had a car accident when I had been here about three or four years and so I could speak Japanese, but I certainly wasn't fluent. I didn't have a lot of vocabulary required for the conversation, yet the policemen didn't give me an opportunity to either write down what had happened or get a translator and what have you. I ended up paying for 90% of the accident and it was clearly the other person's fault.

Interviewer: Really.

Ann: There were witnesses that they didn't contact, that sort of stuff. So yeah that was pretty much sort of definitely marred in that particular incident. One other thing I guess might have been not so much a Japanese versus foreigner sort of thing, more a case of business practices being different. Being employed by a Japanese company in Tokyo, and they were just, moved at a glacial pace in terms of training me. So eventually I just got sick of it and moved on. That's probably not against foreigners, that's just the business practices are so different. That was old fashioned business practices, if you will.

Interviewer: Yeah, business practices are very different. It also depends on the company I guess. Do you think it requires commitment to live here in a satisfied way? Some people live with one foot out the door, if you know what I mean.

Ann: Yes, I do. I mean I lived with one foot out the door I think up until such a point that I got married. That suited my age, at the time I was in my twenties I wasn't ... So no, I think if you're just looking, if you're not planning on creating a long term life for yourself in the country then you don't need to be committed. I would suggest if you are looking to be here for some time then not being committed doesn't make sense.

Interviewer: Do you have any advantages or disadvantages of being a foreigner? Actually lets go with the advantages, we already kind of talked about the disadvantages.

Ann: Advantages well, yeah there are heaps of advantages. I didn't have to join the PTA. That's an example where discrimination works in your favor.

Interviewer: You mentioned your in laws. You said that after you got married you were fine with your in laws or you had no ...

Ann: Yeah, they didn't get much notice that we were getting married. It was my husband's fault but ... she in particular, the mother in particular was a little bit standoffish and distant and what have you but I fell pregnant a couple months later and by the time first child was born she was fine. We're actually on pretty good terms and always have been.

Interviewer: Okay.  
Ann: She just needed to get to know me, you know, so.  
Interviewer: Do you consider Japan your home?  
Ann: Yes.  
Interviewer: So, you have three daughters, they're all living in Japan?  
Ann: No, just two of them are here. One's in Australia.  
Interviewer: Okay. Does it bother you when you're on the street and someone thinks you just arrived yesterday?  
Ann: No, I don't think I ever get that.  
Interviewer: You don't get that?  
Ann: I don't think that that's what they think. I think they think not that I've just arrived ... I don't think they think I've arrived yesterday. I think they don't understand that if you've been in a country for a decent length of time it's acceptable ... it's perfectly common for that foreigner to be able to speak Japanese, read Japanese, know stuff about the country. I think that there seems to be an assumption that if you're in Japan you never really quite understand our culture. The people explain things to me that I've known for twenty years.  
Interviewer: Right, right.  
Ann: Even though they know how much I ... how well I speak and even though they know my background. They still will, you know, tell me something.  
Interviewer: Yeah ... I totally agree. Do you ever experience reverse culture shock when you go back to Australia?  
Ann: I suppose I notice things about Australia that had changed since when I was a kid and I ... but mostly rather than what I would call shock, would just be annoyance about the things that happened in Australia. That I already knew happened. It's like this poor service or bad food or ... and being quite, you know, gee I wish I was in Japan or something. Shocking ... shock in the same sense of the culture shock when I got here, no because I knew what I was getting myself into. Right. So ...  
Interviewer: It's kind of more like a disappointment almost, when you go back.  
Ann: Yeah, I think Australia may have changed a bit but of course I've changed a bit. I left as a twenty one year old, I mean ...  
Interviewer: Right, right.  
Ann: Now I'm thirty years older now so ... I'm a mother, I'm a business owner, traveled, you know.  
Interviewer: What kind of person do you think ends up living in Japan, for example, like over twenty years?  
Ann: Generally speaking if they're women, they ... this is not a personality type this is a different type of ...  
Interviewer: Yeah.  
Ann: Okay, women who stay in Japan are nearly always married to Japanese. Usually they are fluent or very good in Japanese, because if they hadn't and they did that fairly quickly because if they don't achieve a certain level of ... quite a good level of Japanese a lot of Japanese men won't consider them for their wives.  
Interviewer: Oh I see, okay.  
Ann: So, a lot of women that I know ... like as I said I'm in my fifties. So a lot of women that I know, who I've known for twenty, thirty years they are also in their fifties or sixties or something. They're incredibly hearty and flexible, strong. They're generally quite good mothers I think and often quite good career women. It just ... most of the women I know who live in Japan are pretty amazing people.  
Interviewer: Really.  
Ann: Yeah, I'm not talking about the kids that are here for a couple of years and then go home, right.  
Interviewer: Right, right I totally understand.  
Ann: So, you can flip the whole argument around and say, if a woman doesn't learn Japanese she's unlikely to find romance. Which is the reason why she goes.

Interviewer: Oh I see.  
Ann: Because it's a bit harder here. It's very hard to date, for example. You know, a gentleman is not likely to pick you up and they're a little bit passive and things like that. So, if they don't find romance in let's say the first few years they are more likely to leave. So, women tend to either go home or stay for a long time and sort of be these, you know ...

Interviewer: You think most of the people learn Japanese early on, they didn't learn later? They learned early?

Ann: Absolutely, yeah. So women tend to be these pillars or society sort of thing. The men tend to fall in two categories. Obviously there are the people that go home, but the ones that stay they generally fall into two categories. The guys that have found their niche. Whatever that may be, career niche usually. They nearly always ... often times will be married with kids. They may or may not speak Japanese, but then that's okay because a lot of Japanese women do speak English and are willing to take a husband who doesn't speak their language. A lot of these guys are actually I feel quite capable and probably would have done probably easily just as well in their own countries, both in love and career. Then there's the other type of guy who, you know, he's the type of guy that never really learned much Japanese so he doesn't understand the Japanese. The irritations of life just get insurmountable but on the other hand often times I think they're quite ... they just live this limbo life, the easy life. So, they turn around they're forty years old they've got a job in an industry they don't like, they've got no career to go home to and so I think that there is any number of guys like that; who miss the boat on going home.

Interviewer: Actually that's a good group that you've addressed because that's kind of a group that I'm addressing. It's like why did you stay because ...

Ann: Because they never sat down long enough to think about it. They didn't intend to stay. They just ended up staying and they missed the boat. There's a stage I think, you've got to be looking at around about thirty or what have you, where the guys, young guys that are here at some point need to say to themselves either I make a go of it over here and get my Japanese and and get the job I want to do in twenty two years from now. Or I go home and get a career back there. Some of them don't, you know, but I know a lot of really really fabulous guys here. Who I've said found their own niche. So, there's those two varieties in men. It was only around about four or five years ago that I actually started going out and meeting foreigners. So I know exactly what you mean. I think it's a stage,

...as a foreigner you get a lot sort of free passes, right. So, you know I've met quite a few, well not quite a few. I've met a reasonable number of quite famous people like talents or what have you, not a lot. I mean like a handful, but if I was back in Australia and they were Australian sort of performers or something they wouldn't think twice of talking to me. But because I'm a foreigner, you have access to people that you may not have normally had access to , because they are more ... they are just as interested in you as you are in them and. I have a ... when I was living in Australia as a University student I took a young guy in as a ... what do you call it ... home stay? In my family home and he stayed with us for six weeks I think. He came back to Japan but we had a mutual friend. Not long after I got married I bumped into this mutual friend in Tokyo and he said to me, "Did you know that T---- is in Tokyo?" And I was like no I didn't know that. So, I got his address or something and rang this guy T----- and who I hadn't seen for maybe ten years or something. Anyway, so we got into contact. He rang me a couple of months I don't remember how long after, it was a year maybe, and he said, " hey I'm coming up to S----- so lets go have dinner." I was like that'd be wonderful. So I met him in the city center. I hadn't been in S----- that long, so this would have been the early 90's I think. In fact, it was before I was pregnant so I would have been 1990.

So I met T----- in the city, and he had his wife with him right. The three of us are walking down the street all of a sudden, not all of a sudden we just got crowd and mauled by people and I'm thinking, you know, this is taking the *gaijin* thing a bit over the top here. It turns out she's a famous singer. Anyway, so we had dinner that night, and her family was there and what have you. Then I got invited to the concert that she was having down at a big stadium here in S-----. I went there it was like 40,000 people there.

Interviewer: Ah really.

Ann: I've never heard of her, and I was thinking they were mobbing us because of me.

Interviewer: Ah you...

Ann: So I think the point is that if I'd been a Japanese, I would have known immediately who this woman was and then ...it took me an hour to work it out

## 016 Cathy

- Interviewer: Just in a few words, could you first tell me just what it was like when you first arrived in Japan?
- Cathy: Interestingly, I had this image of Japan in my head and being young and foolish, I hadn't really done a whole lot of advanced research on what I was getting myself into so I had images of geishas and quiet gardens and things. My initial arrival into the city was like "Oh. This is not beautiful," so I was a little surprised and I suppose that expectation was disappointing somewhat, but other than that, it was just really exciting. It was my first time to an Asian country and everything was new. It was very expensive. When I first arrived, it was just the tail end of the bubble, and so I had a limited amount of money so I was existing on yakisoba and other cheap dishes until I could get myself some work.
- Interviewer: Did you have a honeymoon period when you came? What I mean by that is like a time where you felt like everyday was fun.
- Cathy: Yeah, sure.
- Interviewer: You did. How long did that feeling last?
- Cathy: It's probably a typical culture shock curve where you go through probably a month or 6 weeks of ... This is so great. However, I would say that my honeymoon period was tempered by the fact that I came here and I knew one person here, and that person had been here for quite a while, like 3 years and she and her friends had become rather jaded about life here, I think they were ready to go. When I would see them and say "Ah, I saw this really great temple" and they would say "Oh, a temple. You've seen one, you've seen them all." My enthusiasm was somewhat tempered by my social circle. However, I soon met an American woman who shared my interests and we often had great adventures together and we had just an awesome time, actually.
- Interviewer: How long did that last?
- Cathy: The whole year I was here, when she and I finally found each other and we go up hiking and hitchhiking and doing weird stuff and ... We did that for a whole year, but certainly there were times when just in my daily life, it was a grind and I got so sick of not being able to make myself understood and not understanding what was going on and some of the rules that didn't make sense to me wore on me. In my daily life, I'd say after about 2 months, I pitched downward for a while.
- Interviewer: Why did you originally come?
- Cathy: I graduated university and I wanted to go and travel but I didn't have enough money to fund any kind of big trip and I had met a Japanese girl in my summer job and we had become quite friendly and she said "C----, so you can go to Japan and be an English teacher." I'm like "Really?" I was into it and that's how I came here.
- Interviewer: The original plan was to teach English for-
- Cathy: Just 1 year. I got a working holiday visa. Canada and Japan had working holiday agreements.
- Interviewer: You didn't plan to stay long term at all.
- Cathy: Nope.
- Interviewer: How long did it take you to realize you're going to be here for a longer time? Do you remember that?
- Cathy: No, I think actually for a long time, I've been sort of sailing forward with no plan for the future. It just unfolded. I was young and had been in school for my whole life, and so come here, earn some money, have some adventures, then I took a year off, went travelling, spend all the money, came back because I knew there was a job waiting for me here, and then in that time, in my second visit back here, I refocused on the work I was doing and said "You know what? Actually I really like this." Then I took steps to better qualify myself to do what I had found I enjoyed doing, but this was not the plan to be an English teacher for life.
- Interviewer: Right, but you kind of worked with the flow-

Cathy: Yeah, because I didn't have a plan. When I left university, like many humanities graduates, I was like "Okay, I got my degree in English. Now what? What am I going to do?"

Interviewer: Join the club. Are you close to your family?

Cathy: Yes, very.

Interviewer: You are? Okay.

Cathy: That has been a very difficult thing, the play between loving my life abroad and being away from my family.

Interviewer: SNS and things like Skype and things that are going to make it a lot easier- Back when I first came, it was 1 phone call once a month, maximum 20 minutes, and even at that, it cost me 6,000 yen it was like "Everybody okay there?" "Yeah, yeah, everything's good here," and then it was just lots of letter writing.

Interviewer: How important do you think it is to learn Japanese to live here?

Cathy: My answer to this question is separate from my actual own abilities. I think it's very important if you want to have a satisfying life here. I recently ... Recently? No. Some years ago actually, I was talking to another lifer who has made a really good place for himself here and I was talking to him about our usual problems of the short term university contracts and how can we get that next step and so find tenure and that sort of thing, and I said "Yeah, I'm thinking about going back to do my PhD" and he said "You know what? Realistically, if you really want that job in Japan, the thing to spend doing now is improving your Japanese," and I think he was right. I think that people with good level of Japanese and particularly Japanese literacy, they can integrate more fully into life here and stop living on the edges.

Interviewer: There are people here that have been quite successful without learning the language.

Cathy: Yes.

Interviewer: What do you think they've done?

Cathy: They have a support system, and I don't want to generalize, but typically it's men who have very accommodating Japanese wives who are willing to work together with their husbands as a team. I've seen it among many, many of my colleagues, so they get a packet of paperwork from *kyomuka* or whatever and I say "Oh, gee do you know what page 3 is about?" He's like "Oh, I don't know. I don't look at that stuff. My wife handles it." That's not just one person, that's so many people and I'm like "Okay," but then I go and sit down and struggle through it.

Interviewer: Do you think a woman has to learn Japanese to marry a Japanese guy? Have you ever met ... I've actually had people say that they don't believe that a woman could marry a Japanese guy that doesn't speak the language without going crazy.

Cathy: Every woman I know who's married to a Japanese man has strong Japanese skills, so I can't say that it would never happen, but everyone that I know married to a Japanese man has strong Japanese, absolutely.

Interviewer: Would you say you assimilated yourself 100%? Assimilated being that you've basically entered society here feeling an equal amount.

Cathy: No. I am not assimilated. We are foreigners. We're on the outside. Language keeps me there. Lack of language ability keeps me there.

Interviewer: Do you think it's possible to become 100% assimilated in Japan?

Cathy: There are certainly people who want to be, non Japanese who wish to so assimilated, but then you get into the area of whether the society accepts you as being assimilated, and that is much more difficult and it's something over which we don't have much control. One of my colleagues in K----- has the best Japanese that I've heard from a foreign person and the Japanese people around me say that it's freakish. He's more Japanese than the Japanese type of thing, but would I say he's assimilated? He's fully integrated into society and fully acculturated as you say, but assimilated? He sticks out like a sore thumb, so no, and not just because of how he looks but because of who he is, but in terms of

work, he is regarded as an equal among the university faculty, fully able to take on whatever responsibilities are given to him. I suppose it depends on the context.

Interviewer:

Cathy:

Interviewer:

Cathy:

Do you think some people can get lost in the country here?

I thought that might be what you meant when you said lost, but so-

Would there be a better way to phrase that?

For a lot of those people, they find themselves here, right? They don't get lost here, they get found here because this is more comfortable for them, depending on the degree to which they integrate. Certainly, there are people who escaped the expectations of their own culture and come here and just want to be party on until they kick the bucket, and be exempt from responsibility there and responsibility here and there are certainly those types. Would you classify them as lost? I don't know. Not really lost, I think they are where they want to be.

People like the colleague I mentioned, he is so completely comfortable here. He revels in his life here. You could tell he just rings the most meaning out of it, he loves being here. I know a couple of people like that. That's not me, but for them, they're just very, very satisfied with life here.

Interviewer:

Cathy:

Interviewer:

Cathy:

Have you ever been personally discriminated against?

Yes.

You have been. Could you give me an example?

Yeah, it was when I first came here. I was quite shocked, actually. I didn't have any Japanese at the time and I was going on a bike trip and I needed some help. I wanted to book some places to stay along the way and a friend called for me to a place, a small town in southern K----, and said "Have you got a room? 2 people, blah, blah, blah." "Yes we do. Can I have the name please?" She gave the name and they're like "Oh. It's a foreigner. No. We don't take foreigners." I heard my friend get all awkward and then she looked at me and she didn't know how to tell me that "You can't do that." Other occasions at real estate agent office. We walked in and they just said "No, we don't serve foreigners here." On a personal level, like socially, no, but just more out of wider prejudice, yes, I have been.

Interviewer:

You know the term "microaggression", right? This is like that coined phrase that came out about ... Do you think microaggressions exist?

Cathy:

Yeah, sure, if that's what you want to call them, that if we ... When that was all going around, I was reading about it, I'm like "That happens to me everyday here," but I thought if I'm going to let myself get upset about that, then I'm going to drive myself crazy here, so I can tolerate "Oh boy, you're really good at chopsticks." Through my whole pregnancies, they just couldn't believe that I wouldn't go home to my mother to have my baby, and I remember the public health nurse, you have to go for a lecture and she's talking about "The best thing to eat is *washoku*," and then she looked at me and she said like "I don't know what you should eat. I don't know what you foreigners eat, but there has to be usually *washoku*." I'm just like "Oh, please." That's not exactly so micro but certainly an aggression.

Interviewer:

You would agree that it exists but you also think that it should be dealt with on a personal basis, you just say "You know, I get to deal with this everyday so get used to it."

Cathy:

I pick my battles, and it also depends on my mood. If somebody's going to go on and on about me being a foreigner, you know how it is sometimes, right? They go just like "We're here with the foreigner, we have to explore all the avenues of foreignness about this person," and "Wow, you can use chopsticks." Some days, I'm like "Thank you very much," and other days, I'm just like "I've been here for 20 years. If I hadn't learned how to use them by now, I'd be pretty hungry."

Interviewer:

Have you ever had a situation or a problem that you thought was complicated by a cultural difference?

Cathy:

Me myself? Yes.

Interviewer: Admit it.

Cathy: It's funny, actually.

Interviewer: Trying to get a soap box?

Cathy: No, this is funny. It's just a complete misunderstanding. It had to do when we were into the education system with the kids. They went to Japanese kindergarten, about which we know nothing, and so the whole first 3 years that our eldest was there, it was just a comedy of errors. I screwed everything up. For example, I didn't know what *katei homon* was and I'm like "Okay," so I made friends with some of the moms and they understood my situation and they helped ... "That's a teacher comes to your house." I'm like "Oh, they come to the house," and they're like "Yeah, usually you make a sweet." I'm like "Okay," so got all ready and here came teacher, everything was fine, great. At the end of the year, there's some different name, it's not *katei homon* and see, this is again my language problem.

Interviewer: I haven't dealt with that. Give me another 7 years.

Cathy: Whatever word it was and this is happening, and "Well yeah, you're going to talk with the teacher" and I'm like "Okay." Then one mom who had helped me, she's like "It's like the *katei homon*," I'm like "Oh okay, okay. I got that," so I cleaned the house and I make cookies and I'm waiting, and then the teacher's late and then the phone rings. "P-----san, we have this blah, blah, blah today," and I'm like "Yes, I'm waiting," and they're like "Oh," I was supposed to go there.

Interviewer: This is a "Doh" story.

Cathy: Yes. I was just like "I'm so sorry," and so they laughed and it was fine and we rescheduled. That stuff happened to me all the time.

Interviewer: This wore you down a bit, I'm sure, after a while.

Cathy: Yes. When I screw up again, I'm just like "Why doesn't this get any easier?"

Interviewer: Absolutely, every time.

Cathy: Have you ever had a situation where you've just thought like "Okay, I'm going back to Canada now. I can't deal with this anymore."

Interviewer: No.

Cathy: Nothing like that.

Interviewer: You talked about personalities and I'm just the sort who ... I don't really freak out about stuff, like if you compare me to my husband, if we're on a bus and the seat's uncomfortable and it's a little bit hot, I'll just maybe try to open the window and I just deal with it, but he's not. He's going to stand up or try to change seats or he's going to say "We got to get off here and get on a taxi" or something like that. He's less tolerant about discomfort of every sort. I'm just a kind of roll with it person.

Interviewer: Do you think it takes commitment to live in Japan? You just said before, actually is it doubling up on an answer you gave already-

Cathy: I can say that until I got this job in K---, I feel my whole life here has been in a state of there's always this temporariness. I'd say that until I got this job, I always felt like I had one foot out the door.

Interviewer: Really? You're on the fence.

Cathy: Yeah. Not by my own because I wanted to be there, but if the country, if the job situation wasn't going to show any loyalty to me, I was going to have to leave because ultimately, I have to provide for my family, and I have to say that when I got this job and suddenly, it's tenure and you don't have to worry anymore. It's a bit disorienting and my whole view of ... We've never bought a house here, we rent this place because the real estate market being what it is, it's not like in Canada where you can buy it as an investment and hope to recoup your investment and then some. We didn't buy a house, the furniture we have is just ... Some day, we'll have good furniture, but for now, this is enough.

Interviewer: I totally understand.

Cathy: I suppose in that regard, for a long time until last year, I didn't have a real commitment. There was always this thought that maybe we'll have to leave.

Interviewer: That's what I figured when you first answered to ... Do you think there are any advantages being a foreigner in Japan?

Cathy: Absolutely, especially being a white foreigner. You ask a person of color the same question and you'll probably get a different answer. We have, among foreigners, a kind of elevated status and I have opportunities here that I'm sure would never be available to me back in Canada, and that you get exceptions. Somebody will spend a little extra time with you at the counter to help you when you can't understand. One example might be for our kids, like when S---- was in 3rd grade, she had the teacher who was the person in charge of English at the elementary school, this is way back elementary school, and I think the teacher was really glad to have an English speaker in the class and I think that she went easy on S----- in terms of grades. She was giving S----- really great grades which I don't think she earned, just because they're foreigners that they can even do as much as the Japanese as they can, it's spectacular, so it's an A. Fortunately, once they got on to junior high school, that was less a part of the equation.

Interviewer: Did you read that quote that I put in here by Daniel Kahl?

Cathy: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: The balance between-

Cathy: You just got to ride it because it is what it is, and so if you can take advantage of that, and I'm not saying be greedy, but what I did on Thursday was a perfect example of it. My side job is I do proof reading and narration. My voice is everywhere. I went to the studio and I was ... A promotional video for Ringer Hut and none of the people in the studio could read the script, they had to trust me, and when I said "This is of a grammatical mistake," they had to accept it and let me fix it and they appreciate it, and when I did the narration, I said "No, we got to do block 10 again. Strange intonation, I messed up the pronunciation there." They had to believe me, and at the end of it all, I checked the titles, I'm saying "No, got to fix this, that, that." There is nobody there who could do that, but I could also talk about the whole process with them in Japanese, so I had something that nobody else could do, so I had my niche.

Interviewer: Your value.

Cathy: Yeah, and I have done very well by that in my side job.

Interviewer: Are there some aspects of your Japanese culture that you just can't find yourself to accept, like you just decide "I'm just going to keep my distance from that." Is there anything like that that you can give an example of?

Cathy: Probably, yeah.

Interviewer: You raised 2 children here so I'm sure there's a lot of that.

Cathy: Yeah, I think-

Interviewer: I don't want to put ideas in your head.

Cathy: No, but it is regarding the kids. The whole *juken* and I always said when they were little, "We'll never go to junior high school. I'm pulling them out after elementary school," but then, here comes junior high school, and "All right, let's carry on, let's see how it goes," and then through junior high school, it's like "Okay, testing, testing, testing," and now 3rd year junior high, and here they are in this *juken* system, and I tell you, I hated it. I hated it, I'm against it, I think it's bad for kids, I think it's misguided in terms of teaching them anything except to just memorize and spew, and so I struggled so much with it because S---- wanted to go to S---- school, she wanted to, she was a part of this academic circle of really high achieving kids and I was like "I hate it, I hate it, am I really going to have to do this? Am I really going to put my kid in this system where she's going to be going to school through the whole summer vacation?" I really struggled with that.

Something came along, an opportunity to go to international school. She got a scholarship.

Interviewer: Really?

Cathy: Yeah, well first we found the opportunity to apply for it, and I can't even describe my relief when she got that scholarship and I realized we don't have to do this part of education that I so strongly disagree with.

Interviewer: Right now, she's at the international school.

Cathy: She just started, yeah.

Interviewer: She just started. She's a high school student.

Cathy: She had to. She graduated from junior high and they asked her to do the last 3 months of junior high there because they're only North American schedule, so she'll start grade 10 in September. It's been a good chance for her to get used to studying in English.

Interviewer: Right. One of the disadvantages of going to an international school is that she'll probably ... I don't know if it's a disadvantage, but she'll have to go to school overseas for university.

Cathy: That was the plan. We started there, so when she were like "S---- school or ..." I was like "You look here."

Interviewer: I didn't mean to say disadvantage.

Cathy: "Look here. Where do you want to go? If you want to go to Todai or you want to go something like that, then it's better to go through the Japanese system." She'd also been living with parents who, for years, are like "Don't go to a Japanese university."

Interviewer: It's safe to say that you have no plan for your life but you have a good plan for your daughter. That's what it sounds like.

Cathy: Yeah.

Interviewer: It's just pretty cool.

Cathy: Maybe it's hypocritical, I don't know.

Interviewer: I don't think so at all, I think what it is is through experience, you realize that "Wow. This might have made it easier if we had a plan," which you're just handing it down to your daughter. It's pretty awesome.

Cathy: I have to say, the one foot out the door thing, as I passed 40, it became more and more dissatisfying to me.

Interviewer: I can't say I have the one foot out the door. I'm married to a Japanese woman.

Cathy: Right, which is a big difference with the one foot out the door thing.

