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## Filipino-Japanese Marriages

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## Filipino-Japanese Marriages

*Leslie E. Bauzon*



Over the past several years, there has been a steady outward movement of Filipinos to foreign lands, either on a permanent basis, as in migration, or on a temporary basis, as in overseas employment. The majority of these egresses are done for the intention of finding greener pastures, of searching for the proverbial gold mine. The persistent long queues at the United States Embassy and at recruitment centers for Middle East employment attest to this. Many of these people have little hope of finding gainful employment in their native land and believe that working abroad is the short-cut to earn good money no matter what the cost may be. For there have been so many cases of misfortunes, accidents, deaths, and very frequently, broken homes. People from the highest strata down to the lowest classes join the exodus to foreign lands. Doctors and nurses train abroad, then eventually settle there. Architects and engineers leave their jobs here to join foreign firms. Skilled and unskilled construction workers augment the labor force in the Middle East. Teachers and housewives take jobs as domestic helpers and take care of other people's children while leaving the care of their own children to relatives.

Job opportunities in the Philippines, although available to those qualified, pay very little and will not enable them to afford big color televisions, cassette players, or video cassette recorders ubiquitously seen in homes of overseas contract workers. While professionals will not be able to build their dream homes, ride in luxurious vans or automobiles, or send their children to exclusive schools, if they worked locally.

The recent years have seen the exit of Filipino women to Japan to work as entertainers, who come and go on 3-6 month-contracts. Those who are fortunate to land more permanent jobs stay longer, or find Japanese husbands and bear their children. A few go to the

extent of becoming mail-order brides, or are recruited to marry Japanese farmers in rural Japan. This latter phenomenon of Filipino village women opting to leave their families and homeland to get married to Japanese farmers led to this study.

This article seeks to make an in-depth analysis of the historical, cultural, social and economic context of the phenomenon of cross-cultural marriages between Japanese farmers and Filipino village women, the recruitment process, their expectations, and how they reconcile their respective expectations and differences.

To accomplish these objectives, it is imperative to do a comparative analysis of the background of the Japanese and Filipinos in general, and of the Japanese farmers and Filipino village women in particular. This is followed by a study of actual cases of marriage between Japanese farmers and Filipino women in rural villages in Japan, carried out by informal unstructured interviews wherein the interviewees casually narrated their stories.

## **The Philippines**

The Philippines is located about 700 miles from the mainland of Asia, forming the northern part of the Malay Archipelago. To its north is Taiwan, to its west, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia and Vietnam, and to its northwest, Hong Kong and Communist China. Its total area is 115,707 square miles, compared to Japan's 142, 726. It has three big islands, Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, altogether consisting of more than 7,000 large and small islands. It is a tropical country with a warm climate, although the months of November, December, and January are relatively mild with cool winds. It is very rich in natural resources: fertile soil, seas, lakes and streams with abundant fish species, pearl-bearing oysters, hills and mountains with rich deposits of gold, silver, iron, chromite and other valuable minerals. Millions of hectares of forests are rich in commercial timber—mahogany, dao, kamagong, tindalo, narra and molave, ranking among the finest hardwoods in the world (Zafra 1966).

Filipino culture is a blend of different cultures, mainly influenced by Spain during its more than 300-year rule, and the United States for almost fifty years, while retaining some pre-colonial beliefs and practices of Malay, Chinese and Indian cultures. Spain introduced Catholicism and Spanish culture which became the basis of many social institutions and ideologies. It was responsible for uneven

wealth distribution, giving rise to the wealthy landed minority, and the poor majority. While Spanish culture was conservative, the Americans brought liberalism and emphasized social equality and democracy. Today, Filipinos are a highly westernized people, enjoying American food, music, and adopting westernized values.

The Filipino family is known for its solidarity, and in the community, almost all activities are centered on the family. It is one of the major sources of security in society. The family is not only supportive but also protective of its members. Thus, an erring child is not considered at fault, but was just probably influenced by bad company. A disgraced child is accepted as an integral part of the family. Likewise, institutions for the aged and the orphanages are very few because it is characteristic of Filipino culture to take care of its old members and orphaned children (Mendez et al. 1984).