Interviewer: It's very true, and my kids, I just felt bad because she has elite friends and she graduated from Rikkyo and all her friends are top companies, these fancy companies, and we all get together, everybody drives fairly fancy cars and stuff, and it's like "I don't have a car," type of thing. They don't say anything, nobody rubs anything in.

Cathy: No, but still, it's there.

Interviewer: It's there and we're the same age and it's a different lifestyle, and plus, even if I make more money, I want to go home once a year and that's cost a lot of money to do.

Cathy: Take the whole family home, we're looking at a million yen pretty much.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's right.

Cathy: Every year we go, and it's a choice we've made. It affects her lifestyle, but I think in a good way.

Interviewer: It's important. I haven't gone home for a while because I think I want to school.

Cathy: Do you have any Japanese friends who only speak Japanese too?

Interviewer: Sure.

Cathy: You do. How many friends would you guess?

Interviewer: It's all comes through the kid's school. Tons of moms in the neighborhood. All my PTA stuff, all my *kodomokai* stuff has always been, and these people have become friends.

Interviewer: You did *kodomokai*.

Cathy: You had to.

Interviewer: You had to. You also did PTA?

Cathy: Got to, yeah.

Interviewer: I know people that didn't do it.  
Cathy: You could be a jerk, sure, and I'm not.  
Interviewer: Again, I think that's one of those things that they get to pass on.  
Cathy: Yeah, I certainly played the *gaijin* card, the working *gaijin* mother card, like you got to be the *tanin* and I'm like "You know what? I can be one *kondankai* a year, this one, and so you draw my name out of the hat, go ahead, but that doesn't mean I'm going to be able to come." Actually, that whole system, I had some cultural battles with.

Interviewer: Would you consider Japan your home now?  
Cathy: Yeah.  
Interviewer: You do.  
Cathy: Yeah, it's a bit confusing though, because when we say "Yeah, well it's time to go home," because when we're here, we're like "Oh, we're going to go home for the summer," and when we're in Canada, "Well, we're going to go home soon."  
We've become two.

Interviewer: Does it bother you when you meet a Japanese person who thinks you're a new arrival, like someone ... They did just got here recently or maybe you're visiting.  
Cathy: I love to be able to say when people are like "Wow, your Japanese is good. Have you been here long?" I don't always tell them how long I've been here but if they ask specifically, I'll be like "Yeah, I've been here a while." "Oh really? How many years?" I'm like "20." They're like ... Maybe they're surprised because my Japanese isn't better and that's why I don't like to tell people actually, because I'm almost embarrassed to say that I've been here 20 years and still struggle so much with the language, so I kind of keep quiet.

Interviewer: Do you feel any daily stress living in Japan?  
Cathy: Not so much. I have the usual stress of work and time management and blah, blah, blah, but I think if were I in Canada working full time job at the university and having kids in school, I'd have all the same time pressures, and because things aren't the same back there. We see that because we do go back every year. We've seen culture grow and change away from us, and we're just like "What? Why are people like that?"

Interviewer: Do you have any reverse culture shock when you go home?  
Cathy: Yeah.  
Interviewer: You do. Could you give me an example?  
Cathy: I think I've gotten used to this humble nature of Japanese people, although some are not, but just the whole group ... "Let's make sure everybody's doing okay, let's work together to make sure," and sometimes that doesn't go as smoothly as they'd like, but it's there and sometimes it's annoying, but in general, for society, it's a good thing and we go back to North America and it's all about what I want and me, me, me. We have a new neighbor at our place and he's so in your face and we're just like "Really?" You're going to have a big screaming party right next door to us without giving us any advance notice, and when we say something about it, "You're mad?" We were so polite about it. We're just like "Gee, that was quite a party you had," and we see people like him a lot and it's grating. It's like "Whoa, chill out, guy." "Well, why else do you ask?" This kind of business, there's Canadians like that too.  
That's a bit hard to take. We've gotten accustomed to this sort of "wa" here and are quite comfortable with that. At the same time, going home is very ... And I said home there, didn't I? Going back is very comfortable.

Interviewer: The double home.  
Cathy: Yeah.  
Interviewer: Do you have any anecdotes that crystallize the whole Japan experience? Living in Japan would be a type of story that you tell people when you go home. Do you have any stories like-  
Cathy: The story about the missed meeting, being represented above my life here, really, it encapsulates ... It wasn't just in kindergarten, it happens all the time.

Another thing that happened, and it's sort of based on language difficulty, we've had some back and forth with our landlady and recently, I think it wasn't me, it was P---. She some months ago asked him if he would think of doing some weeding and this and that and they agreed on that she would pay him, like she said, she offered to pay, and he's like "You don't have to pay." She's like "I want to pay," and then she came again and said something and he took offense, he thought she was changing the deal and he got really mad about it and he was like ... Then when I came home, he said "She said ..." and then my daughter S---- whose Japanese has been better, she's like "Dad, no. She didn't say that. What she said was ..." but he had a really hard time letting go what he perceived to be what she said, and I think that happens to us a lot.

What we think we understand them to be saying and what they're probably actually saying, there's sometimes a mismatch and I think that sometimes, our dissatisfaction arises from those sorts misunderstandings.

Interviewer: Some people also, I think there's a frustration that happens with some. Maybe in your case of your husband, he might have had a frustrated week or something- He has an impression of her as a person and this, I think he perceived what he thought such a person might say.

Cathy: Interviewer: That might happen. I can understand that. Also, we tend to go on visuals if we don't understand the language, so if she's using visual facial expressions or something that don't seem to click with us ... ....

Interviewer: Cathy: Interviewer: What kind of person you think ends up here for 20 years?

Cathy: Somebody like me, I guess. I don't know.

Interviewer: Interviewer: If you had to give just some adjectives ... I don't want to ideas in your brain- I know, but I know all different types of people who are here. I know people who've been here that long who hate it but they feel stuck, like they can't leave and so "This is my lot and I hate it ..." so the Japan bashers, surely you've met people like that and you wonder "Why are you still here?" I don't know. What kind of people wind up here? People who are flexible, people who are okay with existing unknown things. A lot of people, if they can't understand everything that's going on around them, they don't like it, and so they don't last here very long, but if you can just be comfortable with yourself and with your own existence, and make your own place in the world, then I think that you'll do okay here.

Interviewer: Interviewer: Would you consider a difference between people who've recently come versus someone who stayed here a long time, is there any type of characteristic that you see with newer people? Actually, send at the beginning, someone who gets fascinated with all the Japanese stuff and you've kind of been there and done that. When you hear that, how do you react now?

Cathy: Interviewer: I don't feel like the people I met, like my friends who are already here. They were just like "You'll get over that" kind of thing, and when I get new people like we have visitors from Canada or something, I love it because it helps me rediscover Japan and reminds me of the things I really liked about it and that I treasure about here. Last spring, our eldest had a friend from my hometown come to visit, another 16 year old came and stayed with us for a couple of weeks. We put him in kimonos and took him to Y--- park and we went to *yatai*. We don't do that stuff in our daily lives, right? We rediscovered the fun stuff, the uniquely Japanese things that we appreciate but don't always access in our just day to day lives.

I'm going to end this for the second time.

Cathy: Okay.

Interviewer: This is the real ending. Thank you very much.

Cathy: You're welcome.

### **017 Garry**

Interviewer: What was it first like when you arrived, just in a few words? What was it first like when you first came to Japan?

Garry: I came in 1998, in July, the JET program, starting a whole new adventure. I'm going to be one year away from home, from the United States. I thought, "God, that's such a long period." Of course, you know, very excited, nervous, all those emotions. We came to Tokyo on the JET program. The JET program was great. It was like winning the lottery, because you had ... Everything was paid. You had cash in hand every month. It was untaxed. I had a subsidized apartment. So I felt really lucky when I first came to Japan. The first two nights were in Tokyo, really nice hotel, with all the other JETs, really fun.

I remember actually when I landed in Tokyo, because your image as an American before you come to Japan, my image, was just ... I had a few Japanese friends in college, and so my image was from those friends, and also I had a friend who had done the JET program, and he returned to the United States. So just from talking to them, my image was stereotypical images of Japan. Really, lots of technology and big companies. I remember looking out of the bus and saying, "Oh, there's Hitachi and Sony." And then coming to F----a after Tokyo. Of course, I was met by the *Kyōiku iinkai*, the board of education from O----. They were all there with a sign saying "Welcome to F----, Garry." And it was three guys from my office, and this lady N---, who was friends with the ALT before me. She would become one of my good friends, but they were all there at the airport to welcome me in.

At first I felt really lucky. The first three weeks went by ... The first period went by pretty quick. It was very exciting. I liked Japan right from the get go.

Interviewer: Did you have a honeymoon period? How long did that last?

Garry: Yeah, probably about two months.

Interviewer: Two months?

Garry: Yeah.

Interviewer: It was kind of just fun and quick and ...

Garry: Well, I think the reason why was because everything was new, when you first come here. The food, and with JET you get a bike. So you ride your bike throughout the countryside, and it's really beautiful. There was another girl, a second ALT who was supposed to come to our town. And her father passed away, so she couldn't come. And they had taken an alternative person, and he was coming from New Zealand. He was a nightmare.

Interviewer: Really?

Garry: Yeah. So, when we went to pick him up at the airport, one of his first questions to me was "Have you ever stolen a car?"

Interviewer: Really?

Garry: Yeah, that was one of his first questions. He said "It's my hobby back in New Zealand, I steal cars." And he couldn't get over the fact that I hadn't tried heroin.

Interviewer: Really?

Garry: Yeah, and I said I'm an open minded person, but, all things in balance. I haven't tried heroin, I don't plan to. But this was the first day or two I met this guy. I later found out he was a pretty scary guy. So I knew I was going to have to work with this guy in close proximity. He worked in the same office I did, we were going to some of the same schools. And he was living in the same apartment complex. So, it was a nightmare situation for me. So I immediately felt I was so lucky to get this job, and now this. So I really, at that moment, I crashed and I became homesick. I remember a couple months past when he came, I became homesick. I remember going to my friend N---'s house, and she said stay busy, and if you stay busy you'll get over your homesickness. And that was basically the case.

Interviewer: So why did you originally come to the JET program? Were you planning to stay a long time?

Garry: No, I was originally planning to come here a year.

Interviewer: So you weren't planning to stay long term.  
Garry: No.  
Interviewer: When did you realize you were going to stay longer?  
Garry: Basically what happened was, I originally planned on a year. So when I finished college, I was like, I want to try living abroad. I want to work abroad. Basically, first year in Japan, after a few months, I met my Japanese girlfriend, and I had Japanese friends. One year went by really quickly. And was like, I still can't speak Japanese very well. And I've made some good friends. I have a Japanese girlfriend. Besides the psychopath guy I work with, I really enjoy my life. I like the school. And it was good money, I was saving money. I'd also joined the O---- running club, the O---- city running club. So I'd joined that because the *kacho* in the *Kyōiku iinkai*, he was a marathon runner.  
So we had become friends, and we would run together. So I'd gotten really into the running that first year, and I wanted to continue that as well. So I decided to do the additional year. You had an option to continue, so I continued. And after doing two years in the JET program, my job satisfaction had kind of gone down. I felt like just a recorder in the classroom. And I was frightened for my safety, from this guy who I was working with. And I called my boss, I said listen, I'm not going to work, I'm terrified of this guy. Because the police are not going to protect you. And the city hall, they were embarrassed by the situation. They knew he was probably taking drugs, but they wanted to brush it under the carpet.  
So I was just wanting to get away from the situation. So I decided to leave.  
Interviewer: Are you close to your family back home in the states?  
Garry: Yeah.  
Interviewer: How often do you talk to them?  
Garry: Probably every week.  
Interviewer: Every week?  
Garry: Yeah, by Skype.  
Interviewer: Skype, and that stuff, that makes a big difference, doesn't it?  
Garry: Yeah, it's a huge difference.  
Interviewer: Back when you first came it was just letters and once-a-month calls. It was hard to do that, I'm sure. The phone bills were crazy back in the day, right?  
Garry: Oh yeah.  
Interviewer: So, how important do you think it is to learn Japanese to live here?  
Garry: I think most foreigners, when they come here, what they do ... They study when they first get here, and they get to a comfortable level that they can get by. And then most people just stay there at that level and stop studying. Several of my friends are that way. I'm probably the same case. Now I'm actually trying to get better, just for my job and other reasons. I think there's a certain level that's necessary just to survive. Especially, I think, things like, certain needs. For example, dating girls. I think this is a reason why many foreigners try to improve their ability. It was for me, anyway.  
Interviewer: Okay. Would you consider yourself assimilated into society, according to the definition of "assimilated" that I wrote here?  
Garry: You feel like you're an equal?  
Interviewer: Yeah.  
Garry: No. And never will be.  
Interviewer: Do you think it's possible for someone to become 100% assimilated?  
Garry: No. I think what happens when you first get here, my first two years I thought, if I learned enough Japanese, and acted Japanese enough, that I would be accepted. And that I could become like a Japanese. I had this idea. And through conversations with my friends, I quickly realized that was never going to be a possibility.  
Interviewer: So knowing that people can't fit 100%, do you think it's important for people to realize that, and accept it? Have you ever seen someone that still gets offended by ...

Garry: Yeah, myself.

Interviewer: You still get offended by that sometimes?

Garry: Well, I still get upset when I feel like I'm being discriminated.

Interviewer: Do you think people get lost here?

Garry: Oh yeah, of course.

Interviewer: Do you think people in Japan, Westerners, are given things in a way that Japanese wouldn't be given? These opportunities that come to them that wouldn't if they were Japanese?

Garry: Yeah, I think it works both ways. There's opportunities that are given to you. You might be asked to do something like go on a trip, or something, because you're a foreigner. Maybe there's a family that wants their daughter to have a chance to speak English, so they invite you for the afternoon to go to Yanagawa to do whatever. To eat eel, or something like that. You might get an opportunity like that because of that kind of situation, because you're a foreigner. But then there's other opportunities that aren't available for you, so it works both ways.

Interviewer: You mentioned discrimination before. Have you ever been personally discriminated against?

Garry: How can I answer that? Every day.

Interviewer: Every day. You can answer that any way you wish.

Garry: An hour ago.

Interviewer: Go ahead, that sounds good. ... Do you think sometimes there's that pressure that, oh, they're going to say something. It might not happen, but that feeling is always there?

Garry: The thing is, I didn't understand ... When I was in the States, and I heard about discrimination, you hear black people say they're discriminated against, or some group say they're discriminated against, I didn't really understand it. And now I do understand it. Unless you've experienced it personally you don't really understand. And I think there's different kinds of discrimination. It can be something very very subtle. I've had friends who've told me a story, and I have similar stories, where I'm at the gym, the pool, and I walk around the corner, and there's an *obaa-chan*. And her jaw drops, and she goes [gasp], because here's a big white guy coming around the corner.

Or, he says good morning to a Japanese woman every day, and she won't answer, never responds to him.

Interviewer: I can understand that.

Garry: I think part of discrimination is fear of the unknown, things we don't know. So a lot of discrimination is fear. If I walk down the street in the United States, and I see a group of six black guys, I'll walk across to the other side of the street. Would I do the same thing if it was a five white guys? I probably wouldn't. Our society, through disinformation, creates fear in people. Some of it's valid, based on reality, and some of it's not. I think Japanese people have the same thing. They've been raised and taught to fear. Some of it's valid, some of it's not valid.

Interviewer: You read about the microaggression thing.

Garry: I got one today. Drove me crazy. One of my coworkers decided to join our ride, and I introduced him as my co-worker. He gave a laugh and he goes, "He's the English teacher." I was like "Yeah, thank you very much. I work in the human resources department of our company, and yes, I am English support staff, so I do a lot of training in the company." But it's obvious, I always get that. A lot of the people ... I have another guy that works in the same company do the same thing. He says, "You're the English teacher." And yeah, I work in the human resources department, and one of my main jobs is training people in English. But I do other work as well. I do a lot of work which isn't training people in English.

Interviewer: I'm an employee in the same company, I have to go to the same meetings you do, I'm a human resources member...

Garry: What is your title?

Garry: We don't have titles. I'm a staff member in the human resources department. And part of that is training. But I have other jobs I have to do that aren't related to English. But it was obvious ...

Interviewer: So you believe that microaggressions exist?

Garry: Oh, of course.

Interviewer: And you feel them, you do experience them.

Garry: Of course, yeah.

Interviewer: Have you ever had a situation in Japan where, it's kind of complicated by a cultural difference, and it became so ... Maybe traumatic, a traumatic experience you would relate to culture, that was so traumatic that you wanted to go home?

Garry: I feel like that now.

Interviewer: You feel like that now, that it's time to go home?

Garry: Well, I would say, dealing with the life of always being an outsider. Because in Japan you're always an outsider. It doesn't matter how well you speak Japanese or anything. Or how long you've been here. You always get the daily things. Those little things that wear on you. How long do I want to be in a society ... It's a balance, because there's so many good things about living in Japan, and living in Fukuoka especially, that I love. And I have to balance those with my feelings of ... And there are so many factors. If I went back home, could I get a good job? But those little things made me put a question mark in my head. Could I live in Japan for another 20 years or the rest of my life?

Interviewer: But in the job that you're currently at, there's a chance that you could be transferred.

Garry: I could be transferred overseas. I could be transferred to the United States or somewhere, yeah. And if I was to, for example, change departments. Like solar, or something. Renewable energy. Then I would have to go to Tokyo.

Interviewer: I see. What are some advantages of being a foreigner?

Garry: I think there are opportunities that present themselves. We are unique. So a lot of times, Japanese people are curious about foreigners. Both men and women. And so there are relationships that you can form from those.

Interviewer: Did you read the quote I put there about Daniel Kahl. Do you know who Daniel Kahl is?

Garry: No, but I agree with him. It's a balance. I think it's a give and take thing, with all your relationships. We are different. I'm still American, even though I've been here 17 years. Some of my thinking is completely Japanese. I've become, in many ways, my thinking has become like Japanese. But still, there's so many other times when I'm really, truly at my core, American. Things I'll do are things that an American would do. So I have both.

Interviewer: Do you have experience of reverse culture shock when you go home?

Garry: Of course. I still use Japanese when I go back home. Like this past summer. I told someone, "Dozo." I was driving a car and I wanted to say go ahead, go straight, I said "Dozo."

Interviewer: Do you have any Japanese friends you only speak Japanese with?

Garry: No.

Interviewer: So they speak English and Japanese?

Garry: It's always a mix. I made a running group. And they can speak a little bit of English. And usually they speak Japanese. But sometimes I speak English too. I think it's give and take. I think of my coworkers now. We work in a company that the official language is English. So it's a give and take thing. I have to go maybe eight steps to do my best to assimilate to life in Japan, so I do that. But I draw a line, I have my own personal line, where I expect for them also to understand that I'm American, and to try ... I understand that I'm here, so I have more of a responsibility to blend in and to harmonize myself with life in Japan. But at the same time, it's a give and take thing.

Interviewer: Do you consider Japan your home?

Garry: Yeah, I do. I think home is where you think you belong at the moment. And so, for now, that's why I've been here 17 years. Japan's my home. I get so frustrated by these little things, microaggressions, you call them. But there are so many positives to living here. When I compare live anywhere else, Japan is, F---- is safe. The food's great. Beautiful people here. I'll let you interpret that. But here in Fukuoka, the size of the city, I think F----'s a great city. It's easy to get around on a bike. I don't have to have a car. If I was living in the States I'd have to have a car. It's easy to stay healthy. I think Japanese people are much more focused, in general, on health, and staying healthy.

Interviewer: When you meet someone on the street and they think you've just arrived in Japan, and they talk to you like you've just arrived, how does that make you feel?

Garry: I find it a bit annoying sometimes. But then I always realize, it happens so often, it's just something I have to accept. It's just one of those things, it happens on a daily basis. It's part of living here. You have to make a decision.

Interviewer: Is it safe to say you have some daily stress?

Garry: Yeah, of course. A lot. Not only at work, but also in daily encounters. I was just at Starbucks. I ordered a drink and ... Sometimes I take a second to answer. And immediately she goes, "Ice, ice."

Interviewer: Like you're a child, right?

Garry: Yeah.

Interviewer: Anecdotes?

Garry: A funny story about Japan?

Interviewer: It doesn't have to be funny. It could be a story that makes you feel good, or makes you feel bad, or just kind of an unbelievable, amazing story.

Garry: When my mom first came to Japan, I was in the O--- running club, like I said. So, the city hall members. In the city hall there are a few guys who are part of the running club, and my boss, the *kacho*. And we went to A--- do to a 10K run. It was funny, my mom's reaction to some of the things, because it was her first time in Japan. For example, she opened the *bento*, and there was a small baby octopus on top. And my mom was completely blown away by that. Of course she didn't eat it. And later on that evening, there was an outdoor coed *onsen*, and the staff, for some reason, had given my mom a male towel, not a women's towel. And so we all went to outdoor *onsen*, and I gave my mom my towel. And I just used a leaf off the tree.

But it was so funny for my mom, because my mom and these four Japanese guys from the office, from city hall, together in the hot spring. It was pretty funny. And when we went back to the hotel to have dinner, they had the traditional Japanese meal, with the raw fish. So the fish still had the head and the tail on it. It wasn't *ikizukuri*, it wasn't alive. But they brought it to my mom, and all the Japanese guys were going "*oishii, oishii*" and my mom was saying "oh shit, oh shit." My mom did try it, but I ended up eating a lot of her food.

Interviewer: So she had kind of that food shock that so many people have when they come?

Garry: Yeah.

Interviewer: What kind of person lives here for 15, 20 years? Just a couple of adjectives?

Garry: Crazy.

Interviewer: Crazy people.

Garry: Crazy people. I think people who are, who are open minded. You have to be open minded to live here. And people who are also very flexible. I think if you're a really rigid person you're not going to make it here. Someone who's very tolerant, and also patient. The daily stress, the stressful things you encounter, you have to have patience.

Interviewer: Do you feel more patient after coming to Japan?

Garry: I want to say yes, but I'm not so sure. I'm not really confident.

Interviewer: When you meet someone that just arrived in Japan recently, how do you feel talking to that person?

Garry: It's funny, because I watch the way they behave, and I can see they don't understand certain things. We recently had a guy, he'd been in Tokyo one or two years, but he didn't understand Japanese business etiquette. It blew me away. I was kind of laughing but at the same time ...

Interviewer: And he was there for two years.

Garry: He was in Tokyo.

Interviewer: But still, two years would be considered, for many people, two years living in Japan would be considered a long time. If you went back to America after living in Japan for two or three years, you could be supposedly a Japanese expert according to Americans. But two years in Japan doesn't necessarily mean that you know anything.

Garry: For example, in a Japanese company, you don't walk up to the boss directly, especially the president of the company. You don't just walk up to the president. And he would come in, and just try to walk right up to the president, or he would say "I need to talk to the president. Where is he, I want to talk to him." Or "tell him I said hi."

Interviewer: Kind of a good anecdote.

Garry: But you get very good at, as the Japanese say, reading the air. You get very good at reading the air. So I know when I'm stepping out of line. The company I'm at now, I'm in my fourth year. My first two years, I would make mistakes and then I would realize, suddenly the attitude around me got cold. And I realized I had somehow stepped over the line somewhere, for my Japanese coworkers. I was doing something they didn't like. But I've gotten very good, I know what those things are now. I've gotten very good at knowing what they are and being able to go around those. But a lot of it's timing, in a Japanese company.

Interviewer: That whole concept of your coworker trying to go up to the president. His whole plan is to get promoted, right? That's what he wants?

Garry: He maybe has kind of a relationship with him. Maybe he was hired by the president originally. So he maybe has some reason why he was doing that, but he really can't do that.

### **018 Dan**

Interviewer: In a few words, not to tell me the story of when you first arrived, but more just with a few adjectives, could you describe what it was like when you first arrived in Japan?

Dan: I'd say it was like being a baby, but one who is fully self aware.

Interviewer: Did you have a honeymoon period when you first came?

Dan: No, I don't think I did.

Interviewer: You don't think you did?

Dan: I don't think I did. Obviously, looking back that far, I'd have to look at my diaries and stuff, which I didn't write. I wish I had.

Interviewer: Which would be...

Dan: Which I wish I had. I tend to be somewhat skeptical in anything, so it wasn't negative, but I tend to not have big honeymoon periods. If I start feeling that things are going too well, I start to get skeptical at that point.

Interviewer: Oh I see. Okay.

Dan: Part of it's more a personality thing.

Interviewer: When you first came, were you married when you came?

Dan: No I wasn't. I came single.

Interviewer: So, you met your wife here?

Dan: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. So, why did you originally come.

Dan: JET program.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Dan: I, coming out of college, could only speak English. I'd studied a little bit of Japanese in high school, but not enough to do anything with. Wanted the experience of living abroad for two or three years.

Interviewer: So, that was your original plan, just two or three years?

Dan: Yes. Two maybe three. The JET program was capped at three at the time.

Interviewer: Oh I see. You didn't plan to stay the long term at all?

Dan: No, I didn't.

Interviewer: How long did it take you to realize that you were going to be here long term?

Dan: Probably by year...

Interviewer: Oh really.

Dan: Year five.

Interviewer: Oh, year five? Okay. So, five years.