The pervasiveness of familial influence over decision-making is explicit in choices of careers, marriage partners, and place of residence still dominant in some rural areas. The primary function of a family is to prepare each member for his role in the community and in the society by transmitting to the child the proper values. Values refer to the standards of evaluation people use to view objects, ideas or actions as desirable or undesirable, right or wrong, appropriate or inappropriate. Values are guides to human behavior (Mendez et al. 1983). Among the important Filipino values are respect for elders: the practice of the child kissing the hand of his parents and older relatives; the use of "Aling" or "Mang" before the first names of men and women; calling of "Ate" or "Kuya" to an elder sister or brother, and using "po" or "opo" in answering yes in obedience to elders. There are also harmonious relationships: friendly relations between children; the virtues of generosity and reciprocity, as in food-sharing, and responsibility. The boy helps the father in the field; the girl helps the mother in household work, and attends to younger siblings. In modesty they behave properly, maintaining a discreet distance of a young lady from boys, not speaking loudly, or not giggling in public. In a "double standard of morality": the male adolescent is not as restricted; double standard extends to the "querida system," which tolerates a married man to have extramarital affairs; society condones a man doing this, but condemns a woman. (This contradicts egalitarian status between husband and wife.)

There is also human concern and interaction with others (*pakikisama*): close fraternization among neighbors; neighborliness is best exemplified in times of crisis, e.g. emotional and moral support;

material assistance like loans or protection; socializing by exchanging food and visiting, reciprocal relationship which is an individual anticipates material assistance from kinsmen, emotional support from friends, and social response from neighbors, and close kinship ties when all members of the family, young or old, are expected to attend and participate in family-sponsored activities. Children learn the values of the culture in this context and these occasions enhance close ties among kinsmen and a friend approximates another person's background and personality and can provide emotional, moral, physical, and even economic support. Relationships between close friends may approximate or even surpass sibling relationships. Filipino values include commitment and conviction (*paninindigan*): maybe equated to principles; a man earns the respect of his peers because he has a firm conviction about certain matters, and becomes worthy of respect.

Another value is Filipino hospitality. Filipinos are well-known for their hospitality. Sometimes, they go overboard, like in sacrificing one's bed or room to a visiting relative or friend, cooking more and better food for guests. Sometimes, hospitality is carried too far by those who can least afford it. Food is given to guests even if members of the family would not have anything left for them.

Other values include dependency, interest in overseas employment, the desire for education and colonial mentality. Dependency is a trait developed in a child but sometimes carried into adulthood. It is more frequent among well-to-do families with maids who do everything for them. Married people sometimes still depend on their old parents for financial assistance. Interest in overseas employment is particularly among those in the lower income group who do not have stable jobs. Overseas employment becomes an obsession to save money for material goods and their children's education. In the desire for education, the younger generation do not see farming as a lucrative endeavor, and they consider education as a springboard for socioeconomic mobility and a means for alleviating their poverty. Colonial mentality is the Filipino attitude of having a preference for foreign, rather than Filipino, things and ideas, such as preference for foreign consumer goods, preference to use English rather than Filipino in daily conversation.

Jocano (1988) lists three other prevalent Filipino norms: shyness or *hiya* which may also connote shame, losing face, embarrassment or self-esteem: *hiya* is not wholly an individualized feeling, it is the community which defines it. The sense of gratitude (*utang na loob*) is an extremely important norm (Kaut 1961). It implies a sense of grati-

tude, a reciprocal feeling of obligation between two persons. It involves voluntary giving of a gift or favor; the repayment of assistance, gift or favor on the basis of an individual's evaluation of the degree of the indebtedness he has incurred.

There is also the concept of honor and self-esteem (*amor proprio*). This is introspective estimation of an individual's worth and image in the community and accounting for much of the hypersensitivity of the people, especially the young males, to proper social relations. *Amor proprio* encompasses a radical, vindictive reaction to any attempt at casting doubt upon or questioning an individual's action, integrity and honor.

These different values constitute the framework of beliefs, symbols and meanings associated with behavior. It is through them that actions are organized and emphasized for the individual members and the community.

### Changing Values

Urbanization has attracted the rural folk to the city for better-paying job opportunities, way above the meager farm income in the Philippines. The absence of the father from the home contributes to the disintegration of the family since the mother becomes the only adult member of the nuclear family.