Dan: Four or five. After year three I decided... I had met my wife, but it wasn't serious enough for me to stay for her yet. I was just getting at that point in my Japanese in year three that if I stay a little bit longer I'll get really... If I go home, it's gone. I found a job and stayed that fourth year, and then got engaged. After getting engaged, and then getting married, realizing, hey I'm probably here for the long haul. Though, very likely to return to The States at some point.

Interviewer: Do you still feel that way now?

Dan: Yeah.

Interviewer: You do?

Dan: Yeah. We want our kids to be bi-cultural. Every two years, my wife takes them back to The States them to Oregon state to my parent's and they go to an American elementary school.

Interviewer: Oh okay. That's good.

Dan: They'll be leaving in August this year and stay until December. I go back and I visit for a month at a time.

Interviewer: I see.

Dan: I'm here long term, but I don't think of myself as an immigrant necessarily.

Interviewer: Oh, I see what you mean. Okay. I see what you mean. The possibility of you going home, but at the same time right now you're kind of committed to what you have now.

Dan: Right. Even if I do go back, I would go back and run the school from America and come here say six, seven weeks a year.

Interviewer: Which is a good benefit to have. Which is a good flexibility to have.

Dan: I would still be coming to Japan. I'd still be intertwined here.

Interviewer: Oh okay. Are you close to family back home?

Dan: Emotionally close, yes.

Interviewer: Okay. How important do you think it is to learn Japanese to live here?

Dan: I think it's vital.

Interviewer: Vital. Some people get along without it. How do you think they do that?

Dan: Well, I think they get along in the sense they can live life, but they never get be apart of the culture, and they never really get accepted into the community.

Dan: They'll get accepted into a group of Japanese people that are really into English or into expat type stuff. The previous owner of the school didn't speak much Japanese. Some people do really well, but at the same time, it's grown a lot more under me and my wife. I think the fact that I can speak Japanese is a major factor in that. He was relying on the goodwill of others. Well, we all rely on the goodwill of others to a point. He was very much relying on his charm and the goodwill of others in a way that I haven't had to.

Interviewer: How long did he run the school before you bought it from him?

Dan: He ran it for four years. He got several corporate contracts, but they're at companies where the management spoke English.

Interviewer: Oh I see.

Dan: He got up to about 100 students at one location. We've had it now, for seven years since then and we're at 850 students.

Interviewer: 850, yeah that's good.

Dan: At seven locations, and a broader corporate client base then he had.

Interviewer: That's very busy.

Dan: I don't think that could've happened if I couldn't speak Japanese relatively well.

Interviewer: How much of the sales do you do with your wife? Does your wife do any of the sales?

Dan: My wife does very little of the sales. She does the sales for the emerging kindergarten we opened up last April. She's not a salesperson. I did most of the sales, or our office staff. Last September, hired a sales, someone with a sales emphasis for their position who is now going out and making contact with corporate contracts and stuff. I go in... On Wednesday we had a contact from a new corporate contract client. I went in and met with them, and there was no English. They were talking about doing English lessons, but the person I was dealing with could not speak English. The fact that I could go in and... I went in with that salesperson, but she wasn't going in as a translator, she was going in as the sales support. Which is a big difference.

Interviewer: Big difference. I agree. I totally agree.

Dan: That created a level of trust that would have been hard to establish if I had been asking her to help me out all the time.

Interviewer: She's basically your *buka*. She's basically under you, acting as your assistant.

Dan: Yeah. It's the same as Japanese sales positions.

Interviewer: No, I understand. I think that what you're doing it's extremely high level, because you're working for yourself, and at the same time you're also running the business on the front lines of it. That's pretty rare, you know. That's not very common. You don't see that a lot.

Dan: She goes in and does the preparation, and then when it gets to a reasonably high level of importance, then I get...

Interviewer: I see. Would you consider yourself assimilated 100% in Japan? Assimilated being, that you aren't seen as anything other than an equal?

Dan: No.

Interviewer: No.

Dan: I'm more assimilated each year. If we're talking gradations, but fully assimilated, no. I don't think I ever will be.

Interviewer: Do you think that some people could get kind of lost in a life here? They don't know what they're doing? They've been here for 15, 20 years, and they still don't really know what they're going to do. They don't have a plan.

Dan: What I would say... I would say that people can get lost. I wouldn't say people get lost, I'd say people get stuck. They're in Japan, but they're here long enough that they no longer have marketable skills in their own country. They have to stay in Japan, and they're teaching English because, what else can you do? For a lot of them. I don't know if they get lost so much as get stuck.

Interviewer: That's a good word. That's a better word. What about lost talent? Do you think there's any talent here that you feel is not used, utilized by... You have the Western community, there's some talent out there possibly that is not being utilized by, for example, Japanese companies, or skills that could be utilized?

Dan: Oh yeah. I know a lot of computer programmers, who just can't get a job because they don't have the Japanese skills.

Interviewer: That's language right?

Dan: Right. To get in, and to communicate within a Japanese company, even though they have the professional skills to be able to do so. Maybe they can get on at a company where there's a lot of English, or owned by a foreigner, you know.

Interviewer: Have you ever been personally discriminated against?

Dan: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: You have been? Could you give me the story?

Dan: I said about... There were two main stories on there. One is about me personally, one is about one of my teachers that I was involved in the situation.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dan: The one about me personally... I'm a member of Lion's Club. I don't know if you know Lion's Club at all?

Interviewer: Yes, of course I do. Yeah.

Dan: I'm probably the only non-Japanese member of Lion's Club.

Interviewer: I can imagine.

Dan: In Japan, there might be others, but I'm pretty sure in I-----. Anyway, there's an organization that the police have that's called the *Tomonokai*, and the *Tomonokai* is a group of people in the community who communicate with the police about what's happening in the community, give the police support, comments. The police also talk to the people, the *Tomonokai* to reach out to the community. Lion's is historically had a member on the *Tomonokai*, and the person involved in deciding that chose me, to be Lion's representative. Got all the paperwork together, sent it in, and the police said no, you can't have a foreigner on the *Tomonokai*, and requested that I shred all the documents I had received.

Interviewer: Did you have permanent residency at the time?

Dan: Yes.

Interviewer: That was how long ago?

Dan: Two or three years ago.

Interviewer: Oh wow. Yeah, that's not right.

Dan: I also know someone who was on a similar body for the F----- police, who was a foreigner. So, it was definitely a situation of just the Y----- police at that time.

Interviewer: It was kind of a regional...

Dan: I actually, because I knew that person, I got that person's certificate as a member. They were actually not in the *Tomonokai*, they were in one level up, at the professional level at F-----. I sent that information to a person in Lion, who sent out to the Y----- police, but nothing ever came of it.

Interviewer: Really?

Dan: That was very disappointing. It caused me to lose a good bit of trust in the Japanese, at least in the Y----- police.

Interviewer: I think the only thing they could fight with there, is this no citizenship. Still, if other prefectures are doing it, that's definitely a local problem with somebody at the top that is not comfortable with that.

Dan: But, it was at the prefectural... Yeah. Somebody was no comfortable, and I was again, asked to shred the documents which I thought was interesting.

Interviewer: Which is, yeah, that's a very interesting...

Dan: The second one was, I had a teacher who came in, this would've been January 2008, and she was just coming in. We were looking for an apartment for her. My wife had been checking around, just checking apartments. She didn't say it was for a teacher, she was trying to hide. She was just checking. She found a very good apartment. It was the best apartment for the cheapest price. When we went in to rent it, they found out that the renter would be our teacher, a foreigner. They said there's no foreigners in this apartment. We checked with about three or four realtors, and all of them gave us the same answer.

Well, what it is, is one realtor will put a property up on the realtor database, and any realtor can access that database and get part of the fee for it. All of them are working through the main realtor to put it up. They all gave us the answer that they had problems with foreigners before. No foreigners in the apartment. What we did is, we actually went to the tax office and found the address of the owner of the apartment, and paid him a visit at dinner time, and took a tape recorder to record the conversation just in case. That owner claimed, he said, "Oh I have no problems with foreigners at all. That's not the problem, but someone else is looking at the apartment and wants to rent it." We told him, we've been communicating for two weeks now, getting stonewalled. Well, tomorrow morning you can go, and he told us the main realtor. No one would tell us who the main listing realtor was.

He got on the phone, and he said he was calling the realtor and letting him know that we'd be coming the next day, but wife had noticed that we had passed by that realtor on the way in. My wife had noticed the light was still on, so we went to that realtor, and told him, by the way, the landlord for that property just called. They said, "What. Huh." They knew nothing about him having called. He was just on the phone with some random person, but we finally... They kept giving excuses. They said, we needed to have a... Or we couldn't use the *hoshonin* guarantor couldn't be the company. Then, the guarantor had to be a Japanese person. My wife's father ended up being the guarantor for our teacher's apartment. In the end, we got rid of all of their excuses.

It was obvious they didn't want to tell us directly, so we ended up getting the apartment, but... Normally, I wouldn't want to give them any money, except it was the best place for the cheapest for this amount of money.

Interviewer: Do you think, if you were renting that apartment for yourself, do you think there would've been a problem?

Dan: With my wife, I don't know?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dan: Because, they might've let us rent it because my wife... They probably would've required it to be in my wife's name maybe. I don't know. If I had been renting it single, I think I would've ran into the same problem. It was entirely about being foreign. The teacher that was renting it, was actually African American, but they didn't know that. That had nothing to do with it either.

Interviewer: What do you think about micro-aggressions? Do you feel they exist?

Dan: Oh definitely. I think they exist. Sometimes they're intentional, sometimes they're not. Technically, micro-aggression is supposed to be unintentional, but I think some... In Lion's Club, there's one or two members who always make, " Oh okay, okay," kind of strange, random English comments. You can tell they're just kind of uncomfortable. Little things like that, or going to the store and asking for help, and the person at the counter calls up to the manager in the back, there's a foreigner here with a question. You know. I've lived in Y----- for 17 years and I'll

be talking about places around the area and they're like, why do you know all of that? Because I've lived here longer than you have. It might be someone who's only lived in the area for five, you know. Yeah. Definitely.

Interviewer: They exist, and you've experienced them. Do they bother you, or do you just deal with it?

Dan: It really depends. It really depends. If it's a younger person, not as much, because I know it's someone who doesn't necessarily have the experience to know better, and I use it as a teachable moment. Sometimes, it's like someone who should know better. Sometimes, it's a cross between the two. Like the gal at McDonald's who would always try to take my order in English. It's like, okay, she was trying to practice her English, she meant well. She was trying to do good service but, but it showed she saw me as foreigner first and a McDonald's customer second.

Interviewer: I get you on that. Definitely.

Dan: It annoyed me, but I tried to be polite on that one.

Interviewer: Right. Have you had any trouble here that it was so bad, that you just felt like it's enough to make you want to go home?

Dan: I've had problems that I would equate to something cultural but, I can't think of something at the level to make me want to go home.

Interviewer: Okay. No that's fine. Just curious.

Dan: Yeah. Definitely I look back on it, and there was a major miscommunication, and I started saying I see where they're coming from culturally.

Interviewer: All right. Did you see that quote that I had there from Daniel Kahl?

Dan: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you agree with that? That there's like a middle ground, or like a niche that you can find, where you have your balance in the middle?

Dan: I think that's what I've done.

Interviewer: Yeah. It sounds like it.

Dan: I'm running a company. I'm in Lion's Club. I'm in Chamber of Commerce. Speaking of micro-aggressions, just a quick example. I was at a Chamber of Commerce meeting and the mayor came up to me after... The mayor was speaking, and he kept looking at me and then when he was done speaking, he came straight over to me. He said, "What are you doing here?" The idea that I would be there as a member of the business community just didn't come to his mind.

Interviewer: You live in a fairly small town area, no?

Dan: Yes. It's 40,000.

Interviewer: It's not super tiny, but not super huge either.

Dan: No. But anyway, I found a niche. I'm in the community. I'm in the business community, but I'm definitely using my skills in English and business. I tend to have far fewer problems hiring school teachers than a lot of the Japanese school owners I know. It doesn't mean that every person that came from America necessarily has that skill, but I think coming from America definitely makes that easier. A lot of the things that Japanese owners complain about, I understand, root of where it's coming from.

Interviewer: That's definitely important. Are you close to your Japanese in-laws?

Dan: Relatively.

Interviewer: Do they live near you?

Dan: The city, about a, depending on traffic, a 35 to 40 minute drive.

Interviewer: Do you have Japanese friends who you only speak Japanese with?

Dan: Most of my Japanese friends.

Interviewer: I would guess so. That sounds right. Do you consider Japan your home?

Dan: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you feel any daily stress, living in Japan?

Dan: Every time I try to communicate and doesn't communicate as well as I'd like to.

Interviewer: You feel a little stress there?

Dan: I feel stressed there. I feel the same stress when miscommunications happen in the US, but they happen here more often. The level of stress is probably a little bit high.

Interviewer: Do you ever have reverse culture shock when you go home?

Dan: Oh definitely.

Interviewer: Yeah, you have that?

Dan: Oh definitely. Yeah.

Interviewer: Any daily life problems? It doesn't sound like you would. I'm not going to ask you that.

Dan: I mean, not so much any more.

Interviewer: Do you have any dissatisfaction living in Japan? Any things that you wish would change?

Dan: Well, I wish that people wouldn't try to talk English to me. Just when they see me. I find, actually, it doesn't happen so much in Yamagata, but it happens a lot in Tokyo. I'm actually down in Osaka right now, and it happens a lot here. People just see me, you know. Or when I travel at the airport.

Interviewer: Do you have any anecdotes?

Dan: I can think of, kind of going back to the situation, the cultural different situations. After the JET program, I was a *jokin koshi* at a high school. I wasn't an ALT, I was actually a fukutomi for a sub head *fukutanin*. It's on the trips and so forth. There's a lot of cultural miscommunications there. When I got the job, I had told them I wanted to teach by myself. I didn't want to be an ALT. When I received the job, I was an ALT at first, but I was like I want to teach by myself. The next April they were still going to have me as an ALT, and I said I wouldn't have taken this job. They were really surprised. The idea that... Their idea was that they were screening me for the position, the idea that I was screening them wasn't... One that I thought was interesting, later on I was the first year students. The first year students are taken on an overnight trip... It was I---- I think. So, the students were all in bed and the teachers are up drinking, and we've got take the students around the next day. It's *shizen no ie*. So, about midnight I should go to bed, because I'm thinking I need to be responsible and take care of the kids, the students, the next day. Next morning, when I wake up, one of the male Japanese teachers said hey did you have a good sleep, looking at me kind of accusingly. Then, some of the other teachers were talking and I realized later, putting it all together, that what had happened is, I was the youngest teacher so it was my job to stay up and pour drinks for the older teachers. I was thinking from an American perspective, I've got to take care of these kids tomorrow.

Interviewer: How dare you?

Dan: Responsible. To them, my being responsible was taking my position as the youngest teacher. Staying up, pouring drinks for them, and being the last one to go to sleep. The fact that I went to sleep early was abdicating my responsibilities as the youngest teacher. That was a cultural...

Interviewer: Yeah I can see that. That was a good story.

Dan: I was only a ALT that very first... Becoming an ALT at first made sense because I started in August.

Interviewer: What kind of person do you think ends up living in Japan for a 20 years?

Dan: What I wrote here, just kind of preliminary, as one sentence. I wrote, "Someone looking for a challenge, or who maybe feels they don't fit in their home culture."

Interviewer: You split it into two types.

Dan: I think there's some people who just want to go abroad, they want a challenge. They get to Japan, they're here for a while, and they realize, Oh I like it, or it works well for me, or they meet someone. Then i think there's a lot of people too, who they just don't feel like a good fit in their home culture, and they're trying to get away. I think some people are probably a combination of both. I have one of my teachers from Britain who just has no wish to ever go back. The only reason

he does is so that his parents can meet his daughter. His wife likes going back, but he doesn't.

Interviewer: When you meet a new arrival, someone who's been here for two or three years, what differences do you see in yourself compared to them?

Dan: Knowledge of subtleties. Well, knowledge and observation of subtleties. And also, perspective on where they live. People who have been here two to three years tend to still think of themselves as guest. Obviously, that's a generalization. Of course. I understand.

Interviewer: Many of the things that bother me, tend not to bother them because they don't think of themselves as living here.

Interviewer: Right.

### **019 Barbara**

Interviewer: At the very beginning when you first came you were excited. Then you experienced some culture shock after how long of a period?

Barbara: After 6 months. I don't know if it was a culture shock or homesickness ...

Interviewer: Homesickness?

Barbara: They mean the same thing, but for the first 6 months they were an adjustment period.

Interviewer: Did you have a honeymoon period when you came? Just completely fun all the time, and time flying by?

Barbara: Time is still flying by. I wouldn't call that the honeymoon period, but I couldn't tell you when it ended.

Interviewer: Okay, that's all right. Why did you first come to Japan?

Barbara: Good question. I graduated at university. That was in '93, and I was so, so lucky. I was working part-time for a bank, and there happened to be an opening at another branch for a full-time job. I was really enjoying it, but I saw an ad in the paper. "Come Teach in Japan", so I came to teach in Japan. It was a friend, we kind of dared each other. He took a job as a musician on a cruise ship. I took a job teaching for Nova. I was thinking about Nova or JET. I liked Nova better, because I had a say in where I could live.

Interviewer: I see, what was your original plan when you first came?

Barbara: It was a one year contract, and a one year visa. I came here for one year with my family's blessing. It's not so much like they blessed me, but they said, "Get out of here." Coming from an immigrant family they understood the importance of living in another country. They said, "Hurry up. Now is your chance to do it." Nobody expected me to stay this long, but my mother in particular is really happy I've stayed.

Interviewer: You didn't really expect to stay very long, just one year at the beginning?

Barbara: Yeah, just the one year, but then ... Even when I was hired, they told me that getting your visa and contract renewed is like your annual visit to the dentist. It just so ... The company; they did everything for me. It was so easy. I just had to hand in an envelope to immigration. That made the process really easy for me to stay.

Interviewer: How long did you realize you were going to stay here longer?

Barbara: I have no idea.

Interviewer: You really don't know? You never really made that decision, it just happened?

Barbara: Yeah.

Interviewer: You are close to family back home?

Barbara: Yes, my mom and I chat every day.

Interviewer: Really, every day?

Barbara: She's on Facebook. I'm on Facebook.

Interviewer: That's true.

Barbara: My mom is 65 this year. She could retire from her job at the same bank. She'll probably work part-time.

Interviewer: Your mom is young.

Barbara: Yeah, she was a teenage bride.

Interviewer: Really?

Barbara: My brother followed me here in '98. He came to live in '99. He stayed in Osaka for 10 years. He married a girl from Shizuoka.

Interviewer: Really?

Barbara: They got it into their heads, "Let's go to Australia," so that's where they are.

Interviewer: Really?

Barbara: My brother and I ... I have haven't heard from him in months. There're cousins and aunts, and everything. We talk all the time.

Interviewer: Okay.

Barbara: Yeah.

Interviewer: How important do you think it is to learn a language to live here, to learn Japanese?

Barbara: In O----, not very. It depends on what you want to do.

Interviewer: I see, do you think people can do well without it?

Barbara: Yes, if you want to teach English, and make a lot of money. Maybe it was more true in the past. You don't have to knock yourself out, and learn the language if you're just here to make a quick buck.

Interviewer: How would you consider yourself assimilated in Japanese society?

Barbara: Absolutely not. Definitely not, I think there must be like one person in a million who might answer, "Yeah, of course my friends accept me, and I'm Japanese. I love *ikebana* and whatever martial arts."

Interviewer: Do you think sometimes people get stuck living in Japan?

Barbara: Yes, unhappy marriages. Just thinking about a guy who lives in my neighborhood, or a few people actually. They want to stay here. Not that they want to stay here. Their kids are here, so even though they're divorced, they stay.

Interviewer: Have you ever been personally discriminated against?

Barbara: Every day. Okay, not every day, but very often. I don't know if chip on my shoulder. Of course there's a chip on my shoulder. Just yesterday at work we were talking about people ... When you're renting an apartment you hear the stories like "*gaijin dame*" blah, blah, blah. I've never experienced that, but I've known people you have. I've never experienced that, but at work I went for an interview at ... It was an interview for a part time job at a university. I got the job. I said, "Well actually at this point in my career, I really am looking for something full time." They said something like, "Actually at the moment we don't have any positions for native speakers."

You look at JREC quite often you see the language teaching positions therefore, and how the disguise it as must be a native speaker of Japanese. I think that's pretty systemic. At work we have these. Even from where I've taught also at the YMCA. They have these arbitrary categories that really bug me. You're a white person so you get paid on the native teachers scale. Even though you're a white person from Brazil, or the Netherlands, or Iran, or whatever. I wish, of course I want these people to get paid the same as I am, because they work just as hard. They bring other experiences that Japanese people might not, but why do they make these arbitrary categories it really, really bugs me.

Interviewer: I understand, as for micro-aggressions, what kind of micro-aggressions do you experience?

Barbara: Uh....

Interviewer: All right, calm down.

Barbara: One of my favorites is at work by students, or people in the office. They imagine, "You're a white person so I have to call you by your first name." That is easily in my top three. The other one is that they think that it's okay to call me by my given name. Also it's not necessarily me personally, but you know the term, "*yobi sute*"?

Interviewer: *yobi sute*, mm-hmm (affirmative)

Barbara: The way those rules are applied it really, really bugs me too

Interviewer: When they do that?

Barbara: Yeah, they do that to us. They don't do that as much to each other. Or even I had a Google on Yahoo. There were even cases when they are referring to foreign athletes we're not Smith-*senshu* we are *Tanaka-senshu*. They just refer to the foreign athletes by their long and weird family names with no *senshu* as the title. When you go to the store, I don't know what it's like Kyushu, but here in Osaka people can get a little bit weird. They see a white person they think, "Oh, no, I must speak English. Even if it is broken." They don't know I've been living here for twenty years, they don't know I'm smarter than I look and can actually use Japanese.

My husband, he tells me to calm down about it, and I should feel sorry for these people. They're ignorant or whatever. Just the opposite thing happened on the weekend at work. I don't normally work on weekends or overtime, but if necessary I will. There's some guy coming in to repair the air conditioning. He sees me, and he asks me naturally. "Excuse me, can I use this room? It's going to take an hour, is that okay?" So why do some people do it, and some people don't?

My husband and I rented they were asking for the *hoshonin*. I think they assumed that we would ask his parents. We don't like to ask his parents for stuff, because they hold everything over our heads. We just went to a private company. Paid I don't know, maybe thirty thousand yen just for this private guarantor company. That is just bogus.

In Osaka we have quite a lot of Koreans. I teach these students and they show me that they have the old *gaikokujin torokusho*. These people; they can't get government jobs. They can't do this, and they can't do that. My heart really goes out for them. To listen to my husband's mother. She's going on about, "Yeah, these Chinese people they come fresh off the boat and they sign up on welfare." I'm sorry I have no disrespect to you and your country, but she sounds like a tea bagger.

Interviewer: I know, teabagger, have you ever experienced a cultural difference that's made you want to leave the country?

Barbara: Not right then and there, but my husband I we come home from a rough day at work. My husband he's ... What's the word? He's not internationally minded at all. We just come home from a rough day at the office, and we just want to pack it in, and escape to Canada. Our favorite lament is *boumei shitai*. It's not one thing that makes me want to pack it up then and there, but just after a bad day...

Interviewer: It's kind of an overall feeling?

Barbara: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you think it takes a commitment to live in Japan?

Barbara: Not necessarily. Some people they decide they come here when they're twenty five. They love martial arts, and they love flower arranging. They love things Japanese. I can imagine those people are really committed. Some people; some of my friends are really adamant I never want to go back, live in the States, or Canada, or whatever. It's like, "How do you know?" You never know what's going to happen to your family, or for example with China, or with your own job situation. My motto is never say never.

Interviewer: What about advantages to being a foreigner?

Barbara: Yes, at work this really makes me mad. I experienced an advantage as a white foreigner. The YMCA dispatched me to some kindergarten. I found out later that the kindergarten had refused some American teacher, because she was Japanese-American. They really weren't that interested. For the dispatch jobs, I'm talking about the crap dispatch jobs to go to kindergarten jobs or board of EdThis is what I hear about it in the union. "These people; they just want a white person there." How do I say? I have mixed feelings about that, because I want these foreigners to do well but I don't want people to pretend, "Oh, this person is white therefore they are a native speaker of English." You understand my feeling?

Interviewer: I totally understand.

Barbara: It's quite embarrassing to admit. Sometimes we get away with certain behaviors, because we, "don't know".

Interviewer: Any examples of that.

Barbara: This was years ago. I was using my cell phone in the designated, "Don't use your cell phone", seat. The conductor came up, and gave me words. I pretended not to understand English.

Interviewer: I see.

Barbara: Yes, and I don't understand the English language either, because I'm Finnish. I can lapse into Finnish and ...

Interviewer: I see, that's right.

Barbara: Which then gets also infuriating, because they have to guess what country I'm from. "Are you Russian, are you German?"

Interviewer: Anyway.

Barbara: You've heard the term English bandit, right?

Interviewer: English bandit, yeah.

Barbara: Just last Saturday, I had to work that day. I was getting my takeout curry for lunch. It's just outside the school gates. This perfect stranger accosts me and starts. The first question is like, "Excuse me, where are you from?" That kind of bugs me. It's like, "Excuse me, who are you?". Of course I just stared at him blankly until he went, and bothered the security guard instead.

Interviewer: Did you read that quote by Daniel Kahl that was in there?