There have also been changes in the formation of new families. The previous practice of parents arranging marriages among the young children aged between fourteen and twenty, associated with many beliefs and rituals, has changed. Mate selection since the Spanish era has been based on the freedom of an individual to choose his/her partner, although parental influence is still strong. Important traits considered in mate selection were beauty, charm, industry and diligence for a female, and dependability, resourcefulness and manliness in a male. That love is an important prelude to marriage was an American influence. The tradition of payment for the bride in which relatives of both bride and groom try to outdo each other in the giving of material gifts is no longer done. Nowadays, couples marry at an age when they feel economically independent from their parents. The marrying age has been pushed back to twenty-five to twenty-eight when both parties are considered mature and able to spend for their own weddings. Couples divide the cost of wedding expenses between them and limit the guests to close families and friends. The *pamanhikan* which is still being practiced, is less pomp-

ous and without the usual elder go-between. Usually, it is the family, the father particularly, who asks for the hand of the bride in marriage. As to residence after marriage, the newly-married couple opt to live by themselves independently in rented apartments and subsist on a strict budget. Sometimes, they may initially stay with either parents until they have enough money to pay rent (Medina 1991).

The role of the wife has undergone considerable changes because she now usually participates as breadwinner, and she becomes overburdened with both domestic and office work. The husband is still the main provider but has a lighter burden because of his wife's employment.

## Japan

Nearly 85 percent of Japan is covered by mountains and hills, and scientists believe that the mountain range which makes up Japan has not stopped growing. They think the eastern shores of the islands along the Pacific are slowly rising while the western coast along the sea of Japan is sinking. Many earthquakes occur in Japan because of this gradual and continuing movement of the earth's crust. Japan has about 1,500 earthquakes every year.

Regional climates in Japan can be compared to the east coast of the United States. Kyushu and Shikoku have a mild climate like that of Florida, with long hot summers and mild winters. Winters are mild in the south and cold and snowy in the north. Japan gets plenty of rainfall, heaviest between June and July, and from September to October.

Unlike the Philippines, Japan has few natural resources. Only about 15 percent of the land can be farmed. Japan's most valuable resource is its people. With their skills, Japan has overcome the handicap of limited natural resources and has become one of the chief industrial countries in the world. Because of limited natural resources, Japan has to import food and raw materials, and in turn, it exports chemicals, electronic equipment, iron and steel, motor vehicles, ships and textiles.

About one-sixth of Japan's workers are farmers, and one-half of Japanese farmland is planted with rice, mostly in paddies built in terraces on the hillsides. They also grow barley, cabbages, fruits, onions, potatoes, radishes, soybeans and wheat, and tea.

The traditional Japanese rural society established during the Tokugawa period, concentrated on agriculture, particularly farming. The *mura* or village served as administrative unit, as well as a social and economic unit. A village was formed from a distinct residential area surrounded by fields which were cultivated by the villagers. The farmland each household owned or leased averaged nine hectares. During harvest time, it was common for the households to help one another, forging close ties among villagers (Fukutake 1967). A household includes a nuclear family, some relatives and even non-relatives such as servants registered under the household. It also included the family, the house, family properties—the fields, animals and farming tools, and even the family graveyard where their ancestors were buried. The household head is the male who established the household, or his direct male descendant. In the absence of a man to succeed the family line, the husband of the eldest daughter or a male relative is adopted, who relinquishes rights in his natal family, takes the name of his new family, and fulfills his duties and responsibilities. The duties of the household head are to ensure the continuity and standing of his household in the village society by taking care of his aged parents, by managing the properties of the household and each member's participation in the work required, and by producing a successor. Other family members submit to his authority.

Marriage is between two households of more or less equal standing, rather than two individuals, who will then have certain mutual obligations dictated by custom. A go-between, usually a relative or family friend, arranges the marriages. Love and personal wishes are not considered very important. The woman is considered less important than the man because she does not contribute to the family line, uses family resources for dowry, and ceases to be part of the natal household as soon as she is legally married. The parent-child relationship is considered more important than the husband-wife relationship. The new bride has a duty to obey more the head of the household than her husband, so she has to adapt to the ways of the family as a daughter-in-law rather than as a wife. Inability to adapt could lead to divorce if her parents-in-law order it.

Within the household, the househead controls the farming operations and income. He also enjoys many privileges like being served first, and has a special seat. The successor of the household is the eldest son. Daughters are low in status and they may become servants, factory-workers, or sold to prostitution as in the past. The daughter-in-law serves the mother-in-law, and as she gets older, she



takes over the duties that the mother-in-law becomes unable to fulfill.

It is not easy for a daughter-in-law to fit into her new family. She is expected to adapt to the ways of the family, serve her parents-in-law and other members, work in the farm and in the house, and bear children. The husband defers to the wishes of his parents rather than to his wife's. If the wife does not fulfill her duties, she can easily be divorced and changed.