Barbara: Yeah, but it's annoying. I imagine you are white.

Interviewer: I am white.

Barbara: Anytime we go out in the street we're a white person. Anything we do represents the rest of the world. In my mother-in-law's words it's like, there's Japanese and then there's *gaijin*. *Gaijin* can mean 7 billion people minus the 270 something million living here. This has been the mentality which has been dispersed ad infinitum. It bugs me that we have to play the part of some ambassador. That I always have to smile and in my neighborhood I'm not allowed to get into an argument with my husband. Not that I would. We do bring something special but I feel a little bit resentful of that.

Interviewer: I see, what about Japanese friends? Do you have any Japanese friends? Do you have any Japanese friends you only speak Japanese to or is it mostly people that speak English?

Barbara: I have a few friends that ... Some friends don't speak any English. Some of them do. It's a very small handful. How do I say? I think our relationship is really so cool. That we know exactly when to use English. We know exactly when to use Japanese. It's not because ... It's just ... You know like when you ... Well, maybe you don't know. When there is the perfect word or just that mood or whatever. In those moments I think it's really neat that we can just switch back and forth as if maybe my mom and I were speaking in Finnish and English and lapsing back and forth. I think that's really nice. Unfortunately on a lighter side note here I don't have any Japanese friends that I would tell my deepest and darkest secrets to. I wish I did have such a girlfriend, but I don't.

Interviewer: Do you speak English with your husband or you use Japanese with your husband?

Barbara: Only Japanese. He doesn't speak English. He hates English, but he loves things foreign. He's so happy he married me, because he can have these weird and exotic foods from Canada.

Interviewer: Do you think that women who marry Japanese men, I don't know about the people around here. Do majority of those people speak Japanese, the women?

Barbara: I assume you mean white people.

Interviewer: I'm going to say yeah, I guess you could say white people. Western people, I'm using Western because it does encompass people from America who could be African-American or Asian or ...

Barbara: I think especially if she's a mother. She's going to be a lot more likely to use Japanese. Some of my friends they have kids and they have to deal with school things and friends' things, so it's-

Interviewer: A lot of people you know. They speak Japanese.

Barbara: Yeah.

Interviewer: It's just a common factor I've noticed. ...on the men's side. In my case I only speak Japanese with my wife. According to the people that I know supposing this is so rare. I know several people who do the same thing. I think it's because the

ones who don't speak Japanese with their wives tend to be more grouped together. They notice each other, because I would never invite ... If they only speak English and my wife and I only speak Japanese, it's hard to go to dinner with a couple like that. My wife won't speak English that much and he won't speak Japanese. Then what's going to happen, we have to choose a language. We can't use both languages, because his wife can speak English and Japanese, and he can only speak English. Then my wife can basically only speak Japanese, so which language do we choose?

Barbara: I'm so insensitive about that. I just say, "Let's go and talk with the Peterson's." The Peterson's they're bilingual. Of course there's three of us or three or four of us. Of course we are going to use English and my husband is kind of left to it but he seems, he doesn't mind just because he is enjoying listening to that, "noise" atmosphere. He's told me not to worry about that. For example, I'm not the world's best church goer, but Christmas and Easter we'll go. There's a Finnish Lutheran Church in N-----.

If my husband's in the mood he'll join me. At least I'll tell him what's going on. I just gloss, I won't do a word for word translation because I want to enjoy it too. At least I don't want him to feel left out. I'll say he's talking about this or they're talking about that, but then at the end when it comes to the kids the western women I know they know Japanese. They are also more interested in making sure that the kids learn English. If it's a western guy he's a lot less likely to push that I think.

Interviewer: I think it depends on the person. There seems to be a lot of people's big worry is that their children won't speak English. It's been one of the major factors for some people going home, because their children get older once the child hits five or six they start to realize at the dinner table nobody is speaking English to them. They don't understand what their children are saying. Their children who is five or six speak better Japanese than them. It's time to go back to whatever country they're from and that's the big flag for a lot of them to go home.

Barbara: Interesting.  
Interviewer: Are you close to your Japanese in laws?  
Barbara: On the surface we are best friends, but when we are in the same room we hate each other.  
Interviewer: No, I understand. You don't have to get too deep into that.  
Barbara: I'll just say that his mother and father are crazy, but I love the extended family. They are always so nice to me. We've had no grief about him marrying a foreigner. I mean he got married late in life so maybe they are a little relieved that they got rid of him.

Interviewer: They got rid of him. Do you consider Japan your home?  
Barbara: I don't know.  
Interviewer: Do you feel any stress on like a daily basis?  
Barbara: Yeah.  
Interviewer: Would that be linked to micro-aggressions or-  
Barbara: That's just one source, but with my own life I feel stressed from work. Not just the micro-aggressions, and discrimination at work, but the work load. Then my own studies I feel stressed. I worry about my family so I feel stressed. I think maybe it's more age related than geography related.

Interviewer: What about reverse culture shock do you feel that when you go home to Canada?  
Barbara: Not really, but if I visit it's maybe for about two or three weeks at the most. It's something I do worry about. Like I told you my husband and I have these fantasies where we just pack and it all, leave and fly back to Canada. If it ever happens it might be when we retire. He works for O--- City so he would get a good pension. We go there and I worry more about me than I worry about him more than the reverse culture shock.

I don't know what to expect, but I do notice it. My friends who've gone back already. That's how they've coped, and to be proactive about it.

Interviewer: Do you have any dissatisfaction with life in ...? Sounds like you have some dissatisfaction at work maybe.

Barbara: Yeah, sure I feel dissatisfaction at work, but I also feel satisfaction for like I was saying that there are certain job openings that are open only to foreigners or whatever. I know I do have that working to my advantage. Even for this foreign position next year I will be working full time. It's only because the person who left said I highly recommend this teacher. There was misunderstanding with the hiring practice and they thought they would get me through as a part timer forever. I think, "What, are you guys nuts?" Why would I leave my other job to take this? We are working into something full time, but ...

Interviewer: Is that a university position?

Barbara: Yeah, just for appearances they think it's nice to have a westerner on the faculty I think. Open campus days, I'm always happy to help out with those. At the end of the day I know my presence might probably attract more people.

Interviewer: Do you have any anecdotes that would be an example of your life in japan or just life in japan in general? Something that you might tell other friends back home in Canada. This is the japan story or your ...

Barbara: I'll tell you one about when I first arrived here. Do you remember when we first arrived we had to hand write letters to our family and put them in the post.

Interviewer: Really, I don't remember that.

Barbara: The internet had just been invented by Al Gore.

Interviewer: The Internets.

Barbara: They were still in their infancy. I thought it was so weird I was writing to my favorite aunt and her husband loves barbecue. I'm saying how I'm meeting these funny people from Australia and England and all these different countries. He was teasing me, "Hey, why don't you marry an Australian? Go to Australia and have barbecue everyday." I thought it was so weird that here I seek out ... I don't know if I seek out, but maybe it's also partly because of the (foreign group name) activities. I end up making friends from so many different countries.

Not that I don't like Japanese because I don't make friends with them, but that's just the way the opportunities through the (foreign group name) I hang with these people a lot. If I have a party, the usual suspects will be (foreign group name) members. I think that it's so weird that I should come to such a homogeneous insular country and make friends with people from so many countries and continents. I think that's weird.

Interviewer: Especially nowadays with the way things are changing so rapidly. It's interesting. What kind of people do you think end up in japan?

Barbara: The people who could be happy living anywhere.

Interviewer: Then it's also the people like we mentioned before that kind of get stuck here, but ...

Barbara: That was their case. The top one is people who love japan. Number two is the people who cliché is my term, but the people who are open minded or easy going. Unfortunately some of these, usually guys get divorced. They can't leave because then they'll never see their kids again even though japan has ratified the Hague convention.

Interviewer: I know a couple of those guys.

Barbara: Me too. One of them just recently he found out he could never see his kids again. That's sad.

Interviewer: Why do they do that now? Of course the wife wasn't thinking now is a great time to do it, but that's just how it worked. People like me, not that I don't like things Japanese, but I was not interested in anything Japanese until I came here. Now I'm really, really glad that I've come to O--- because it suits my personality. The good food, the comedy and things like that.

Interviewer: To sum up, I have one more question here. When you meet a new arrival in japan what differences do you see in yourself compared to them?

Barbara: I'll ask an easier question of myself. The me now and the me twenty years ago. Now I'm a lot more confident especially at work, but also in other situations. I can handle myself better in situations where I get pissed off or whatever. These people fresh off the boat who've only been here for five years ...

Interviewer: Fresh off the boat, five years. The confidence, that's for yourself some people here they're overly confident when they first come. Which is a great problem as well.

Barbara: I started being confident at work, but who's to say that now I'm forty five maybe I'll be more confident if I'd stayed in Canada. I don't know. With the self esteem thing like when you speak Japanese do you find your identity changes?

Interviewer: My identity or my personality changes?

## 020 Lee

Interviewer: Could you just tell me about the first time when you came to Japan? Just in a few words. Not your actual story, but just how it felt?

Lee: Sure. Well, I was 18 and I was alone and I had virtually no idea what to expect frankly. So, really it was a curious deer-in-the-headlights feeling I suppose.

Interviewer: When you say deer in the headlights, kind of captured?

Lee: Well, there I was. I was in the middle of this completely unknown city, country, city, and I had no idea what people did on a regular basis. I don't know what I was expecting. I mean, I had childhood images of Feudal Japan and here I was in the middle of a metropolis sort of thing, so really I had a quite curious experience.

Interviewer: So it just kind of really sparked your curiosity you would say?

Lee: Well, I mean obviously I was curious to begin with. That's why I was there, but this was unusual, being in a place where you had no idea, you had no preconceptions about what it might be other than childhood images of Feudal Japan, ninja and samurai, you know?

Interviewer: Right, right.

Lee: And then finally, after being 18 years of age and you arrive in this new place and there is not even a glimpse of these things. You're in the middle of a metropolis scenario.

Interviewer: When you came when you were 18, that was only for a short time, right?

Lee: 3 months.

Interviewer: 3 months. So what about the time when you came here to live? Could you tell me about that?

Lee: Yeah, well, obviously my experiences after my first 3-month tour and then having shared and lived with Japanese people in Australia, when I say share, I mean shared an apartment, and then finally, years later, arriving in Japan, obviously I had a better idea of what to expect and what kind of people were there and what I'd be up against, so in that sense I knew more of what to expect, so it wasn't a surprise and I wasn't overwhelmed by anything. I was quite more or less prepared for what was ahead of me.

Interviewer: All right. So, did you plan to stay for the long term when you first came?

Lee: When I moved in 2004, I didn't have a specific time frame in mind, but I had sort of packed up all my staff, packed it away in Australia and made the move to Japan with the view to staying for at least several years. I certainly wouldn't have entertained the idea of 10 or 20 or anything like that at that time. I was more sort of just go with the flow, see what happens, if I didn't like I'll get out, if I like it, well, I'll just take it as it comes.

Interviewer: So, how long did it take you to realize that you were going to be here longer than you really first expected?

Lee: Well, as I said, I never really thought about it so much because in the back of my mind I always had the knowledge that if I wanted to get out, I could get out at any time.

Interviewer: I see.

Lee: So, really, as I said, I just sort of took it as it came, whatever came I took it on board and ...

Interviewer: Went with the flow.

Lee: Went with the flow, yeah.

Interviewer: Are you close to your family back home?

Lee: Oh absolutely. I go back every year.

Interviewer: You go back every year? Do you talk a lot online?

Lee: Yeah, Skype, e-mails.

Interviewer: How many times a month?

Lee: Oh, particularly recently because I've had my son born and my parents want to see him on Skype, we do it every weekend or every second weekend, but before

then more or less the same, a couple times a month we might have a Skype or certainly a few times a month there'd be e-mails exchanged.

Interviewer: Do you find that you use more Japanese in your regular life than English or do you use more English?

Lee: Well, without a doubt, Japanese. I work in a Japanese company and everybody there is Japanese. There's really not an option there.

Interviewer: Right.

Lee: Japanese.

Interviewer: Do you think it's important to learn Japanese to live in Japan?

Lee: Oh absolutely. I think it's essential really. If you wanted to participate fully and understand and succeed in Japan, I think it's essential really.

Interviewer: What do you think the differences are about what people can accomplish with it or without it? I mean, when someone doesn't have the Japanese skill, how big of a hit is that? You probably know people who don't speak the language who still live here for a long time. How do you think they succeed?

Lee: Well, I think if you can't speak Japanese, obviously you're not going to starve because you can communicate with people on a basic level and point and make gestures and get your point across and so you can certainly get by. By all means, there are Japanese people who speak English and will make great efforts to help you out with what you need, but putting the question of being able to survive and such aside for a moment, what are you missing out on is really sort of how I think of it. I mean, when I think of all the friends that I've made and all the conversations that I've had and all the laughs, all the experiences that I've had as a result of being able to communicate my thoughts and my feelings and being able to participate with the Japanese people, I think the people that obviously can't speak Japanese miss out on a great deal of those experiences.

Interviewer: Have you assimilated yourself 100% in Japanese society? Assimilated being that you really aren't pointed out as different?

Lee: I definitely wouldn't say 100%. Frankly speaking, I don't think that in this current era, in general, foreigners are considered as equals or assimilated in Japanese society by Japanese people. I just don't think that's possible, but having said that, as far as is possible, I think that, well, if you could put it on a scale if you will, I've assimilated closer to say 80% or something like this.

Interviewer: So, do you find that there are some sort of compromises that you need to make? For example, like if you have your Australian identity and there are just some things in Japan that you just decide I'm not going to do, I want to do it my way, but it's still beneficial to the Japanese around you, do you ever find yourself doing things like that?

Lee: That's a tough question. I don't think I've ever felt like I'm making any compromises. I've never felt like I've had to throw a part of my own identity away or I've never felt like I've had to relinquish part of my own culture to participate here. I don't know, I think it's perhaps because I just took an open-minded view and whatever was expected of me or whatever people were expecting I just sort of went with the flow and I think perhaps, to raise a popular phrase, when in Rome.

One example might be, say, the use of humor or the way one speaks. I mean obviously being in Japan here, the humor is a little bit different than Australian humor and the kinds of nuances and mannerisms and way of speaking that I would use in Australia, even though I have the ability in Japanese to say those things, I don't say them. I choose not to say them because I realize that it just wouldn't go down well. So, I think there are cases where I've wanted to have an Australian joke or wanted to express an Australian point of view, but at the same time understanding that it just wouldn't be taken as I'd like. I've decided not to go down that path.

Interviewer: Oh okay, so there's a conscious decision there not to do that?

Lee: Yeah.

- Interviewer: Did you happen to read that quote that I sent to you? Daniel Kahl said it. Do you think that's a fair quote?
- Lee: Absolutely. I think having multiple skills in any job or any situation is usually an advantage. In the case of foreigners in a country, I think the only option if one wants to survive is to find middle ground and you have to have an innate way of assimilating. As I say, having multiple skills is obviously advantageous in any situation most of the time and in Daniel's Kahl's case, obviously he has the best of both worlds, but again, it's sort of like a Jack-of-all-trades, master-of-none, situation really isn't it? You get by and, as a result of your multiple skills, you do have some success, and obviously there's varying levels of that success, but Jack of all trades, master of none, is perhaps how I might sum some of that up a little bit.
- Interviewer: Okay, all right, so having a little bit of knowledge, being almost like a generalist almost, right? ..... Do you think people get lost in their life in Japan?
- Lee: Absolutely, I think so. I think it's easy to get caught up in the wonder of a new country or a culture.
- Interviewer: At the beginning?
- Lee: Yeah, for sure. I mean I haven't lived extensively in other countries, so I can't say for certain that this is unique to Japan, but I think there are some unique factors in Japan that make getting lost here perhaps more of a likelihood than in some other countries.
- Interviewer: Is that because, in many cases, Japanese are not so confrontational? Do you agree that Japanese are not confrontational?
- Lee: Most of the time, for sure, yes. There's really no confrontation there. Getting lost in Japan, I think part of it is because it is, first and foremost, an Eastern Asian country, which is so very much opposite in many ways to a Western nation, so I think there's a big factor there, and then you go down to the personality of the people and the way they interact and the way they see foreigners and the way they treat foreigners. I think that, in that way, I mean I'm not going to go into any specifics here, but I think the way that Japanese people themselves interact with foreigners enhances this feeling of perhaps wonder and intrigue that many foreigners feel towards Japan.
- Interviewer: Okay, all right. Have you ever been personally discriminated against?
- Lee: I have not been discriminated against in way that contained any personal malice, but by virtue of being a foreigner, there have been occasions where that has been pointed out, so to speak, and therefore essentially that has been a discrimination, but it's never been with any sort of malice. The Japanese people that made their comments were doing so in humor, but quite conscious of the fact that they were pointing out that I was a foreigner.
- Interviewer: So, what's the example or could you give an example?
- Lee: A very basic example was you tripping in the street for example. They call out *gaijin* or mothers and fathers that you would hear talking about some foreigners in the park. They use the word *gaijin*, which it not necessarily a derogatory term in and of itself, but often in the context of how it's used, it obviously does make a distinction between them and us and so, in that way, you could say it was discrimination. I stress again, it's not necessarily with any malice.
- Interviewer: Do you think some people are too sensitive? Some Western foreigners, do you think they're too sensitive about the word *gaijin*?
- Lee: Well, yeah, I think it depends on the depth at which those foreigners understand the meaning of the word and understand how Japanese feel about foreigners in the first place.
- Interviewer: When you say the depth, are you talking about the time they've lived in Japan or are you talking about language ability?
- Lee: Well, both. I think as you learn more of the language, you understand what the word *gaijin* means and its origins and how people use it, either in a friendly way or in a seriously derogatory way. Also, as you spend more time in the country,

you learn to sort of accept the fact that this is a nation that has essentially been very separate from the rest of the world for quite a long period of time. There's a lot of history there concerning them and us issues, so there's no surprises there. The term microaggression some people, this is kind of like the big thing recently, actually it was bigger two years ago, so have you ever had that? Could you give me some examples if you've had it?

Interviewer:

Lee: So, essentially, the way I understand microaggression is that really they're faux pas really, aren't they?

Interviewer:

Lee: Yeah, this is how I look at them, so in that sense I think even people, regardless of whether they're in a foreign country or not, in this case Japan, they've been the butt of a faux pas if you will.

Interviewer:

Lee: It is real French I'm sure.

Interviewer:

Lee: So yeah, what can I say there?

Interviewer:

Lee: Does it bother you when someone says, oh, your eyes are a different color?

Interviewer:

Lee: Oh, not at all.

Interviewer:

Lee: It doesn't bother you if someone says, oh, your child looks more like a *gaijin*?

Interviewer:

Lee: Me, personally, no it doesn't bother me. However, having said that, I do understand how it may bother other people, but me personally? No.

Interviewer:

Lee: Do you think it bothers you less because you can communicate with them in Japanese or the people who do get bothered by that might have a language deficiency? Is there any weight to that?

Interviewer:

Lee: Well, I think the people that have a language deficiency are then those people who possibly don't fully understand the culture and the mindset of the Japanese as well as people who have an understanding of the language do. Therefore, it's perhaps likely that those people may be more offended by those microaggressions than people who do have a command of the language. It could be likely, yes. I mean, from my point of view, I tend to consider myself reasonably knowledgeable about how Japanese people are thinking in these sorts of issues, so therefore with that understanding I'm not so bothered by it.

Interviewer:

Lee: Okay. Have you ever had a situation that you would consider complicated by a cultural difference? Something that was so bad that it made you want to go home?

Interviewer:

Lee: I can't say I have. No.

Interviewer:

Lee: Do you think it takes commitment to live in Japan for the long term?

Interviewer:

Lee: Well, I think if you want to live anywhere, I think you need to be committed to the idea of giving it a proper go, so I don't think it's an issue necessarily restricted to living in the foreign country of Japan.

Interviewer:

Lee: What are some of the advantages of being a westerner in Japan?

Interviewer:

Lee: Well, I don't know if this is the correct term, but the word "exploit", it sounds a little bit sort of sinister and malicious.

Interviewer:

Lee: It does.

Interviewer:

Lee: I think at the end of the day, it's true for even being in your home country, the way people perceive you allows you to take certain steps in the course of your daily work that bring about the outcome of a better result during your work. For example, if you know that people are uncertain of your abilities or if they don't trust you and you're aware of that, then perhaps you feel less confident about moving forward or getting people together and going forward to achieve a certain result in the workplace, but on the other hand if you have the trust of people, then you feel a little bit more confident and then you can bring people together. I think in the context of Japan and people in the Japanese workforce and being a foreigner in the midst of that environment, you can take advantage, if you will, of people being perhaps not fully comprehending of what you may or may not do in the course of your work and take action in that way.

Interviewer:

Lee: Do you think you get cut slack sometimes because you're a foreigner?

- Lee: I've certainly experienced this. I've experienced it myself, but I've also seen other foreigners experience this. For example, the particular foreigner in question was not able to read certain documents due to the *kanji* that was in there, due to the difficulty of the documents and, therefore, rather than require the participation of this individual and have them participate in the work that would be normally required of a Japanese person, they overlooked that and said, look, that's okay, they can't do the Japanese, so we won't require him to do this particular work, it's okay. So, in that sense.
- Interviewer: You've already said it a couple of times, do you think a lot of this stuff, after you've been in Japan a long time, it just seems like, well, Japan or Australia, it really doesn't matter, it just grows into like work and family? Does it really not change? The foundation of it?
- Lee: Absolutely. I've long thought this when people ask me similar questions, friends and whatnot when we've had these sorts of discussions, one phrase I always put out there is that people are people. It doesn't matter what country or what culture you're from, at the end of the day essentially people want the same thing. Obviously, there's various shades about how we go about getting what we want and going after that happiness that we're all after in life. So, as you say, sure, after you've gotten your job, after you've gotten your savings, you've gotten your house, you've gotten your kids, while that's ultimately, in most countries I think, the target of it really isn't it, where people want to be? So, in that sense, when you break it down so simply, I don't think there's much difference. There's not any need to sort of spend so much time ironing out the cultural differences.
- Interviewer: Japanese friends. Do you have Japanese friends who you only speak Japanese with?
- Lee: Yes, I do.
- Interviewer: What about your in-laws? Do you have in-laws? Are they both living?
- Lee: Yes.
- Interviewer: Do you speak Japanese with them?
- Lee: Well, there's not really any choice there. If you want to speak, it has to be Japanese because they don't speak English. Yes.
- Interviewer: Do you consider Japan your home?
- Lee: Yes, yes I do, but ultimately I suppose as a second home really. I mean, I'm still very conscious of my Australian origins and I'm always open to the possibility of moving back to Australia should that become desirable, but that being in the back of my mind is always an option. That aside, then yes, absolutely, Japan is my home and this is where I am.
- Interviewer: Does it ever bother you when somebody recognizes you, like they see you and they think maybe you're new to Japan? It's often drunk people I know, but how do you feel, it kind of points you out as very different, doesn't it?
- Lee: Yes, absolutely. The issue for me there is not about being pointed out per se, it's more that they're considering me to be deficient if you will, perhaps. They may not be, but there's a small part of me that sort of feels that they might be thinking on their side that I'm deficient in Japanese so they therefore feel obligated to speak to me in English, but that aside, I mean this has happened to me on many occasions and I'm very well used to it now. I just go with the flow and return their conversation in English as best as I can or if it turns out that they can't continue in English, then I try and help out with Japanese as best as possible.
- Interviewer: Okay. Do you feel any stress in your daily life here?
- Lee: As a result of anything in particular?
- Interviewer: That you would consider different from Australia.
- Lee: You mean from a cultural standpoint? Like everyday and work is stressful, but that's not necessarily because it's a Japanese workplace, it's just work is work, so I guess you're asking more about whether Japan is. Not particularly. I wouldn't say stressful. Perhaps a little bit frustrating is that some of the signs up around the place or newspapers. That's quite difficult at times because I don't have

100% *kanji* recognition, so there's some signs that might look interesting or some articles that I'd like to read, but can't, so that's a little bit frustrating, but by no means would I say stressful.

Interviewer: Yes, I see. Do you ever experience reverse culture shock going back to Australia?

Lee: No, not really. As I said, I tend to go back once a year, at the latest once every two years. I also read the Australian news and generally try to keep up with what's going on, so I don't feel necessarily too distant from what's going on in that respect. At the same time, as a result of reading the news, I am aware of the certain kinds of things that happen in the country as opposed to Japan and so the differences are certainly in my mind, but I wouldn't say I experience reverse culture shock really.

Interviewer: Any dissatisfaction with living here?

Lee: I find it very frustrating that some of the natural environments, like rivers or beach sides, are ruined because of various human constructions and I also find that the power lines are still very much out of the ground and up in the air and in view, so what would normally be quite a beautiful environment is ruined by human transgression if you will. Other than that, other than the environmental sort of side, I don't have any dissatisfactions other than that I don't think really. I don't know if I've answered your question or if that's what you're getting at.

Interviewer: Basically that's enough. I mean if it bothers you, if it's a dissatisfaction, that's all I'm asking about. It could be about anything.

Lee: Yeah, no, I do find that quite sad really, when a lot of the natural environments are ruined really in a sense.

Interviewer: Highways over the countryside.

Lee: Yeah. You go hiking, for example, and there's in your face modern buildings or all sorts of things that don't necessarily need to be there, but they've been put there just because and it's unnecessary.

Interviewer: I understand. Do you have any anecdotes that kind of crystallize the whole living in Japan experience, maybe a story that you tell people back in Australia or a story you share with friends who live in Japan?

Lee: The first one was a long while ago, one of my first experiences here. It was when I was in university and everyone was in the computer room, sitting down, doing the work, and I had forgotten to bring some pencils and notepaper, so I decided to go up to the front desk and ask the attendant there if I could borrow a piece of paper and a pencil. Sitting right on the desk there, right in front of me, in front of her, was a mug with, I don't know, 15 or 20 pencils in there and a piece of notepaper sitting there. I asked if I could borrow a piece of paper and a pen and she refused me. It was quite astounding to me at the time that ironically there were quite a few pencils and paper on the desk and the reason was simply because that was the rule, that they didn't give out pencils and paper.

There were many more examples like this over the course of my experiences with Japan where people have just sort of followed the rules. I mean, sure, rules are important, but there are certain instances when I suppose we would expect them or we would like them to be bent if there were no foreseeable grave consequences involved and this is one example of that.

The other positive experience I have in Japan is going out and having a night out, or a day out, but having a night out. In Western cultures, the consumption of alcohol and the night scene is generally very heavy with, I don't know if there's an aggressive air or an air of danger involved, and that's quite simply very much the opposite to Japan. You can go out on a night in Japan and the copious amounts of alcohol consumed by Japanese and foreigners alike doesn't bring out any of the aggressive behavior or air of danger that you see in a lot of Western cultures. So, for that reason, you really can go out with this feeling of safety without this feeling of danger or the threat of some confrontational conflict, even when alcohol is involved, if it is involved at all. Japanese people tend to go very much

the other way when compared with foreigners in that sense. They are very benign if you will.

Interviewer: Okay, all right. What kind of person do you think ends up in Japan for 20 years, living here for 20 years? I'm using 20 years in this example.

Lee: Well, first of all, I think people who have an open mind and are willing to accept cultural differences are initially candidates. I mean, I think that goes without saying, but then those same people I would argue need to be unique again in that they must be willing to give up, so to speak, the typical path of life that most of their countrymen and countrywomen, if you will, are following in their home country. So, an open mind and the willingness to literally give up the path that most people take. Those are reasonably unique qualities. Finally, as I mentioned in a previous question, is that in general I think that aggressive and headstrong foreigners living long term in Japan are few and far between.

## 021 Theresa

Interviewer: What was is like when you first arrived in Japan if you had to describe it in a few words? Just a couple of adjectives would be best.

Theresa: No language ability.

Interviewer: No language ability.

Theresa: Didn't know what to expect. Came with my sister from California, C-----, California sister city K-----, I---- . Really did not know what to expect but open to new things.

Interviewer: You were open to new things.

Theresa: Right.

Interviewer: When you first came did you find that there was kind of a honeymoon period where you just enjoyed everything and was kind of a carefree time?

Theresa: Sort of. We were taken out by a lot of people around in town. That was 25 years ago. Things were different. For me after the first month or two I saw different things where I was like, why do they do that? Probably about five or six months into my first sojourn here, suddenly I was walking down the street it was like, a-ha. It's not why do they do that, what's the reason behind why they do that. That helped me be more open to understanding and trying to find out why they did things the way they did.

Interviewer: Why did you originally come? What was the plan when you first came?

Theresa: I was originally going to be a high school English teacher. I got to put myself through school and took a long time. I got a job in a hospital. I worked in a hospital for 15 years, loved it. It couldn't be advanced beyond where I was because there was no place to move except to the head of the department and he wasn't retiring for quite a while. I got a job in another hospital. That didn't pan out. It was eight months and I hated it and I quit, picked up a job that ended up being four years. My sister happened to call one day and said, "How would you like to go to Japan for a year?" I said what am i going to do in Japan? "Teach English." Okay, I'll try it.

Interviewer: So when you first came you weren't expecting to stay for the long term, right?

Theresa: What I thought was if I liked it I would stay longer. My sister ...

Interviewer: How long is longer? Is it just like two years or three years? You weren't expecting to stay ...

Theresa: I ended up staying for three years. And they were very happy with that. I was around 40 when I first came here. I had a good work ethic behind me and work experience compared to somebody who might be just out of college. The Board of Education liked me. I knew how to act in an office. I knew how to do a lot of things in a good work way. They liked me. A friend of mine told me about SIT and I decided I would go back and go to grad school because I was thinking about doing international student advising and study abroad advising rather than teaching English. Teaching English here 25 years ago was like knocking your head against the wall.

Interviewer: Are you close to your family in the States?

Theresa: Not super close.

Interviewer: Not super close. Do you talk to them at all?

Theresa: They're scattered all over the U.S. We don't call each other. We don't email each other very often.

Interviewer: When it comes to Japanese, you had mentioned before that you wish you had studied more before. Do you think it's important to learn the language when you come here?

Theresa: Yes.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Theresa: I think it's necessary. If you want to truly understand the culture and the people, you need to learn the language and the culture connected to it.

Interviewer: Right. What about yourself? You run a school. How do you run the school? Does somebody help you with the Japanese or ...?

Theresa: Yes. Originally 13 years ago I had a Japanese woman as a business partner. She had a British husband. He'd been here quite a while. He was on a JET program. Three years into the school we were doing pretty well. Three years into the school, he decided suddenly he wanted to do back to the U.K. That was tough because she as a mother knew other mothers brought in students. We had hired a part-time Japanese woman as a receptionist on Saturdays. She's still with me. She speaks English and she had lived in Canada for a year or two and also in Australia. And then when C----] was leaving we found another woman who lived nearby and we hired her as a receptionist. She comes during the week. Financially things are tight now. I've got her down to about four hours a week. I can handle a lot of stuff myself but for reading and things like that and maybe sometimes talking to different people, I need some help.

Interviewer: Who does the sales for your school?

Theresa: Well, right now, nobody. Things have been difficult financially. I'm retaining more junior high school students but I haven't had many new students in terms of Kindergarten and First Grade kids. I was told that my elementary schools I can't mention my school which doesn't help because I could pick up new students that way. At 67 I'm tired. I plan to semi-retire at 70. I will start collecting U.S. social security at 70. The last five, six years, I've had to ... I was doing, picked up the outside work in order to supplement here. It's been up and down. Last year was fairly good but 10 kids quit suddenly this year. They go to Juku or whatever. Some of them told me they were coming back when they start high school but it was just a blow.

Interviewer: I totally understand.

Theresa: I'd like to keep the school open and find another teacher so that I kind of manage the school, maybe do some private classes, but I don't have the money to do that. I'm really strapped for money right now.

Interviewer: When it comes to living in Japan, would you consider yourself fairly outside of the ... I know you're having trouble with the business now but when it comes to living in Japan, would you consider yourself assimilated here?

Theresa: To a good extent, yes. I get by on my own. I have a car. I've been driving for a while.

Interviewer: Westerners, do you think they can assimilate in Japan?

Theresa: I think so.

Interviewer: But not 100% right? There is always kind of that ...

Theresa: I am hesitant to join things because when I was living in K---- I found that once you join something you get locked into it. And then it's tough to quit. I've been very careful about what I commit to. I was teaching 30 classes a week up until this past March. There wasn't time for a lot of anything else. The teachers association is my family in Japan. I've gotten to see places or go to places in Japan that I normally probably couldn't have afforded to because of teachers association, very active in the teacher's association .

Interviewer: Just to move on here, have you felt personally discriminated against in Japan?

Theresa: Yeah. In K---- in 1998, I had a bicycle accident and broke my ankle. This liaison between the sister city, a very pushy Japanese woman took me to an orthopedic clinic that she knew. They x-rayed my ankle and the doctor turned around and said to me, "Open reduction." And I went, oh no. That meant surgical repair. But his operating room was under renovation. They wrapped up my leg and they moved me over to a private hospital in K----. The doctor that I saw I had seen before when I injured my knee. I felt discriminated against in terms of he didn't want to accept me as a patient because he kept saying, "Why don't you go back to the U.S.?" I said that's not an option.

Come to find out, they sent me to x-ray, the woman I was with talked to him. I came back and she said, "He was worried because another doctor friend of his had been sued by an American serviceman." And so he was worried about getting sued. I said "You don't have to worry about that. I'm not that kind of

person." As long as he didn't operate on the wrong leg or something, I wouldn't have any problem with that. He finally agreed. I was admitted but I was told that the surgical schedule was full and it would be a week before they could do. I was terrified of losing my job. I heard the mayor was coming to visit me. I thought, oh no. It was just to say hello and to say "I hope you get well soon." I think I got a little cash gift or something. I don't remember. People came to visit me and brought me food and things like that. I was in the hospital for three months.

Interviewer:

Theresa:

Wow, three months. Holy moly.  
Well, yeah. Length of stay in Japan is the longest in the world. I had worked in a hospital for 15 years. I had a lot of experience there. When they said three months, the board of education said "Please stay in the hospital until you're better." What was interesting was the superintendent, *kyoikucho* had to sign a permission form for me for surgery which I think I had to sign something too. He had to sign for me evidently as being responsible for me in Japan. I felt that was a bit discriminatory. I can't think of anything too specific otherwise. However, I would notice at the Board of Education, if they had to make a phone call on my behalf for something, *gaikokujin* would always get mentioned. Oh, this is a guy *gaijin* we're warning the people on the other end.

Interviewer:

Right. One of the questions they talked about, microaggressions, do you put any stock in that?

Theresa:

Yes. I would say I have experienced that. For example, one that stands out clearly is back to K----- in let's say around 1991. This Japanese guy at work in the Board of Education, we had an *enkai* and I'm sitting there. We're drinking Sake. There were other people there but he was talking to me. He says to me a heavy body is not healthy. I was no more than say 20lbs over my good weight than I am a lot more now. In the last ten years I've gained weight too much because I was always working. He's sitting there, puffing on his cigarette and sucking down Sake while he's saying this to me.

I'm thinking, okay, Jack. You're saying this to me and here you are sucking on a cigarette and slurping Sake. Uh-uh. I just kind of brushed it off. But I've had, you know, I walked into a store in K----- once. Somebody told me where to look ... I was looking for some particular makeup when I went in. I swear the clerk started hyperventilating. I kept hearing her say, *gaijin*, *gaijin*. I found what I was looking for. I brought it into the counter and said something in Japanese to her. She rang it up but she was still practically hyperventilating, like what's this problem?

Interviewer:

Have you experienced a situation in Japan that you would consider kind of like a cultural shock where it was so bad that you wanted to go home? You just say, oh, I've had enough of Japan, have you ever had that type of experience?

Theresa:

Not that bad. No. I like Japan I think because I am a foreigner here that I can get away with a little more sometimes. There's a certain point where if you've been here long enough and people know you, I think you can't kind of use that. There are times when you can just pretend to be stupid about something or ...

Interviewer:

This is a Western foreigner. This probably isn't the same with the Chinese or the Korean or something.

Theresa:

Yeah. I think it would be different.

Interviewer:

Did you see the quote there from Daniel Kahn?

Theresa:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Do you agree with what he said?

Theresa:

I think I could probably say that with my school and I've met different people that really like me and think I'm a good teacher, I think I found sort of a middle ground to some extent. I've been really happy with teacher's association . I would have to say if it were not for teacher's association I might not be here because I've met a lot of different people.

Interviewer:

Do you consider Japan your home?

Theresa:

Yes.

Interviewer:

You do.

Theresa: Yes. I like to go back to the States now and then. I had to go back last two years in a row in March to clean out my storage space. One reason also is the health care. I'm happy here and comfortable here. I really want to do some travelling in Asia at some point. I'm sick of some of the U.S. culture.

Interviewer: What about do you feel any daily stress in Japan living here?

Theresa: Just to getting to work on time.

Interviewer: That's regular stuff all right.

Theresa: Yeah, just regular stuff.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's just regular stuff.

Theresa: Pretty much.

Interviewer: Do you feel like ... a lot of the stuff that I'm asking you you're pretty much settled down here in many ways. Do you think that a lot of the stuff that I asked you is just like, well , why do you keep bringing up Japan? It's really just living my life. Do you feel that way at all?

Theresa: No. Experience is important. I think some people adjust differently than others depending on their background maybe. I knew a woman from SIT. She was in my class. She had been in a peace corps. Anyway, she just could not cope with it. She had to leave. I think it depends on where you are and what situation is and what your background is. When I grew up, six kids in the family, we always had to work. We delivered newspapers. We collected newspapers. I'm used to working. I'm used to accepting a lot of things in terms of not always having what you need or not being able to afford what you need. I have adjusted and I do things. I take care of myself in whatever way I need to and cope with it.

Interviewer: Sounds like regular stuff. That's just the way life is, right?

Theresa: Right. I've been on my own for a long time.

Interviewer: What about ... you're in Japan. You're walking around. People see you. They think you just arrived in Japan yesterday. They kind of talk to you in a way that doesn't really reflect the actual experience that you have. Do you feel offended by that? Do you even get that?

Theresa: I don't really get that much if at all. I'll tell you, I wear sunglasses outside year round. I'm stared at a lot of for that. Sometimes people kind of ... I don't know. I do my own thing. For the most part, I go to the supermarket down the street from my school here. People know me. I've been here 13 years in the school. People see me. I think they're used to me. For the most part, I don't have any problems like that. It's now and then when you get the occasional odd person who you know thinks ...

Interviewer: Yeah. When you go home to the States ...

Theresa: Go home or go back?

Interviewer: Well, go back I mean. Do you ever experience reverse culture shock?

Theresa: Yeah.

Interviewer: You do?

Theresa: It depends. For example, my father died in 2007. When I went back last year I haven't back since in seven years. Things had changed. I mean, physical changes and stuff. But yeah, to some extent and just people. Compared to Japan, everybody is so polite most of the time that the way you're treated by people in stores and things I thought was pretty rude. Everybody's got their hand out. I lived on tips as a waitress and bartender years ago, but I don't miss tipping at all here in Japan.

Interviewer: Right.

Theresa: I realize how some people really need that but it seemed like everybody had their hand out. At a massage place, they were doing massages at one of the airports and they had a tip jar. Clerks at convenience stores had tip jars. What the hell for, you know? I'm like, you want a tip for just doing your job? It's not like you're bartending or waitressing. It's a different ... But anyway, I just yeah, to some extent, yeah.

Interviewer: You get that reverse culture shock?

Theresa: Yeah, a bit.  
Interviewer: What about the opposite? In Japan do you have any daily life problems that you might ...  
Theresa: Not really. I've had people like there's a guy who has been here for a while. He introduced me to ... he actually happened to work on cars when he was in the States. He's good with cars. For one thing he was surprised I know so much about cars because my father used to fix his own cars growing up. He introduced me to a mechanic who's really good and really nice. I've been really happy with that. I feel like the culture thing is more important than the language. I feel so comfortable I feel like I can yell at people or playing about things sometimes nicely but ... Even some of my students where I wouldn't before, I might get not yell-yell but chastise them or whatever compared to when I was first here and not sure of myself. I feel sure enough to myself to be able to complain sometimes. In O--- we had a teachers association executive board meeting last weekend. We stated this YMCA Y----- Memorial welfare whole type of thing. I walked in and the guy asked me for my passport. I said, passport? I said, it's in I----. He said something about *koseki* and I couldn't remember what that meant. I said I have a *eijuken*. Oh. But I kept saying to him. He's going passport. I was going *nande* nicely but saying *nande*. Unfortunately I had enough information from David Arudo's website that I knew that I live here I don't have to carry my passport. I don't have to show my *gaijin* card unless it's a cop or somebody. Finally they quit bothering me but they had already asked another person. They showed me his card that they had copied it you know ... There was no way I was going to let them get away with this. I was there in February in the same place and nobody ever said anything. This time they're recording people. I don't know. You're not getting away with this.  
Interviewer: What about in general, do you have any dissatisfaction with living in Japan?  
Theresa: Well, *shaken*. I just think it's a big rip-off.  
Interviewer: It is kind of. What kind of person do you think ends up living in Japan like for example 20 years. Do you think there's a specific type of personality?  
Theresa: I wrote somebody who ends up feeling more comfortable here than in their home country or likes Japan better in terms of customs, food, whatever.  
Interviewer: If you had to ... Did you see the question about anecdotes there? You kind of gave me a few stories already, the one about the hospital and some smaller stories as well.  
Theresa: I rented a house when I started the school. It's an older neighborhood. I was out in the balcony one day hanging up clothes or something. I saw the neighbor woman weeding out there. I just called out, "*Konichiwa*." She looked up and looked back down again. That was it. I felt like she was very ... she would barely nod to me if I happen to see her in the street going to the Gomi station or something.  
Interviewer: U-huh. And this was when you first moved in?  
Theresa: Yeah.  
Interviewer: Okay. How long have you been living there?  
Theresa: Not very long, not even a year.  
Interviewer: Not even a year. Have you met her many times before that?  
Theresa: No. This was 13 years ago. I thought, oh, wow. Actually her husband came over and helped me one night. There was a huge snowstorm and I was out there late. I'd come home from work and I was shoveling the driveway. He came over and helped me. He never helped me after that but I think she was pissed off about it. When you moved in did you do that traditional bringing gift over and everything?  
Theresa: Nope. I didn't do anything. At the time I was so busy with the school. I tried to rely on people saying, telling me what to do if I needed to.  
Interviewer: That is kind of a big deal. Not to say that gives her a right to be that rude. I'm not saying that at all. It's just, you know.

Theresa: There's a guy two houses up from me that about five or six years ago started shoveling my driveway. What I do is in the spring, the first time I made some cake. The next year I did something else. The last few years I've given him a six-pack of beer. He'll come and he'll come and ring my doorbell saying "Thank you so much, you didn't have to do that." I said, "No, I really appreciate your help with the shoveling the snow" because sometimes you know, I grew up in Connecticut. I'm used to it but man, I'm tired.

Here's another anecdote. One day, the *chonai* stepped up my door and said that they were going to build a new *gomi* station. I'm on a corner. The side street kind of goes kind of uphill a little bit. There's space up at the top. They were going to put a new *gomi* station there because of the crows and stuff. We're having a lot of trouble with the crows. Would I be willing to chip in some money for it. It was about 3,000 yen and change. I said, oh sure, no problem. I gave him the money.

The next thing I know I was on the rotation list for *gomi tanto*. I have been every since but I do my part. There's enough households. I only have to do it twice a year. I don't have a problem doing it. Stuff like that is important.

Some of the neighbors I've met have been very nice to me. One lady I was out gardening once and she stopped by. I was in the driveway and she was walking down the street. She stopped to say hello to me, introduced herself. We chatted in Japanese a little bit. Now she goes by, she waves or says hello.

The old lady behind me invited me over one time and invited another lady in the neighborhood that was her friend. We had sushi and *chuhai* and beer and stuff and talked for a couple of hours. I brought some homemade cake with me. Though she's in her 80s I don't see her as much, but several of us that live around there we will shovel her steps in the winter. One night I was out there, I was shoveling my own driveway. I shoveled her steps. The light went on and she opened the door and said, "Oh, I was wondering who it was!" She said thank you. I said you don't need to worry about it.

Interviewer: That's good. Other than that one woman, you would say pretty much in general the community around you has accepted you for who you are and what you do?

Theresa: Yeah.

Interviewer: No problems at all?

Theresa: Not really. I don't get involved in stuff partly because of language and partly because I don't want to be expected to be there all the time.

Interviewer: It's very involved, I know. I'm sure.

Theresa: And also because to be honest with you although it might not seem like it, I am basically shy.

Interviewer: Is this how you're going to end this conversation is you're going to tell me that?

Theresa: Yeah. I know people who know me say, what? You're shy?

Interviewer: That's such an Irish thing to say.

Theresa: You have no idea I struggle with that. I have forced myself to do things. You see, I've always loved theater and when I was in elementary school I was involved in anything that could be on stage. My minors as an undergrad was theater but yeah, I struggled with that.

022 Steve

because I'm here, and so yeah I think we're actually closer now than when I came here at the beginning.

interviewer: I see. How important do you think learning Japanese is living to live in Japan, according to...?

Steve: Personally I think it's really-really important, I think it's absolutely essential. I know there are people who do very well for themselves without learning the language, but I think it's really-really important. I think it's really made my experience in Japan very positive for the most part, and I know a lot of people who do not speak Japanese, kind of have problems with culture more than people who do speak Japanese I suppose.

interviewer: Do you know people who do speak Japanese really well, but still have trouble? Steve: Yeah actually I've got a range of people ... Some people who speak badly, but write well, believe it or not. I have a friend of mine who writes Japanese haiku in Japanese and wins awards and he is published, but he speaks horribly, kind of unusual not ... I was going to say there is one guy I know who actively avoids learning Japanese, I don't want to know any Japanese because it affects ... He thinks it affects his English ability, he is an English teacher so...

interviewer: Okay, how long has he been here, could you guess?

Steve: Forty plus years.

interviewer: When you speak Japanese, do you find that your personality changes a little bit? Steve: Yeah, I certainly do.

interviewer: You do.

Steve: Actually people ... I didn't even realize it at first, but now I may be a little bit more conscious about it, because people have actually mentioned it several times, but my voice even changes, the pitch of my voice. I speak at a lower volume, a lower pitch when I speak English than I do in Japanese, so yeah.

interviewer: There is a physical change, and also kind of a personality change?

Steve: I would say so yeah. The language itself changes the way you think, the language ... The way English language is structured, and the way Japanese language is structured and how you have to think to form the sentences changes the way you think.

interviewer: I see. Do you get bothered when somebody thinks you don't speak ... Do you even get that anymore where someone thinks you don't speak Japanese, they just try to speak English to you?

Steve: Yeah I get people who speak English to me, because they assume that I can't speak Japanese, but no it doesn't really bother me.

interviewer: Have you ... do you feel like you have assimilated 100% in Japan?

Steve: Absolutely not, I think and actually I give a lot of thought to this question because it's an interesting question for me, because especially when you think about yeah for me I'll always be a westerner no matter what, because the look is just different, like physically I look different. I don't think that it's really possible to become assimilated into Japan either without at least having generations of relatives also being in Japan for their entire lives. I was thinking of is there even a situation in Japan where a westerner could be considered by a Japanese person to be actually Japanese? The only thing I can think of would be the Dutch who live in Nagasaki. The Dutch have been living in Nagasaki for hundreds of years, and I think most Japanese people would consider them to be Japanese even though they don't look Japanese. I know that's kind of a related question, but...

interviewer: It's interesting, and that's a good point, that's a very good point. It's almost generations, sort of a second, third and fourth as time goes by...

Steve: That's right.

interviewer: They are considered more Japanese, so for example some of these like at first generation, they nationalize themselves, they become Japanese mark of

citizenship, but they still look like you or I look. These people, it's really hard for them to separate themselves from that, because they are first generation.

Steve: Indeed, I think that's the only way that that can actually happen in Japan, because until then even if you live your entire life in Japan, and die in Japan you're still a temporary visitor because there is no extension past that. I think the lion share of westerners who come to Japan are not here permanently from generation to generation to get in kind of continuing that like the Dutch. It's very-very rare to see somebody who's third, fourth generation westerner looking person still living in Japan.

interviewer: It's turning to becoming that way perhaps, we start to see it.

Steve: It is, it really is, but it's still rare enough that it's not happening.

interviewer: Do you think people do get stuck in Japan?

Steve: Yeah, actually the guy I was talking about earlier, the guy who writes haiku, he has no marketable skills outside of Japan, and his marketable skills in Japan are also quite small. Despite the fact that he actually writes haiku, he can't make a living doing that, and his knowledge of Japanese language is small enough and specific enough that he can't make a living doing that either. That's kind of I think something that really gets you stuck in Japan is not having ... Not building your career past what you get here in Japan.

interviewer: It's not a marketable skill?

Steve: Right.

interviewer: It's a good skill, I mean it's interesting, artistic skill, but not marketable.

Steve: Right, and so he's teaching English which teaching English at the level that you need here in Japan is not, again it's not a marketable skill that you can take back home and teach in the United States for example. That kind of sticks you there where you get used to that quality of life that you get here with those skills, and to go back to United States or wherever, try to live to that same quality of life that you're used to here it just doesn't work.

interviewer: So earning in the basic information you've got seven, your lifestyle satisfaction?

Steve: Hmm.

interviewer: What would make that higher?

Steve: Probably ability, or easier ability to move up in the job, have a better job, get better pay more easily, those kinds of things.

interviewer: That makes sense. Have you ever been personally discriminated against in Japan?

Steve: Yeah.

interviewer: You have been, could you give an example?

Steve: When I lived in H----- people were blatantly telling me that I couldn't rent that apartment because I was not Japanese. I had people refuse entry in a restaurant because I was not Japanese, those kinds of things, but on the whole I think that's the exemption rather than the rule.

interviewer: It's not something you find everyday?

Steve: No, certainly not, and I think I experienced that far less than here in K----- than I did when I was up in H-----.

interviewer: Okay, the microaggression question, do you ever experience those types of things?

Steve: Yeah, it's an interesting question. I think some of the things that they talk about being microaggression is the why you can use chopsticks and that sort of thing, and yeah I guess it's kind of a little bit annoying, but I think the things that I would consider to be microaggressions that do bother me are things like if I'm talking on the cell phone on the train for example, people will tell me that that's not okay, but if you see another Japanese person talking on the phone on the train and they do, then they don't say anything to the Japanese person. For some

reason there's that kind of it's okay to tell him because maybe he doesn't know, but for Japanese people it's okay because they know, and are just ignoring the rule, and being overly corrective in certain situations.

For example I sometimes ... I have a kimono, I have a yukata and I wear them ... I study shodo to try to improve my kanji recognition. If you do something wrong that ... Kind of a traditional art like that, the correction is ... Anybody walking by will give you their two cents as far as, okay well you're doing this wrong, and you're doing that wrong. You shouldn't be wearing those shoes with that kimono, or you shouldn't be wearing that obi with that kimono, but again with a Japanese person, if they were doing the same thing, exactly the same thing, then that would be okay. That's probably what I would mostly consider as from my perspective as being a microaggression.

interviewer: Have you ever had a cultural, or something you would deem as a cultural problem that was so bad, a conflict that almost made you want to go home, or made you want to leave Japan?

Steve: When I first started working at my teaching position now, I think maybe two or three months after I started working for them, a very close friend of mine in Tokyo died. It was kind of a sudden really surprise death, it was he had some kind of stomach problem, and over the course of three days, and just progressed from he was perfectly fine to death. I wanted to attend his funeral, and my company said that I was not going to be able to do it, and they didn't allow me to. I understand I'm a new employee and that sort of thing, but that was a huge down point for me as far as I don't know but understanding how things worked in the culture of Japan, but in that particular company where they said, no you can't attend a funeral, I know that if I was working in the United States I had a close friend die that I would be given the time even if I had only been working for the company for a week or so.

That was pretty huge for me, it's connected I guess, but the only thing that really kept me going in Japan after that ... Kind of shortly after that was when I finally got my motorcycle license. Getting my motorcycle license kind of opened things about Japan that I didn't experience before, and opened up Japan in a way that was really-really interesting, and kind of refreshed it again.

interviewer: How many years were you in Japan when you got your motorcycle license?  
Steve: I've had my motorcycle license I think now for five years, and I've been in Japan for eleven, so that would be six to seven years I was in Japan without a motorcycle license.

interviewer: Do you think it takes conscious commitment to live in Japan?  
Steve: Yes.  
interviewer: You do?

Steve: It's important ... Well it's kind of linked I guess to the language ability where it takes effort in time to get to that point where you can actually carry on conversations with the Japanese people, that alone takes commitment. The cultural problems that you run into frequently or even infrequently that cause you issues take a lot of effort to push through in that sort of thing as well, so yeah it does take effort and conscious effort.

interviewer: Talk of some advantages or disadvantages of being a foreign resident in Japan.  
Steve: I think first of all, the advantages I think outweigh the disadvantages. One of the things is the cultural errors are often forgiven, not always as I mentioned earlier these are kind of really specific things about Japanese historical things, if you make mistakes with that, that's not okay, but other things pretty easily forgiven. Also given preferential treatment in places like restaurants and hot springs, and hotels and that sort of thing.

interviewer: For example in one of your earlier examples you mentioned that you were discriminated at in a popular restaurant, but on the opposite side it could just be a plus as well such as give you a little bit more something...

Steve: Exactly, right okay this little dish that I'm giving you right here, that service is free, you can have it and thanks for coming, and that sort of thing. I have to say that that happened to me far more than being denied entry into a restaurant, so again like I said when I was talking about that question, that's really the exception to the rule.

interviewer: When you hear people focusing on those negative things only, because they are less than the positive ones, and some people really tend to focus on that a lot...

Steve: Right, so it's easier to remember the negative things than it is the positive things for some reason I think for a lot of people.

interviewer: I see, so sometimes the negative stuff makes better conversation.

Steve: It does too I suppose. Rather than saying this great thing happened, I found this new road on the way to work, it's really twisty and I love it, and that's "Oh that's good," and that's the end of the conversation, but yeah it's, "Oh yeah I've had that problem too and I really hate people." Negative things do kind of create more conversation, but I think one of the things ... Earlier you were talking about conscious effort. One of the things that I did and kind of consciously was I avoided western communities for a long time in Japan to kind of ... Because even the small experience I had with the western communities in Japan, like that where everybody was kind of talking about the negative things in Japan, and there was just really negative ...

It feels like kind of consciously removed myself from that because online communities like ... I don't know if it's okay to name names, but Japan Times and that sort of thing, I read that for a little while when I first came to Japan, because it was a source of English news in Japan, but the community behind it was just incredibly negative, and it was affecting the way I saw Japan as well. I wanted to remove myself from that, and have my own perspective built from my own experiences.

interviewer: Do you think what Daniel Kahl said is true? You need that little ground?

Steve: I think anybody who comes to Japan is already by definition in a niche, so it's not ... You can't be Japanese, and you can't be westerner either. You have to be able to fill that nice little niche spot, because you are an unusual or rare case to the most part in Japan. It is changing, but yeah it's really important to be able to fill that niche. I can't think of anybody I know who is not Japanese who is 100% mainstream, even ... What's the thing, Daniel is mainstream ... I actually had to look him up, I'm not really up on popular culture in Japan, but I do recognize him actually. I know his picture, I've seen him before, and I've actually seen him on television before, but he's quite right where it's important to realize whether you realize it or not that it's important to fill that niche.

interviewer: When you go home or if you go home any time, I don't know how often you go home to the states?

Steve: I've been home twice in the entire time I've been here.

interviewer: Do you feel like a reverse, do you feel ... I'm sorry when you go home, do you a reverse culture shock?

Steve: Yeah.

interviewer: Could you give some examples?

Steve: A couple of humorous ones, actually one humorous one, I remember going into a restaurant in the United States and ordering in Japanese. The guy behind the counter just kind of looked at me with blinking...

interviewer: Reverse craziness.

Steve: Actually it was kind of interesting also when I was back in the United States, I don't know if this is reverse culture shock or not, but when I was in the states ... It was actually only a short time, but my dreams were mostly in Japanese at that time.

interviewer: You dream in Japanese?

Steve: I do yeah occasionally not always, but I do.

interviewer: When you dream in Japanese, do your parents or American friends appear and do they speak Japanese too?

Steve: I don't know...

interviewer: This is just a personal curiosity.

Steve: I know this is...

interviewer: It's a personal curiosity really.

Steve: No, usually if I'm dreaming in Japanese I'm trying to solve some kind of problem actually, oddly enough, but yes it's probably culture shock. I think the biggest thing was people back home in the United States are huge, I mean just absolutely enormous, and it happened while I was in Japan. Before I left to come to Japan, the problem of obesity in the United States was just starting to take off I think, and I went back for the first time after having been in Japan for maybe three or four years, and I was shocked at how big people were. Another thing that was actually pretty bad for me, really sad was ... One thing I remember very fondly is my family .. Extended family got together several times a year despite the fact that they are living all over the United States. As for Christmas and Thanksgiving and New Year's and that sort of thing, and for special birthdays or what not.

The big thing to do at that point is just to get around the dinner table and you got ten or fifteen people, and everybody is telling stories and laughing and having a good time, and talking about that kind of thing. I went back for that kind of a party in Chicago ... Huge family and everybody is talking, and I didn't understand what they were talking about just because I didn't have that recent cultural connectivity to understand the references that they were making that were so funny. The movies that they were watching, the dramas that they were watching all had influence on what they were talking and how they were speaking, and I didn't understand it. That was probably really my biggest experience with reverse culture shock as you call it.

interviewer: Do you consider Japan your home?

Steve: Yes and no even several times I've said (in this conversation) "back home" in the United States. I don't know why really why that is, I can't put my finger on it. Maybe part of it is because most of life I've kind of thought of things as being temporary anyway. Even in the United States as I moved around, I think the longest I lived in any one single place in the United States was six or seven years, so being in Japan for eleven years is pretty permanent for me. Even in Japan I've moved like three, four times, so just my life in general has been pretty temporary, so maybe that's contributing to not really 100% feeling like this is home.

interviewer: Do you have any daily stress that you think would be related to Japan?

Steve: Yeah, but some of the stress, I think anybody has stress, daily stress...

interviewer: That's why I mentioned related to Japan.

Steve: Related to Japan...

interviewer: It doesn't have to be, you don't have to have stress.

Steve: Oh yeah, certainly work stress, the way I have to deal with things at work is quite different than the way I would deal with things in the United States. I think a good example of that would be I had a Japanese coworker call me on the phone, we had a conversation in Japanese, and I understood the conversation was kind of a

strange conversation. She was asking my opinion on what to do, I gave my opinion, and then she ignored the opinion and said okay do it this way anyway, which is I don't know, I've had that experience several times in Japan, so not unusual. The odd thing that gave me a lot of stress and made me feel kind of bad about the whole experience was that after that she had another westerner who speaks Japanese maybe a little bit better than me. She talked to him, and had him call me to make sure I understood what we talked about. It kind of made me feel like okay what was it that I said that made her feel like I might not have understood, or is there something wrong with the way I communicated that gave her that impression, so it was kind of stressful for me.

Also not being able to handle big problems. My next door neighbor ... In my apartment pets are not allowed, and my next door neighbor got a dog, and the dog was just ... My next door neighbor was a construction worker maybe or a factory worker, and a shift worker. Sometimes he would be working through the night, and sometimes he would be working through the day, so he would leave in the middle of the night and as soon as he left the dog will start barking and barking and barking non stop, aloud. It was my next door neighbor, the walls are sort of thin, there is nothing you can do. I complained to the management of the apartment complex, but they can't do anything because he's already got the dog. You can't complain to the police, they can't really do anything about it anyway, so that kind of how that conflict is resolved is just by waiting until it's gone, that's pretty huge. So big kind of normal life problems that you can't anything about, solving conflict by just ignoring it, that's huge.

interviewer: Even in the States if there was a barking dog what could you do? Once it's been done?

Steve: Fair enough.

interviewer: I think the communication with that person might be more difficult, because you know how sensitive they're going to be about it.

Steve: Yeah, and actually I think in the States the way I would handle it would be quite different, so I could actually go talk to the individual personally and say, hey look we've got a problem here and how can we handle it, and that sort of thing. There is no way that can work in Japan.

interviewer: What kind of people do you think end up in Japan for 20 years... for a long time, and what kind of ... You've seen types of personalities that you might have noticed?

Steve: It takes somebody who's willing to be flexible. If you're too rigid, you're too inflexible you can't make it work even to the point where where I mentioned earlier the friend of mine who's teaching English and flat out refuses to learn Japanese because he thinks it's going to affect his English.

interviewer: This is the fellow that's been here for forty years?

Steve: Yes.

interviewer: Okay.

Steve: Even he has to bend and make sacrifices as far as what it means to be living in Japan.

interviewer: Flexibility is important?

Steve: Flexibility is really-really important. I don't know whether that's really directly related to living in Japan, because for example if you move from Boston to Chicago, or if you move from Boston to California for example, you'd have to make ... You'd have to be flexible about the differences in living in those places as well.

interviewer: If you meet someone that's say a new arrival, it's someone from America or United States or Canada or, a westerner I just could say, that's only been here

for a year or two, what would you consider a difference between them and what you've done yourself? Do you see any differences between those two groups?

Steve:  
I think people who are here a shorter period of time never really think about making Japan their permanent ... It's a kind of a stepping stone on the way to somewhere else in their lives, so they really enjoy Japan and love Japan and like it, but enjoy being here and enjoy the language even in many cases, but from the very beginning I don't think they really see it as a permanent thing for them.

interviewer:  
Do you have any anecdotes that you could share about Japan?

Steve:  
I think the best thing that happened to me, and I don't really know whether it's really a specific story but I think the best thing that happened to me in Japan was getting my motorcycle license, because and I said earlier, and I didn't really expand on it, it kind of changed my perspective of Japan, but the reason for that is kind of interesting to me, because on the motorcycle I'm anonymous. That's almost impossible for me up until I was on the motorcycle to be anonymous in Japan, I'm never anonymous. Because I've got the gloves on and the jacket on and the helmet on and a dark visor nobody can see my face, they can't see that I'm not Japanese, so people as a I pull up people treat me exactly like Japanese. Even after I pull my helmet off, that kind of carries more into the conversation later on.

If I go to the middle of nowhere in a Ryokan and pull up on my motorcycle, and I'm asking about a room for example. I had that happen in Shikoku near the Shimanto river, I pulled a ... What was it Goroku Onsen really-really nice place, beautiful-beautiful place. I was driving down the road, and riding down the road and I stopped because it was getting close to the time to find some place to spend the night, and I hadn't made any reservations. I just pulled into the parking lot, there were a bunch of people standing there and I asked just are there ... In Japanese of course are there any rooms available? They said oh yeah, let me hook you up and that sort of thing. They all went inside to start preparing things for the room, and I got all my motorcycle gear off, and I walked in and they kind of looked at me like who are you?

interviewer:  
You went in with your helmet on?

Steve:  
No-no, I rode up with my helmet on, the people for the hot spring were outside, so I just talked to them through my helmet, and then of course I took all my ... They said they had a room, so I took my gear off after they went inside, and then they were like who are you? Where did this guy come from? After that they kind of automatically assumed that I could use chopsticks and I could speak Japanese, they knew I could speak Japanese, so I didn't have that conversation where it's very time you go somewhere, you have the conversation, oh you can use chopsticks and you can speak Japanese really well.

interviewer:  
They probably think it that you got that you got far.

Steve:  
Right, exactly.

interviewer:  
You probably know what you're doing.

Steve:  
Yeah, so it was...

interviewer:  
How many years ago was that?

Steve:  
It was maybe three years ago, something like that, so that was really kind of pleasant surprise where the way they treated me was more like a Japanese person would experience maybe. Of course I also got that nice little westerner benefits as well, the proprietor of the hot spring was also a hunter, and he had some venison, and he pulled the venison out of the freezer and cooked some up for me, so that was nice.

interviewer:  
Pretty wild. Do you have any Japanese friends who you only speak Japanese with?

Steve: I have a lot of ... in fact most of my friends are Japanese. I have very few what I would consider western friends who ... And don't speak much Japanese. In fact most of my Japanese friends do not speak English. Of course my girlfriend speaks English quite well, better than I speak Japanese actually, so we usually just speak in English, but yeah most of my friends who I would consider close friends in Japan are Japanese people who do not speak English.

### **023 Amy**

Interviewer: Could you tell me in a few words, just maybe some adjectives or some feelings that you had when you first came? Was it a good feeling? Did you enjoy it from the start?

Amy: Yeah. It's a bit disorienting in an exciting way.

Interviewer: In exciting way?

Amy: Yes.

Interviewer: Did you come as a student or did you come to work?

Amy: No. I came, I was working for a language school.

Interviewer: You got the job from ...

Amy: In Canada.

Interviewer: From Canada and they sent you over?

Amy: Yes, in Canada.

Interviewer: Okay, and they sent you over?

Amy: Yes.

Interviewer: When you got here, it's a bit disorienting?

Amy: Yes.

Interviewer: The school you're out, was it in a city or is it in a country area?

Amy: It was in a small city.

Interviewer: Small city. Okay. Did you experience a honeymoon period?

Amy: Yes, except I don't think I really knew it was a honeymoon period until I was out of it.

Interviewer: I see. Okay. How long did that feeling last?

Amy: I think it might have been about three months or six. I can't remember now. It's been so long but probably around three.

Interviewer: You came to teach. What was the original plan? How long are you planning to stay?

Amy: Three years.

Interviewer: Three, actually ... Typically, if you went back after three years, you probably have a better chance of working and stuff like that.

Amy: Yeah. I think I was thinking along those lines.

Interviewer: When did you realize you're going to be staying longer? Did that ever ...

Amy: Yesterday?

Interviewer: Not yet.

Amy: You've been here for 21 years, is that correct?

Interviewer: Yes. I think actually, it might have been after I got divorced. I mean, because then I had no real reason to be here. Before I got married, I was a student. I was still a student when I got married. I wasn't really seen beyond that. Then I thought, actually he thought he would leave Japan I thought I would leave with him so even for a while when I was married, I didn't really, at first, I didn't think we were staying here.

Interviewer: You thought you'd be more flexible, maybe after you both graduated?

Amy: Yeah. I thought I might follow him somewhere. Not Canada but England or somewhere like that. Probably after that, when people asked me, "Are you going to come home?" I was no longer married.

Interviewer: After divorce?

Amy: Yeah. I didn't know I was going to get divorced, then I think I realized that.

Interviewer: What did you see? What were the differences of getting a divorce in Japan versus getting a divorce in, let's say, Canada?

Amy: Well, I think just if you have kids, here you could probably never let your husband see your kids again and that would be all right so you could cut off ties easier with the person, I think.

Interviewer: In Japan, it's very little visitation rights.

Amy: Yes, yes, yes. I think whoever has custody can usually decide not to.

Interviewer: Have you even known anybody to have those types of problems before?  
Amy: Foreigners in Japan?  
Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.  
Amy: I've heard of it, yes.  
Interviewer: You heard of it, but you don't know anybody specifically?  
Amy: I knew someone is but I don't know him personally. I just know about him.  
Interviewer: What's the story, ...?  
Amy: The story is, I don't know in detail, but the story is he had a child and she had custody. I think he was working at the school where his daughter was going to school so he could see her.  
Interviewer: I see. Okay, okay.  
Amy: I think kind of a typical thing, foreigner / Japanese.  
Interviewer: Basically, it's not like the States or not like Canada where the father would be able to meet their children on a weekend or something like that.  
Amy: Exactly, yes.  
Interviewer: Nothing like that, right?  
Amy: Yes.  
Interviewer: You didn't have children, so you didn't have to deal with that?  
Amy: Exactly, yes.  
Interviewer: Other than the children as a factor, it was difficult to get a divorce in Japan?  
Amy: No, no.  
Interviewer: Fairly simple?  
Amy: Pretty simple.  
Interviewer: Pretty simple process?  
Amy: Yes.  
Interviewer: Which is definitely not able to be said in America?  
Amy: Exactly. Yeah, it's like it didn't really happen. I don't even have any paperwork. It's like when you get married too, you don't get any.  
Interviewer: Yeah, I don't need to drill on the divorce part so much but if you just want to know, it just take less paperwork. It wasn't until after the divorce when you realized that now you have to think about your existence in Japan. Did you really think it was an option to go back to Canada at that time?  
Amy: No. I think it was more because I felt I changed a lot being married or being in Japan so long. I felt I had to ... This happened to me here so I had to fix it here. It wasn't like I thought that I would never go, I wouldn't leave Japan even after all this time. I still thought sometimes, maybe I would go to another country.  
Interviewer: To another country?  
Amy: Yeah. Not necessarily Can ... Maybe, not Canada.  
Interviewer: When you go home to Canada, do you feel a reverse culture shock or do you feel strange?  
Amy: I feel like I might be behaving strangely but nobody says anything. It's weird, but I think if I stayed longer like they feel I'm coming back to visit. Maybe, it's okay I'm behaving a little bit strangely.  
Interviewer: When you say strange, what do you mean?  
Amy: Probably, I just slip in Japanese words by accident. You know what I mean?  
Interviewer: Do you have any family back home in Canada?  
Amy: Yes.  
Interviewer: You do?  
Amy: Yes.  
Interviewer: Are you close to them? Do you talk to them a lot?  
Amy: No.  
Interviewer: No. Not at all or not that often?

Amy: I wouldn't say not at all but very seldom but I wasn't close to them originally, really.

Interviewer: You've mentioned you do translations?

Amy: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you do spoken in translation as well? Can you do that?

Amy: No.

Interviewer: It's usually written?

Amy: I've had to do it a couple of times but I really dislike it.

Interviewer: You dislike it. Why do you dislike it?

Amy: I don't think I think quickly enough. I think you just need a little bit training to be able to do it really rapidly.

Interviewer: Right, right. Learning Japanese, do you think it's an important skill to have in Japan? Do you think it's necessary?

Amy: It's necessary for me but I do know some people who don't speak Japanese and they seem to be doing fine.

Interviewer: Do those tend to be men or are they women, too?

Amy: I do know women but I think maybe more men.

Interviewer: The women you know that don't speak the language, are they married?

Amy: No.

Interviewer: No, they're not. The women that you know that do speak the language, did they tend to be married more?

Amy: Yes. I don't really know that many women but yeah, especially single women. I think single women tend to leave.

Interviewer: Single women tend to leave. That's true. That's probably true.

Amy: Yeah. If they're here, probably they have a long term boyfriend or something.

Interviewer: Right, right. You think the people without Japanese skills, they can still accomplish things in Japan?

Amy: I think so or at least maybe they're satisfied.

Interviewer: They're satisfied?

Amy: Yeah, I think.

Interviewer: Do you think they have a limited view of what the community or the society they live in? Do they just focus on work because that's what they mostly do?

Amy: Maybe work and I think, they probably have a group of people they normally meet and so they communicate with other foreigners.

Interviewer: Right. Their community, basically other foreigners, they have a foreign community?

Amy: Yes, and then maybe Japanese girlfriend.

Interviewer: A Japanese girlfriend. That's right, or wife or something like that.

Amy: Yes. I don't really know that many foreigners, I think.

Interviewer: Right. Most of your friends are Japanese then?

Amy: Yes.

Interviewer: I see. So you have female Japanese friends?

Amy: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think a lot of their discussions is mostly about personality or fitting in into the society? It's a personality discussion rather than cultural?

Amy: Both.

Interviewer: Both. It's a mix?

Amy: Yes, yes, yes.

Interviewer: Can you explain that a little bit?

Amy: Well, I think I'm adaptable so I could stay in Japan so long. I think maybe some things that people might say, like you have questions about my microaggressions, whatever, I really have to think hard about that. I think if I'm

really tired or something, it might be things will bother me. Otherwise, I might not even notice. You know what I mean? Flexible or just not even paying attention.

Interviewer: You would consider yourself a flexible person then?

Amy: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you think people get stuck living in Japan?

Amy: Stuck? Sure.

Interviewer: They can get stuck here?

Amy: Yeah.

Interviewer: They can like they can't leave because ...

Amy: Yeah.

Interviewer: This type of discussion that I'm having, culture and all this stuff, do you feel it's really just about living your life here? Just really like Japanese part is a backdrop. It doesn't really affect you that much anymore? Do you feel that way?

Amy: Mostly. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: That's actually fairly common. A lot of people I've discussed ... Have you ever been personally discriminated against in Japan?

Amy: Personally.

Interviewer: Something that you would consider almost like a systematic discrimination?

Amy: Maybe, but I don't know if I really understood what's going on at that time.

Interviewer: This is when you first came early on?

Amy: Quite a long time ago when I was renting.

Interviewer: Do you ever notice that in someone who's fairly new in Japan and they're using the word discrimination? When you hear them talking, you can see that they've just misunderstood something?

Amy: I can imagine that that would happen.

Interviewer: Has anybody ever said anything to you that you thought was discriminatory?

Amy: Yeah. Well, there's been a couple of things but like a really rude person ran into me. I got mad, you know being idiot. Then, they said something about my language ability totally off the topic. Those kind of things that I think people want to tell you what to do because they think you don't know what you're doing because you're a foreigner.

Interviewer: Can we attribute things like that to people's individual personalities or do you think that's part of the actual culture itself? You would find that fairly rare that would ...?

Amy: That's pretty rare, yeah. I think those are very frustrated individuals looking for somewhere to strike out and they happen to find a foreigner.

Interviewer: Right, right. Easy pickings.

Amy: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: Easy pickings.

Amy: Probably, they're a little bit racist but I wouldn't say that's a common thing at all. Anyway, microaggressions, I mean, they definitely exist in Japan. They exist in every country. Have you ever had any things like that? Could you give me an example?

Amy: Something happened to me strange when I was walking my dogs one day and someone was asking me about ... They thought I was a tourist who got my two dogs. It's like, "Do you think I'm traveling the world with my two dogs?" It's just ... That kind of thing. I think I'm lucky where I live, too. I live in an old neighborhood with a lot of old people. They can't speak English. They won't even think about trying. I think because of that, they don't really look at me as a foreigner so much. They just talk to me like they talk to anyone else.

Interviewer: In your area, you speak only Japanese?

Amy: Yeah. In my neighborhood, I speak only Japanese.

Interviewer: It's a fairly old town neighborhood?

Amy: Very old town. Everybody would talk to each other. When I just go walk, in 10 minutes, I probably meet 10 people I know and talk to them.

Interviewer: Really? You're fairly well accepted. No problem at all?

Amy: Yeah, yeah. I think so.

Interviewer: Do they know what you do?

Amy: No. They don't know where I'm from. They never asked.

Interviewer: They've never asked?

Amy: They don't care.

Interviewer: Really? They don't care?

Amy: I don't think they care. The people in my neighborhood, I don't think there's anyone who's asked me. When I'm down at the beach, walking the dogs, some people will ask me but the people I see everyday in my neighborhood. I thought about that before. They don't ask, they don't say anything. It's not important- Has that been since you moved there? It's always been that way?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Amy: Really? It's just the area?

Interviewer: It's just the area.

Amy: Do you think it would have been the same if you're not speaking Japanese to them? Do you think it would have been a ... What would happen?

Interviewer: I think if I didn't speak Japanese, there would be no communication because they don't speak any English. I think that they would just, I don't know, maybe smile at me or something.

Interviewer: Do you feel your personality changes when you speak in Japanese versus English?

Amy: I wonder. My voice changes.

Interviewer: Your voice changes?

Amy: Mm-hmm (affirmative). A lot of people, their voice change.

Interviewer: Do you find it easy to jump back and forth from English and Japanese?

Amy: I think if it's one jump, it's okay but if you have to jump back and forth continuously, it's really hard. If that's not hard, I don't think about it. It just happens.

Interviewer: You don't feel like your personality changes at all when you speak Japanese versus ...

Amy: Maybe, but I'm not sure if it's based on the person that I'm speaking to or if it's really my personality changing or I'm just changing according to the situation if I'm at work or talking to my friends. I think if I'm with a really good friend, I don't think I would behave so much, so different than talking to a foreign friend.

Interviewer: Okay. Just hypothetically, of course. If you could have the same level of work that you have in Japan in Canada, would you go back?

Amy: No.

Interviewer: Do you think that's a middle ground between Japanese culture and your own culture basically? Do you live in the middle of those two? Do you feel like you've-

Amy: Yes.

Interviewer: You do? You do feel that way?

Amy: Yes.

Interviewer: Could you give us some examples?

Amy: I don't know if I can really think of some examples but it's more of a feeling thing. I don't know if I really belong anywhere but it doesn't really matter. That thing doesn't bother me to be in a little bit on the outside.

Interviewer: Do you feel like exist in the middle of that?

Amy: Yes.

Interviewer: Why is it that you would never really want to ... I mean, even if you could, would you want to become a 100% Japanese style?

Amy:  
Interviewer: I don't think so. I think I have to give up a little bit of my personality or something. Existing in the middle also has its [inaudible 00:15:10]. The Daniel Kahl quote, right? The quote that I had here for Daniel Kahl, he'd be as good as he does right?

Amy:  
Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).  
Amy:  
Interviewer: That middle ground, you feel it's there?  
Amy:  
Interviewer: Yeah.  
Amy:  
Interviewer: You kind of exist there. It's like you don't really care. That's interesting.  
Amy:  
Interviewer: I think we maybe have to accept that to exist. I mean like him, I don't know him but if he thought he was being completely successful like a Japanese person or act like his a Japanese, then he's going to maybe reach a point where he is shocked to find out he is not.  
Interviewer:  
Amy:  
Interviewer: You think that eventually, it will come about?  
Amy:  
Interviewer: Yes, yes. Then, you get a big shock. I'm just kind of like advantages to being foreigner and disadvantages but advantages.  
Amy:  
Interviewer: Do you think the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?  
Interviewer:  
Amy:  
Interviewer: In terms of work, maybe not. Working at universities, there's not really a lot of tenured work or whatever, for foreigners, but that's not what I want so it's okay. If I did, then I think I might be more frustrated. In terms of just general everyday life or what I do or what I wear, I think I can ... People don't expect me to be a certain way because I'm a foreigner.  
Interviewer:  
Amy:  
Interviewer: You get away with more?  
Amy:  
Interviewer: I get away with more in just being myself. I don't think I push the limits too much but I think I can just ...  
Interviewer:  
Amy:  
Interviewer: Do you think your personality mixes as well in Japan?  
Amy:  
Interviewer: Yes.  
Amy:  
Interviewer: Why is that?  
Amy:  
Interviewer: Maybe I don't really rock the boat.  
Amy:  
Interviewer: You don't rock the boat?  
Amy:  
Interviewer: I don't rock the boat too much. Yeah, kind of quiet.  
Interviewer:  
Amy:  
Interviewer: What kind of person do you think ends up living in Japan for 20 years even if for 21 years yourself?  
Amy:  
Interviewer: I think somebody who's either adaptable, maybe. I was thinking about this question. Adaptable, so someone like me and is just going with the flow and whatever or just probably several different types. One other type is someone who likes to complain.  
Interviewer:  
Amy:  
Interviewer: You know people who like to complain?  
Amy:  
Interviewer: Yes. I know people who like to complain.  
Amy:  
Interviewer: Could you give me examples of what they complain about?  
Amy:  
Interviewer: Complain about work, maybe.  
Amy:  
Interviewer: These people tend to be part-timers?  
Amy:  
Interviewer: No.  
Amy:  
Interviewer: Full time?  
Amy:  
Interviewer: Both.  
Amy:  
Interviewer: Both?  
Amy:  
Interviewer: Yes.  
Amy:  
Interviewer: Okay.  
Amy:  
Interviewer: I don't know a lot.  
Interviewer:  
Amy:  
Interviewer: What kind of complaints do they have at work?  
Amy:  
Interviewer: Well, some people are maybe just, I don't think complaining so much in a negative way, but just in legal kind of matters. Others are, maybe they misunderstand what the administration wants to say to them. I don't know. I know some people who complain a lot who were unhappy and left, but then there are

people who've been here a while who complain, I do wonder why they're still here. I don't want to hear that from a Japanese person, actually. I've heard Japanese people say that as people complains a lot, why are they still here. As a foreigner, I think I could say it.

- Interviewer: Why does it bother you when a Japanese person says that?
- Amy: Because I feel they don't want to accept that there are anything about their culture that could be changed.
- Interviewer: Do you consider Japanese internationally minded?
- Amy: No. Not really. Maybe not.
- Interviewer: Do you feel that Japanese they're internationally minded?
- Amy: At least I think that they think they're moving in that direction.
- Interviewer: You said they're not internationally minded?
- Amy: That's a generalization but-
- Interviewer: That's okay. Generalization is fine. I don't expect you to research that but just your opinion is that, in your experience that you feel that they're not. Do you have any anecdotes about life in Japan?
- Amy: Yeah. I'm just living my life here so I don't really ... You know what I mean? I see some things, some I will put on Facebook, "Blah, blah, blah. Welcome to Japan." I don't know. I just feel it's a little bit strange. I guess I don't really feel I'm living in a foreign place so I don't really feel like ... This is life here, kind of thing.
- Interviewer: You really feel you fit in here? You don't feel uncomfortable?
- Amy: I don't feel uncomfortable. No.
- Interviewer: You really fit in.
- Amy: I'm not really a very sociable person. Maybe I don't put myself in situations as much as other people where they might feel.
- Interviewer: Don't you feel not being a sociable person, sometimes Japanese is more accepting that fact?
- Amy: Yes.
- Interviewer: Right. For example in Canada, if you're unsociable, somebody might still invite you, invite you, invite you, why won't you go, why won't you go, but in Japan-
- Amy: Yes, yes, yes. I had that trouble here with foreigners. In Japan, with foreigners, they wanted me to go out.
- Interviewer: But Japanese wouldn't push so much?
- Amy: No, I don't think so.
- Interviewer: Just that personality style of your own?
- Amy: Yes.
- Interviewer: Do you have anecdotes of other people that you know like I want to tell you this story about some dude about? Do you have any anecdotes of other people or other people's experience that you've heard about that might be interesting?
- Amy: I don't know if I have anything interesting. I mean, I know some people who don't get offered work again. I think they don't really understand why.
- Interviewer: There's some people who don't get their contract renewed and they don't know why?
- Amy: They don't know why but they're a little bit ... There are reasons. There are very good reasons for them not getting their contract renewed.
- Interviewer: You see the reasons?
- Amy: I see the reasons than other people.
- Interviewer: They don't?
- Amy: Yes. They're in denial.
- Interviewer: Do you think it's denial or do you think it's like we were just talk about the *kukiyomena*?
- Amy: They're both. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yes.

Interviewer: Also, this also fits *shakojirei* as well because when they're asked directly to the staff, the staff will say, "Oh no. There's nothing wrong."?

Amy: Yes, exactly.

Interviewer: The staff won't tell them what's wrong but they just let them go because they know, if they start to do lists of what's wrong, then that person start to argue with them saying it's not wrong and they're just eliminating their frustration by saying everything is fine. Right?

Amy: Yeah, just they're not contacted. Maybe it's easy.

Interviewer: You see people not getting their contracts renewed, they didn't know why and you were saying that you can see why?

Amy: Yes.

Interviewer:

Amy: I think other people misunderstand what other people are doing when they're trying to do something nice for them because they don't speak the language. The person is trying to do something nice but they take it in a negative way because they think that maybe they're ... I don't know. I don't know if they feel they're being discriminated against their ... They're just very negative.

Interviewer: Do you think that's a projection thing or someone who isn't inherently negative is projecting that feeling?

Amy: Yes. When I said earlier that some people like to complain staying in Japan, it's an easy target.

Interviewer:

Amy: Japanese don't fight back so much.

Interviewer:

Amy: Yes. Don't fight back so much and there's more to complain about if you'll look. I mean, if you really want to feel something is bad. I think it's a projection, unconscious kind of behavior. I do know one person. I don't know if I'd say it's an anecdote but thinking of your questions, one of your questions was about knowing someone who speaks the language but is not successful?

Interviewer: Right.

Amy: I know someone who speaks fairly well but who wasn't smart in their choice of jobs or what they did and move around a lot, changing jobs and now, they can't really find a suitable job.

Interviewer: Really?

Amy: Yeah. I think because they're a woman and of a certain age, it's hard for them to get a job.

Interviewer: I see, but the person speaks fluent Japanese?

Amy: Pretty fluent.

Interviewer: Really?

Amy: Yeah. Maybe not as good as me but pretty well. I think those kind of people are sometimes just maybe a little bit too ... They might have a little bit too much confidence so they think, "I can do this." They start doing some kind of job and then don't really fit in well with the job and they don't get the contract renewed because this person did not ... I think probably because of not being able to get along well with the other staff and they didn't really want to go back to teaching and so they're looking for jobs elsewhere and over confident thinking, "I can speak this language so I should be able to find."

Interviewer: People that you know that speak the language, it's not always a given that they'll be doing well just because they speak the language?

Amy: Exactly, yeah. I think it's maybe just their choices as well.

Interviewer: Also there's that fit, right?

Amy: Exactly, yeah.

Interviewer: You don't seem to have that struggle?

Amy: Yes.

Interviewer: When you someone else that struggles, you realize it's a personally-generated type of problem that they have, right?

Amy: They're not really negative right now about Japan, but they were, so I can see that probably they would misunderstand a lot in the workplace. I don't know if they would have less trouble if they were living in an English speaking place.

Interviewer: Do you feel you benefited from living here?

Amy: Yes. I'm not thinking like I didn't, like I lost something but I had the-

Interviewer: Some people had brought up that they feel that living in Japan is a sacrifice because they look at their friends back home and they see the things that they had to sacrifice to live here.

Amy: I look at like if I see pictures on Facebook of Christmas or things like people ... I don't know. Just the different things that people do. I look at them and feel glad that I don't take things for granted that things should be on a certain way. I think that's one of the benefits of living between two cultures because if I don't fit in, then I don't have a set idea of what kind of person I have to be. In that way, I don't feel stuck. I feel more like I'm myself, I think.

Interviewer: There's almost a freedom there, I would say.

Amy: Yes, yes, yes. There's a freedom in that space. I think I benefited because I got divorced maybe in this culture, at both things. I don't know if I would have-

Interviewer: The divorce in Japan holds more of a stigma though, a social stigma wherein Canada or America doesn't, but financially in Canada and America, it's pretty damning. In America ...

Amy: Yes, yes, yes-

## **024 Collin**

Interviewer:  
Collin: Could you give me your first impression when you came?  
Actually the very first time I came to Japan was 1995. I was down at Sasebo, in Sasebo, I found people to be actually quite open and friendly. I was cycling around the area and coming down from Mount Eboshi one guy driving a dump truck, we had stopped at a red light, he starts asking me questions in English. My first impression was quite friendly. That same day actually I had dropped my wallet on the mountain on the way down. I went back up the mountain and couldn't find it. Of course I went to the security office and let them know and what not. There was another cyclist going up the mountain when I was coming down and apparently he found my wallet and the very next day he brought it to the security office. There was nothing at all missing from my wallet.

Interviewer:  
Collin: The honesty ...  
In comparison to even back home, even way out in the country, the same would not happen. The wallet might come back with an ID but there would be no money or credit cards left in it.

Interviewer:  
Collin: That was 1995?  
Yes.

Interviewer:  
Collin: When you came back, you said you come in '98 then in January.  
Yes.

Interviewer:  
Collin: When you came back at that time, did you experience like a honeymoon period or anything like that where you felt like, oh, this is a great place to live or ...  
Before I came to Japan, I had gone to Singapore and with all the different experiences in Singapore, I had already decided that I was going to settle here in Asia. Where in Asia, I hadn't decided. I was thinking of Singapore itself but after I finished with the service ... In the service was kind of a honeymoon because you don't get as much national news and you don't get the full social exposure. When I finished, then I started getting the news and hearing about this and that and what not.

Interviewer:  
Collin: Would you say it's safe to say that service band, serving in Sasebo, well I'm close to Sasebo I'm in Fukuoka so I'm just curious, do you think it's like a bubble over there? Do people stay in the base more or do they venture on top?  
Yes. As far as military, basically, the only time they do interactions outside of the base are when they go drinking in the evening, and that's about it. Me, like I said, I was doing cycling and what not, so I was actually going out and finding different places and trying to understand what's around me and what not. Once I started living here, completely different because I didn't have that bubble.

Interviewer:  
Collin: You didn't have the bubble, yeah, it's gone right?  
Continually off base, having to interact with everybody outside.

Interviewer:  
Collin: Right. Did you learn the language early on?  
No actually. I didn't.  
Really?

Interviewer:  
Collin: Because after I finished, I was working in English schools all along and my ex-wife, she could speak English. I didn't have any direct need to speak Japanese. I didn't start speaking Japanese or trying to learn in earnest until maybe 6 years later. I used to build computers. Going into the computer stores and making sure that this part will work with my system or what not, most of the store clerks didn't really know. If you asked them in English, they're even further from understanding. From that, I knew I had to start learning. I started studying on my own.

Interviewer:  
Collin: Did you start to run your own business after you learned Japanese or were you doing your own business at that time?  
No. At that time I was still working at other schools.

Interviewer: I see, okay.  
Collin: I didn't start my own school until 2007.  
Interviewer: Oh good.  
Collin: No, late 2006. It's been rough going these first ...  
Interviewer: Oh I'm sure.  
Collin: ... so many years but yeah, those that give up, they usually give up quickly.  
Interviewer: Yeah. Average is about 3 to 4 years that they give up. It's a tough time I'm sure.  
Collin: But the language is extremely important to run your own business. Am I correct?  
Interviewer: Yes. Early on when I was studying, I would get to some words in Japanese and think, I'm not going to be able to do this. I'm never going to learn this. Once I changed my thinking to, I can do this, I'm going to do this, then my Japanese level increased quite a bit.  
Interviewer: Right. Does your personality change at all when you speak Japanese?  
Collin: No.  
Interviewer: Not really?  
Collin: No. I've often seen that especially with some of the schools that I've worked at where some of my Japanese coworkers, when they answer the phone, their voice changes. Their whole tone changes. I don't do that no.  
Interviewer: I'm sure you don't. Do you think you use the same speech patterns, do you think you speak the same way that you would in English? That's what I'm ...  
Collin: Yes. I do. Sometimes get shocked by it but ... Right. Because of my experience doing sales back in school and what not and like I said, being able to read people, I have always been able to gear how I speak to them, the image they portray and their aura. When you approach them, some people give off a certain image. I speak this way, I want to speak this way and if you're going to speak to me in this way, I'm not going to communicate with you.  
Interviewer: Like I said, because the first fundraisers I remember doing, I think I was in 4th grade. You imagine a 4th grader carrying around plastic trash cans, carrying around 12 of these things because we managed to get so many people to buy them. At the same time, I wasn't feeling well. We didn't figure it out until later that night that I had the chicken pox.  
Collin: You have a gift for that? A knack?  
Interviewer: Yeah.  
Collin: That's cool. When you learned Japanese and you had to do all the same ... Did you find that the jump from going from English to Japanese fairly steep or was it frustrating at any time? Because it's a very high-level way of communication there.  
Collin: Sometimes it's frustrating because one, you're having to speak backwards. It's not as easy to just go from what you're thinking in English to saying it in Japanese. Then all your predicates and what not, just very astoundingly different.  
Interviewer: Do you know anybody that's learned the language well but hasn't done well professionally?  
Collin: Basically, folks that are working in international companies here in Japan. One of my friends, her husband, he knows nothing in Japanese though he worked at a company here in Japan for I think she said seven years. The whole time he's never tried speaking in Japanese, even outside in social situations only hanging out with people that speak English.  
Interviewer: Have you ever had anybody who speaks Japanese that still has trouble?  
Collin: Well, I can think of one instance, but I think it was more of something where the person wasn't able to handle everything mentally. This person actually had a mental breakdown at the workplace.  
Interviewer: Oh really? That's not a good story. What happened in the end?  
Collin: In the end she disappeared, nobody knew where she went.

Interviewer: Oh, Did she go home? She go back to her country or ...?  
Collin: Nobody knows.

Interviewer: Nobody knows. Wow, well that's really weird.  
Collin: Yeah. She just upped and disappeared. Pretty much everyone that I know that can speak English or Japanese rather and has tried to learn they've been quite successful. But success is not just the language, it depends on your motivation as well. For me, it's been seven, eight years that I've been running my school and I've persevered and this summer has been a gold mine for me. It's not because ...

Interviewer: Yeah, that's good to hear.  
Collin: Not so much because of language, I don't think. I think word of mouth is getting out and also in some part, the language because outside in social situations I'm able to explain to people that are thinking about studying, I'll explain to them in Japanese about how my lessons go and what not.

Interviewer: Right. You think that maybe it could be a culmination of Japanese plus something. An example, in your case, Japanese plus perseverance would be a way to think. Do you know anybody that gets stuck here? Like they don't really want to be here, they have nowhere to go? What do you think?

Collin: Because of the quake in 2011, especially in this area, anyone that might have been stuck, they've gone. They took the free flight from the embassy, well not free flight, you had to pay it back later. They took that flight from the embassy to go wherever. I've never really heard of anyone getting stuck here. For me, I surround myself with people that try hard and actually go out and get what they want. No. I've never seen that. Even the Lehman crisis, there were lots of Japanese that lost their jobs here in Japan, I've met quite a few of them because they didn't have any money to go back home, they ended up homeless in Tokyo. They preserved as well and they tried everything they could and they managed to get a job and get back on their feet and get their own place again.

Interviewer: Right. Have you ever felt like you've been personally discriminated against or do ...?  
Collin: As a foreigner, yes, I've had numerous times where some places I wanted to go to like restaurants or a bar and they said, no foreigners. Usually with the bars it's more near the bases. On the other hand, taxis, with taxis it doesn't seem to matter where you are. When I moved up here to Saitama, I think the first or second time I went to get into a taxi, and actually it's happened more than once up here, the first year I was here, right away the taxi driver wants to take me down to the air force base. Even after I tell him in Japanese, "No, I want to go to my home at this place." "No, no, you're American, you need to go the ... You need to go to the air force base." I'm like, "No, look at my beard."

Interviewer: Yeehaa  
Collin: Yeah. "My beard says I don't work at the base." Those instances, directly. There was one time on the train ...

Interviewer: When did you leave the ... Were you in the army? Were you in the marines?  
Collin: I was in the navy.

Interviewer: You were in the navy.  
Collin: I finished the navy in 2000. On the train, you can see it as personal. Sitting on the train and the seats beside you are open. People come on the train, they want to sit and they see the open sit, but then they look at you and they go down the other end of the train. Get that quite often. Also there was another time where some old guy came on the train, he was a little bit drunk maybe, the person behind him, pushed him or something whatever, he only turned a quarter of the way round. He's yelling at me. I'm like, "No, I'm not dealing with this." I pushed

him off the train. He managed to get back on the train and we argued for a bit and we straightened it out.

Some other guy, come up after we had straightened out this argument. Some other guy came up yelling a lot of racist slurs at me, stuff about being from the base and I don't need to be here and this and that and because I'm here I'm ruining the Japanese society and this and that. Of course he wouldn't let me get a word in edgewise. But the old man managed to get a couple of words in to him to get him off in a way.

Interviewer: Right. What do you think about microaggressions?

Collin: For me, especially with chopsticks, I tell them, well I learned chopsticks without chopsticks. When I was in the navy, I had a cup of cup Ramen and in my office we had a hot water spigot and I had forgotten to get a folk from the cafeteria earlier that evening. The only think I had to eat my cup noodles with, were coffee stirrers, the wooden ones, the Popsicle pack. It took me about 20 minutes to eat that cup.

Interviewer: Yeah. Well, that's good. It's good for the digestion.

Collin: After I tell them that, then they don't ask me any other questions like that.

Interviewer: It happens all the time right? You have to explain that every time to new people?  
Collin: Not all the time. Most of the places I tend to go to, there are other Japanese people that know me there and they know me well.

Interviewer: That makes sense.

Collin: If somebody asks about chopsticks, my friends see that I just put food in my mouth, they know I'm not going to speak in my mouth so they will explain it. I don't always pay attention to the question so ...

Interviewer: These types of things don't bother you that much?

Collin: No, no, not really.

Interviewer: Which I think also goes into your concept of persistence right?

Collin: Yeah.

Interviewer: Persistent people don't really let these things bother them. That type of thing. It's just always about moving forward right? These little tiny things, it's part of life.

Collin: It affected my ex-wife more than it affected me.

Interviewer: Have you ever had a situation where you felt as if you had a problem that was enhanced by cultural difficulties that almost made you want to go home? They just wanted to make you leave Japan or maybe go to another country in Asia?  
Collin: I've never actually wanted to go home.

Interviewer: I understand. I know what you mean. That's why I said another country in Asia is also okay.

Collin: Yeah. Another country in Asia, maybe. Because I have children here, no, I wouldn't leave.

Interviewer: Right. Makes sense.

Collin: The big thing for me, and this is a big problem with many foreigners that have gotten divorced from Japanese, is the consistency of the Japanese government to help ex-spouses hide children. I was told by one of my Japanese friends what information I needed to give the city hall to get the address of my daughter. After I gave the information, apparently there was a flag that came up on the file.

Interviewer: When I asked about why I was denied the information, they said there was something on the file about me but they wouldn't say what it was. They said they couldn't tell me because of the privacy act. I said, "Well, this is about me so the privacy act does not apply here. This is about me, you should tell me." But still wouldn't tell me. I think it's a bit of cultural and a bit of maybe cultural ignorance.

Collin: Did you ever get in touch with your daughter again?

Collin: Actually my daughter got in touch with me.

Interviewer: Great, that's awesome. That way, yeah, I could imagine such a situation would not want to make you leave the country but it's very ... I'm sure the pressure and the stress from that was quite trying for some time.

Collin: There were many times that I yelled off my balcony for sure.

Interviewer: Yeah. I bet. Do you have any anecdotes? One of the question at the end there, is about anecdotes.

Collin: The funniest one for me ...

Interviewer: You've got a funny one? Well that's good.

Collin: I was waiting for a friend at Yokohama station, while I was waiting, this older couple came up to me, they were in their '70s, maybe '80s. They came out to me and the old man came up and he asked me where the ticket gate for JR entrance was. I explained to him in Japanese where the gate was and after I finished explaining, his wife says, "oto-san, he's not Japanese."

Interviewer: That day I had no hat on and my hair is cut short as usual. The only thing I can think is because my hair was cut short, like many young Japanese, maybe he didn't see that I was a foreigner. I explained everything to him and he had no inkling, didn't show any idea that I was different. Which to me was great.

Collin: Yeah, that's a good story. Oh, that's a good one.

Interviewer: For his wife to say that after, I was like, "Okay, this is the way to carry on."

Collin: That's funny. There's a quote in here by Daniel Kahl.

Interviewer: When I have somebody come in for a trial lesson, I figured out right away what they want to get out of English and what they want to study for. From there, yeah, take everything as far as you can go.

Collin: You focus on the needs of the students, basically?

Interviewer: Yes. My wife hates it because I'm spending a lot of time on the train going out to find students and what not. That's what you've got to do.

Interviewer: What kind of person do you think ends up in Japan living for 20 years in Japan.

Collin: What kind of person do you think that is?

Interviewer: I don't think there's one kind of person.

Collin: Yeah. No just your image of ...

Interviewer: Basically somebody that gets married here or they find a good comfortable job here or they get here after traveling to so many countries and I'll just set my hut down here, grow my roots here. It's very easy, coming from Maine we have one festival a year, to coming here where there's a festival every weekend, there's something to go out and do, something to go out and see.

Collin: Yeah, especially out in Saitama, yeah.

Interviewer: It's very easy to sit down and settle here.

Collin: What about when you go home? Do you ever go home to Maine?

Interviewer: Yeah, occasionally.

Collin: Do you have reverse culture shock when you go home?

Interviewer: About the only thing I get for reverse culture shock is sitting down to eat. You eat the *itadakimasu* and all that stuff. That wears off quickly. No.

Interviewer: What about dissatisfaction living in Japan. Any dissatisfactions with the living situations in Japan?

Collin: Recently with the changes that ... They keep making different changes for where to go for IDs and what not. Couple of years ago they were saying that for us permanent residents, we only need to go to city hall and they can take care of everything there. Then the following year, no, we've got to go way out, an hour and a half out of our way, just to renew our IDs. Things like that, rising taxes and stuff. Here we are, in the US we get taxed if we make over a certain amount. We can vote but really we have no voice. The US doesn't support us here. Japanese government won't support us here either. We're in no man's land. No matter what happens we're stuck.

Interviewer: When you say, no man's land, are you referring to politically and economically or both?

Collin: I would say both because the Japanese government doesn't want to give any financial support to any foreigners, no matter why. A few months back the Abe administration said that they do not want to give any kind of welfare to foreigners. Worker contracts left a lot of teachers up in the air wondering, "Hey, what are we going to do?" Those that have gotten tenure and universities and what not but now are told that they cannot get more than one-year contracts to work. Things like that.

Interviewer: That last one was, you're saying that they couldn't get more than a one year contract they can't get tenure, foreign teachers?

Collin: Right. Can't get tenure. Those that do have tenure now, they're left up in the air, what are we doing then?

Interviewer: Would you rather spend time with other foreigners or Japanese?

Collin: Difficult actually because I spend a large amount of time with other Japanese.

Interviewer: It's funny that you say other Japanese. I'm going to write that down.

Collin: Yeah. Because I'm way up here in Saitama, everybody says, "Oh, you live too far away." I don't actually meet up with many of my foreign friends, unless I stay out late in Jiyugaoka after lessons. I spend most of my time with Japanese, Japanese friends.

Interviewer: I see. Right. What about your current business now? Do you feel confident with that in the future?

Collin: After this past summer? Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. Good.

Collin: After this past summer, I'm picking up a part time teacher for my school as well as expanding locations so ...

Interviewer: Do you still feel like you have a lot to learn about the country? Language ....

Collin: For language, yes. For the country in general, I tend to know more about the country than many of my Japanese friends. Especially geographically and history-wise. A lot of my friends are very surprised how much I know. When I went to Osaka back in 2008, my friend and I, we were going in Osaka castle and there were a couple of guys from Canada. There's one big placard that shows a feudal era battle field. Of course each daimyo in general they've got their own battle flags. These two guys were wondering, what are the flags about? I explained the whole thing to them. After I explained it and they understood, I went up with my friend and I said, "Did you know that?" She says, "Yeah, but I'm surprised you knew that." Yeah, there's always something new to learn but ...

Interviewer: Have you ever had any situations where like the ... You know *shakojirei*, especially in your case, because you run a school, this is a good example, somebody will tell you, "Oh, no, I have to quit now but I'm going to come back in 2 months?"

Collin: Yeah.

Interviewer: That means no to you right? Does that mean ...?

Collin: I leave it open. I don't expect them to contact me but I will contact them to give them a chance to say yay or nay.

Interviewer: Right. You do the follow up but you don't have any expectations basically? You understand that ...

Collin: Not really. No.

Interviewer: What about *kukiyomenai*, the ...

Collin: Yes. One of the schools I worked at, I was the interviewer for the school or a year. Quite often the owner's wife, she would be begging me to say yes to hiring somebody. I clearly saw that the person was not planning on sticking around.

One time I said, "Okay, go ahead." The person that I was saying no to originally, within two months, she was gone.

## 025 Sean

Sean: I arrived ...  
Interviewer: This is 26 years ago, right?  
Sean: 27 years ago, yeah.  
Interviewer: 27.  
Sean: '88.  
Interviewer: Okay.  
Sean: I arrived during the bubble days, the end of the bubble days. The best way to explain it was a lot of people had money and they spent money on foolish things. They didn't really understand much outside of Japan. It was more or less just ... They were just starting to see the world; so they were still lacking understanding of many usual things.  
Interviewer: I see. Internationally, you wouldn't have labeled them as internationally-minded as they might be now?  
Sean: No, definitely not then.  
Interviewer: Did you have a honeymoon period when you first came, a period that was just completely fun and ...?  
Sean: Oh, yes, of course. I think everybody would. You come here, it's, "Wow, this is different. Wow! This is wow!" Everything is just new and ...  
Interviewer: Fun.  
Sean: It was my first time to live abroad. I was just in awe and just everything was, "Wow!" Actually, I was in my first year of marriage, so I was probably in the honeymoon then too.  
Interviewer: Marriage honeymoon, yeah, a different type of a honeymoon.  
Sean: Yes.  
Interviewer: Oh, okay. How long did that feeling last?  
Sean: I would say a good six to seven months.  
Interviewer: Did you plan to stay long term when you first came?  
Sean: No. Actually, it was supposed to be a one-year gig.  
Interviewer: Oh, okay. How long did it take you to realize that you were going to be here longer?  
Sean: I would say probably after five or six years, I started to realize, "Okay, I'm going to stay here longer, yes."  
Interviewer: In this case, was there any factors that made you, like any specific factors that had effects on that decision?  
Sean: Financial, obviously. When I was looking to go back, at one point my family member would say, "Well, jobs are hard to find." I went, "Well, I'm gainfully employed here." That was the main factor. I had had two kids by then; so going back with two children was not going to work that well that way.  
Interviewer: I'm guessing that was around '92?  
Sean: '92-'93, yeah.  
Interviewer: Right, okay.  
Sean: Because I came here married with my wife and that was ... One of the reasons I came here was we just finished college. We had gotten jobs for a year. We didn't like them. We said, "Let's go to Japan. You can meet my family, see my culture;" and that's how I got here.  
Interviewer: You met in the States.  
Sean: Yes, I did.  
Interviewer: Oh, okay. How long were you together in the States?  
Sean: We were together not that long. I would say we had dated for about seven months and then we got married. Then we were married for about ... Actually, we were only married about three months before we came here, definitely about a year.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. When your wife said, "Let's go to Japan and you can experience my culture," was it just the adventure of it that you thought it was going to be ... that appealed to you or did you have interest in Japan before that?

Sean: Actually, it was more the adventure. I came to Japan pretty ignorant of Japan other than what my wife told me, which I still had that image of Japan as the land of geisha, that people walked around in kimonos. It sounds silly but growing up ... Everybody says that. Everybody says the same thing.

Interviewer: Japan was just ... It was really booming then, but it still didn't have that image in America in some ways.

Sean: Right.

Interviewer: Interesting time to come for me.

Sean: Are you close to your family back home in the States?

Interviewer: I am more so now than when I first got here due to ... The Internet has helped me stay in contact with my family more.

Sean: That's right, yeah.

Interviewer: Again, phone calls were not cheap. Christmas phone calls were a 10,000 Yen ordeal sometimes; but now that we have Skype and all the other Internet technologies, I actually talk to my mom and dad weekly now.

Sean: Really?

Interviewer: Skype with my brothers and sisters more often.

Sean: Makes a huge difference.

Interviewer: Yes, it does.

Sean: It does.

Interviewer: Now, I visit home once a year guaranteed, sometimes twice.

Sean: Do you think learning Japanese is important to live in Japan?

Interviewer: I believe it's important. Living here not speaking the language or learning the language, you can do it. I know people who have. I know people who have been here for 30 years and the complete Japanese ... The least they can say is 'Good Morning,' 'Goodbye,' 'Thank you,' and 'How much is it?' I think even a little learning goes a long way here, but that's a personal opinion about that.

Interviewer: When it comes to work or success, do you think the language is a crucial part of that?

Sean: I think it is. Regardless of what field you're in ... Most of my work here has been in language learning. To facilitate the office requirements, speaking and reading in Japanese really does help a lot versus finding someone who can translate for you. You can live here without it, but I think it would be best to at least learn some basic things at least.

Interviewer: You've been basically in Japanese society for, you said, 27 years.

Sean: Yes.

Interviewer: During that time, when you speak Japanese versus when you speak English, are there any changes that happen to you? Do you feel like there's any personality change or ...?

Sean: Oh, yeah. When I speak Japanese, I tend ... Nowadays, I tend to think in Japanese. I tend to take my experiences of living here and talking to different people, and I put my mindset of this is how a Japanese would look at this. Most of the time, I would try to use language that wouldn't create waves, I guess. That's why sometimes ... Even when I'm talking I tend to use mannerisms that Japanese use. When I speak Japanese, I'm more Japanese than Western, I feel. Then, for example, also because you're an East Coast person, sarcasm is a famous ...

Sean: Yes.

Interviewer: Sarcasm in Americans in general is very common for humor. Obviously, that doesn't work in Japan.

Sean: Yes.  
Interviewer: Do you completely separate yourself from that type of thinking?  
Sean: I try to but it's embedded in me. It's actually coming out more now that I do talk with people back in America especially Massachusetts more. Sarcasm can seep in even when I'm speaking Japanese and I get looks of, "Huh?"  
Interviewer: Have you ever been able to gear your sarcasm towards a Japanese audience?  
Sean: I've tried but I don't know. For me, it just seems like Japanese really don't grasp sarcasm. I don't know. I know they have a form of it, but I've never been able to really grasp how they use it. For me, it's one of those little mysteries. My life in Japan, 27 years of sarcasm and frustration.  
Interviewer: Do you think people can stuck in Japan?  
Sean: Oh, yeah, without a doubt. I, for a while, was stuck here. I wasn't sure where I was going, what I was going to do. I think it happens to people anywhere no matter what. I know people who they come here, for whatever reason they stay longer, maybe they get married and have kids, and they realize they don't want to continue what they're doing at the moment and they try to change.  
I did that. I got out of teaching for a while. I love technology and so, I actually went online and studied for my Cisco certification. I started looking for jobs and I became very disappointed. At that time, I could work in the language schools for minimum of 250,000 Yen a month. I was looking for jobs at 35 and they're like, "We'll pay you 200,000 Yen a month and you work from 9am till 9pm Monday through Saturday with the possibility of working till midnight." I was, "No, I couldn't ..."  
I've done other jobs. I've worked in Udon shops. I've worked in coffee shops, yes. I haven't just taught, but yeah.  
Interviewer: When did you go back to teaching?  
Sean: I left teaching in about, almost in '97 because I finished up in December. From '97 till 2001, I was doing various jobs.  
Interviewer: I see. Have you ever been discriminated against?  
Sean: Oh, yes. I mean my ...  
Interviewer: Can you give an example?  
Sean: My very first one was ... It was '91, I guess.  
Interviewer: '91.  
Sean: This one sticks to my head because I was doing a training film for a bank and the branch manager actually asked me. I had a business account. My wife and I had a business account there and he asked me if I'd help them make a training video for foreign currency exchange. I said, "Sure" and did all that.  
Then I said, "Could I apply for a credit card?" and he's, "Oh, no." I'm, "Why not?" He goes, "We'll turn you down." "Why?" "You're a foreigner." "You'll take my money as a business but you won't give me a credit card?" "Yeah, because you're a foreigner. You'd probably run up the bills and then run away." That was my very first overt form of discrimination.  
Interviewer: This is in '91. '91 obviously credit cards to foreigners was not going to happen, right?  
Sean: Yeah. That was my very first one that it's, "Wow. Okay, you're just blatant about it here." Of course, you always get the ones of like you walk into a store and there are four other people in there, Japanese, but they're watching you. You know they're watching you because they think you're going to steal something; but they're not watching the three kids with punk hairdos and pants hanging down to their legs.  
Interviewer: Do you have any other discrimination stories?  
Sean: Other than the usual of being turned down for renting apartments because I'm a foreigner.

Interviewer: That's a common one.  
Sean: They just say, "Well..." My wife applied and then when they met me, they're, "Oh, he's a foreigner." "Yes." "No, we don't rent to foreigners." Now, I don't know if that was still legal or not but ...  
Interviewer: What year was that?  
Sean: It would have been about '94-'95.  
Interviewer: Do you think since you've come over these last 27 years, have you found that the level of or occurrences of any type of discrimination has decreased?  
Sean: Personally, I've experienced less and less. I think one of the reasons is when people talk to me and I speak Japanese to them, they feel relieved that I can speak Japanese. They maybe think, "Okay, he's not such a bad guy. He's not that kind of foreigner." I don't know but also, I'm more set in my own mansion now. Mansion in Japanese is for your condo and so, I don't have to deal with a lot of other things.  
Interviewer: Your lifestyle basically supports less discrimination and somewhat ...  
Sean: Yeah.  
Interviewer: In general, do you think society here also has gotten better with that or do you think it just hasn't changed and you just don't have to deal with it anymore?  
Sean: Due to where I live, there are more foreigners in the city I live in. I think that also helps. Also now that there are more foreigners in Japan, I personally feel even when I go to other areas there's less discrimination, but also because there are more foreigners here. They're more used to it and they start to accept us more than maybe before. Personally, I think it's less.  
Interviewer: Microaggression, you understand what microaggression is, right?  
Sean: Yes.  
Interviewer: Do you experience those or ...?  
Sean: I have. Example would be I was working for this Japanese company. It was a ... and we were going out and one of the people said, "Let's go out for some food and drinks." I say, "Okay, I'll join you." Then they'll, "Oh, you wouldn't like this place. They only serve Japanese food." Okay, like I live in Japan. I've been here. Why would you think I wouldn't like Japanese food?  
Or being invited into places and people say, "You have to take off your shoes here. It's not like you're at home." Actually, when I was a kid, we didn't wear shoes in our house. My mother would kill us. "You're not going to dirty my carpet." For me, taking off shoes was something I did as a kid every day.  
I actually have a problem when I go to America because when I go into people's house now, I automatically take off my shoes and they look at me like I'm weird.  
Interviewer: Do you experience any reverse cultural shock when you go home?  
Sean: Oh, definitely.  
Interviewer: You do, you do?  
Sean: Yeah. It's weird, but after two weeks I'm ready to go home sometimes.  
Interviewer: What's the big differences for you? Could you name one or two things?  
Sean: The big ones are when I'm in stores and you're waiting in line to pay. You want to do some shopping. You're waiting to pay and you've got the cashier and somebody having a nice little friendly chat for five, 10 minutes and you're, "I've really got to get going here," and same with restaurants.  
Also, people's attitude towards the world in general. I think because I live overseas and I experienced many different cultures through working with people from many different countries, people from South Africa, from Finland, from Australia, so I have a little more, I want to say, knowledge of what's happening outside of my own little community.

When I'm home, I hear people talk about certain things that I'm, "Well, no. It really isn't like that." Well, aar-aar, it's like ... It's this whole small town mentality that drives me nuts. I don't know if that's really a reverse culture shock but ... It is in some way because that's something where a place where you lived and you were comfortable when you lived there, but then when you get back, it's shocking that it's changed in a way that ...

Interviewer:  
Sean:

Yeah, and just people I went to school with who are, "I've never been out of Massachusetts and I'm proud of it." I go, "Okay. Can I go home now?" Those are my main issues when I go ... or cultural issues I have in America when I go.

Interviewer:  
Sean:

Do you find the topics people talk about too are difficult to follow?

Interviewer:  
Sean:

Not so much now, again, due to Internet I have access to ...

Interviewer:  
Sean:

That's right.

Because I can read my newspaper from back home. I'm keeping up and talk to people back home to find out what their issues are there; but I did have more of that when I first started visiting back home because I couldn't afford to buy a ... Newspapers, you could buy a foreign newspaper for 500 Yen. That was the International Herald Tribune. I think it was 450 Yen per issue. I was, "Hoohoo." I would say that's my biggest culture shock. I guess if I had to move home for whatever reason, I don't know if I could do that or not. I'm not sure. I think also if I had to move back in my hometown, work, what would I do? Would I be able to find a job as a teacher that would pay anything? The situation of like I'd dread if I ever had to move home right now. Or I shouldn't say home. I don't really consider going back to where I grew up. I would try ...

Interviewer:  
Sean:

Do you think the quote from Daniel Kahl is correct?

Interviewer:  
Sean:

I do.

What about yourself? How could you apply that to your life here? Do you feel like you do the same thing?

Interviewer:  
Sean:

I try to. I don't know if I have. As a teacher in Japan, my niche is technology.

Interviewer:  
Sean:

Oh, really?

My masters is in technology education. I'm an EFL teacher to say, but most of my education on education has been more technology related. I don't know if I can say it's a niche but it's my happy medium, I guess is ... What I want to say is teaching English is enjoyable for me, but teaching students how to use technology even though it's through the medium of English really, but for them to learn how to do things that they never thought they could do with even their mobile phones now, to see the look on their face when they actually realize they can do these things and they were shocked. It's, "Wow, this is not that hard." Just recently, one student came to me and said, 'Thank you. I thought that was the stupidest thing you were having us do and now, I'm going to be working for a TV station. I showed them that PSA that I made and they were quite happy to see that I knew how to do something as simple as that.' I feel that that's my niche where I help people use technology to get jobs or improve their chances for jobs or even teachers. I help fellow teachers a lot.

Interviewer:  
Sean:

Do you have any dissatisfaction with Japan?

Interviewer:  
Sean:

Police.

The police.

My problem is you'll be there and you watch them. They'll be out for something and that's all they do. That kind of, "Today, we're going to do seat belts." If someone runs a red light, we don't see that because we're here for seat belt or red lights, oh, kids with seat belts not on.

It's that. Little things like that or like when they stopped me when I was on my scooter because I was a foreigner, but two kids riding double on a 50cc with helmets that were not legal. They didn't stop them; they stopped me because I

was the foreigner. It's discrimination, but also it's just I was an easier target because I was on the left side of the road. It was easy to pull me over versus having to cross the street to get the other kids or whatever.

Interviewer: What about Japanese when they go by the book.

Sean: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you find that frustrating?

Sean: I find that frustrating. This whole idea of this is the way it's supposed to be done and we don't deviate from it.

This goes back to many, many years ago when I went to a McDonald's. I was at McDonald's and I ordered a Big Mac or something and they said it's going to take five minutes. I'm not a big fan of pickles on my burgers. I like pickles on the side but not on my burger.

I'm going to wait five minutes. I'll say, "Can I get that without a pickle?" I could see the girl's face was, "Huh? No pickle? Huh" She said, "Hold on. Chotto matte." She went and talked, "Oh, yes. We can do that. It's going to take seven minutes." You go into a place and say, "I don't want certain things or could you add I'm willing to pay but could you add that and that?" Or my car, when I bought a car, I'd been to many dealers and I was at a dealer with one car. I told them, I said, "When I ask you to do something, please at least check if it's possible. Don't just go *muri*. Just don't say it's not doable. At least humor me."

I was in the process and almost done. It was like I love this car. I love this package but I want these specific tires from another packet. I said I'm willing to pay extra, whatever it costs and the guy goes, "Can't be done," not even checking. He just said it can't be done.

I said, "Okay, I'm leaving." Then he starts to talk to my wife, ""He told you if you said that he was leaving." "Yeah but ..." It was just ... It was like he didn't even see if it could be done. He just said it couldn't be done without maybe checking. 'By the book' is something I forget that happens here. It's just something ...

Interviewer: It just becomes so normal that you get used to it.

Sean: Yeah. You just accept that if they're going to say no, so you don't do it and then you do it yourself some other way. I have that problem with my condo association and they tell you, "You can't do this, can't do that."

Interviewer: That's what I've heard, yeah.

Sean: Then I'm thinking, "Jeez, I see a lot of people doing this and that."

Interviewer: Right.

Sean: I'm, "Okay;" but then I do something that nobody else is doing and they're like, "Uh." What was it? I'd put a little pool on my balcony. It was a 2-meter pool. My wife and I would sit around and invite friends over. We just put our feet in the pool and have drinks and all that.

My neighbor complained that I drained the pool and it would make a lot of noise of the water going down the pipe. That was because it was after 8:00 that I do that. I would do that. I wouldn't drain it. I'd drain it the next day. Complained that it was making too much noise. Apparently, in the condo association you're not supposed to have put pools on your balcony with water in them. I said, "Okay." I said, "Isn't it also against the rule to block the emergency exit with something underneath?" Yes, but my neighbor was putting their spare tires. It created a kerfuffle and all that. Now, I just barbecue instead.

Interviewer: I wish I could ... What kind of person do you think ends up here for 20 years if you had to give an example?

Sean: I think someone who is really just a flexible person, willing to just walk away from something because it would just make their life, not necessarily easier, but make everybody's life easier even if they're personally going to get a bit financial

damage or something that it's a personal hit to them but in the long run it will help everybody else involved.

Someone who has the ability to just accept things as they are; maybe try to change them but don't let that define them. There are things that I think we all experience and we want to change and we try, but it becomes too cumbersome to the rest of our life. If we're spending a lot of time on that, other things get ignored. We just ...

I have friends who to this day still are trying to change just the ... What was this one? This one guy was about the vegetables in his area. The farmers were not putting all of the pesticides they use on the packaging or something. I don't know, and to this day, he's been doing this for 20 years now. He just won't give up and I'm just like ...

Interviewer: He took a side project.

Sean: Yeah and it's caused animosity among his neighbors as well. People who in general are just open to new ideas and willing to agree to disagree, I think that's but ....

Interviewer: Yeah, it sounds about right. I would agree with a lot of that. What about anecdotes? Do you have any anecdotes that you share with people about Japan?

Sean: I talk about ... People ask what it's like. I tell them it's not really that much difference in many ways. There are differences but you still have the same issues. In America it's always about ... In America or Japan, because I use those mainly is we worry about our kids, worry about education, worry about health and food and things that ...

I do talk about the 'by the book' things and how sometimes they're funny jokes to people back home; how many parents are worried about are the kids getting a good education or not; are the teachers doing a good job; safety issues; are my children safe going from home to school as we've had recently a few incidents and over the years seen them.

In so many ways, we're not that much different and I believe that's pretty much every country. There are differences in how we go about things and I think that's what people find interesting.

How Japanese don't protest as much in many ways. They have small little protests here in there, but from my knowledge of what I've learned about Japan since I've been here like the seventies, they had a lot more big protests especially when Narita Airport was being built, things like that.

You don't get as much of that but now and then you do when ... Was it TEPCO, the electric power company, not putting out enough information about the Fukushima incident, then we get more protests. Of course, I had to share my experience of living here during the earthquake of '95.

Interviewer: Oh, that's right. You were there for that.

Sean: I was here. I was actually in Osaka at the time but I was awake. I was actually helping at my mother-in-law's coffee shop. I was just opening up the shutter when I heard the noise and everything shook.

Interviewer: Wow.

Sean: It was and I had friends who lost their parents and siblings. I did not lose any friends, thank goodness but I've had friends who lost their parents or siblings. Again, then I saw the Japanese working with each other, helping each other out. Most of my sharing was if people ask what's different, well, housing is different definitely. I find the housing here a bit cramped compared to America.

Interviewer: Are you a fairly tall guy?

Sean: No, I'm not. When I first came here, I lived in a very old building and I'm all of 175 cm tall. I would walk between my kitchen ... kitchen, yeah, we call that a

kitchen ... and the other room. It was the style with the sliding doors, the *fusuma*, and I would constantly bang my head on the framework of that.

Interviewer:  
Sean: And 175 is like a dangerous low because it's right at your forehead.

Yeah, so you can stand inside the frame and be okay. Your head would just have a half a centimeter of space but when you're walking you bounce up and down with your feet, and that's where I'd hit my head.

For me, the housing. In general, housing is generally smaller here overall. I had an issue where we are living now. We moved out for a couple of years for a financial benefit and we rented our place.

When we were renting, the real estate agent said, "You should make four rooms instead of three rooms in your ... Instead of 3LDK, make a 4LDK and you can get 80,000 Yen more a month. I'm, "Why? The rooms would be smaller?" Oh, that doesn't matter, numbers. Yes, Japanese like a 4LDK even though they're smaller. I'm, "Uh-uh, no." I like my big rooms. I want to tear it out and make it a 2LDK.

Interviewer:  
Sean: I can imagine.

Then again the condo association won't let me do that, too much noise.

Interviewer:  
Sean: What about the future in Japan? Do you feel any stress at all thinking about your future in Japan?

Interviewer:  
Sean: I do. It's a combination of ... The Japanese pension system, I don't rely on that but I'm part of it. I think it's happening in other countries as well. People are thinking these are not solvent but I paid into it for 20 years already.

It's like I'd like to get something back, but I also worry about some of the younger generation. I think this is just general from everybody over the years but being in education here and seeing students thinking, "This is the person who will be responsible for the country while I am retiring," it does bother me a bit, not all.

It's just maybe the universities that I work at, but it does make me worry. I and my wife have been looking around for alternate places to retire. We don't know if we want to stay here.

Interviewer:  
Sean: Do you mean not retiring in Japan?

Interviewer:  
Sean: Yeah.

Interviewer:  
Sean: I see.

Interviewer:  
Sean: I was saying, my wife and I have been having this conversation. For the first couple of years after we retire, we are thinking of becoming JICA volunteers.

Interviewer:  
Sean: Oh, really.

Interviewer:  
Sean: The only way I can do that is if my wife does it.

Interviewer:  
Sean: Oh, I see.

Interviewer:  
Sean: I actually know a person who works at JICA and he was explaining that if I do it, no but if my wife and I do it, then I can do it.

Interviewer:  
Sean: JICA pays pretty well for the two years you go but they have, what is it, a restriction. You don't get to guess ... You don't get to ask for where you want to go or something.

Interviewer:  
Sean: Yeah, I understand that and I'm okay with that. We're just thinking it's a good way because we'll be still young and healthy enough to do things and be productive. It will help to extend our retirement fund.

Interviewer:  
Sean: That's right, yeah.

Interviewer:  
Sean: They give you a stipend and a place to live or enough to cover all that and that's fine for us. We like to get involved in those types of organizations. We do a lot of charity work.

We are involved with a thing called KISS. It's K---- International School Service and we help the kids gather sponsors, business sponsors to help them to either run an event to collect money to send for various orphanages in Japan, mainly in our area.

Interviewer: I see, okay.  
Sean: Also to help during the Tohoku earthquake, send money there or we actually sent some kids to go and help through homes for habitat types. We didn't go due to the timing that they were going. We like that and we feel we could help a lot.

Interviewer: That's an interesting plan.  
Sean: Then after that we're looking to retire somewhere in Asia where our money will last longer.