The grandparents, particularly the grandmother who stays home most of the time, take care of the grandchildren, and are usually indulgent to them, at times conflicting with the mother. As the children grow older, the headship transfers from the grandfather to the eldest, the father who is more strict.

The traditional Japanese family system has undergone extreme changes. There was a rapid growth in the Japanese economy but the number of persons engaged in agriculture decreased. Manufacturing and service sectors caused the movement of more people from rural to urban areas, lured by higher wages. Farming was no longer as productive and lucrative so that the men went away to work in the cities and became weekend farmers only. Sometimes, farmwork was left to the grandparents and the daughter-in-law. Modern farming utilizing scientific methods weakened the authority of the father or househead. He also had difficulty learning the new modern methods, and he had to rely on his son to do the job. The household mistress assumed many responsibilities of the househead in his absence and increased her authority.

The oldest son or successor is given incentives to stay at home and manage the household, but marriage partners are now becoming increasingly difficult to find. Japanese women now enjoy more social and economic independence. For husbands, they prefer white-collar employees who live in urban centers and are not eldest sons, so that they are not bound to take care of the parents-in-law, can control the household finances, and raise their children the way they want. They also want enough time for leisure on a part-time job. These are some of the main reasons why only very few Japanese women would marry Japanese farmers. The men who would have much difficulty finding marriage partners are successors of family households, are living with parents, and are aged thirty years and above. Mothers themselves do not want their daughters to marry successors of households, not wanting them to experience hardships and difficulties.

Young men and women who are not bound to stay and manage their family properties migrate to urban centers like Tokyo and Osaka, leaving only the older people to live in rural areas. The situation then is that men cannot find marriage partners within their district or even from other areas, which experience the same conditions. The lack of wives for successors in rural areas has become a critical problem. The sons are getting older, and their search for brides has now extended far beyond to other Asian countries, notably Korea, China, and the Philippines.

According to a study done by Hiroyuki Watanabe et al (1993) there are four patterns associated with the formation of cross-cultural marriages in rural areas of Japan. The local government establishes a connecting route with a particular country, and arranges meetings in Japan or in foreign countries between Japanese men and foreign women. Connections are made through sister city or sister municipality relations and/or the acceptance of trainees in the manufacturing or agricultural sectors. The intermediary, usually a marriage introduction service or a marriage broker, acts as a go-between. The local government hires him to search for suitable candidates; then men from the municipality visit the foreign country to meet the women. The broker arranges for the men's airline tickets, hotel accommodations, meetings, and other expenses. If a couple decides to marry, he pays for all expenses for the preparations and the wedding itself, which may be preferred to take place in the foreign country. The broker also usually asks for a commission. In this pattern, even if it is the intermediary who establishes a connecting route and searches for the bride candidates, it is still the local government that is nominally considered the "intermediary" in the cross-cultural marriage.

While the first and second patterns of Watanabe et al. involve the direct or indirect intermediation of the local government, and in the second pattern, the intermediary receives wages from the local government, this pattern involves the direct application to the marriage service or broker by the Japanese man who wishes to search for a wife abroad. However, there are many corrupt practices here by introduction agencies or marriage brokers, and this pattern may often lead to failure. In the personal pattern, the man and the woman meet in a "natural" manner, and there is no third party involved. They have time to get to know one another before the marriage. Within the past decade, there has been a steady influx of Asian women to

Japan working as entertainers. A big number of Filipino entertainers met their fiancés or spouses through this pattern.

### **Cross-Cultural Marriages**

Between Filipinos and other nationals, cross-cultural marriages occur through various methods: many through the natural method such as in meetings through community activities, church, school, place of work, seminars, or through introduction by mutual friends or relatives. Other means, such as through pen pals, mail-order bride services, and occasionally through marriage brokers, also succeed in bringing about cross-cultural marriages, especially between Filipino women and foreign men. Arranged marriages are made mainly for economic reasons, to improve their present state of life, and to go abroad, or live abroad. Moreover, stories of successful and happy marriages between Filipinos and foreign nationals, and the actual observation of Filipinos having come into fortune with their jewelry, electrical appliances, cars, nice clothes and other things, are strong motivating factors.

The top foreign nationals married by Filipino women are from the United States at 45 percent and Japan at 29 percent, followed by Australia, Germany, United Kingdom, and Canada. These countries are industrialized and rich. In the recent years, Japan has been a top destination of Filipino entertainers. It is near the Philippines and would be affordable for the women to come home and visit their relatives frequently. In the 5-year period from 1989 to 1993, there was a large number of Filipino-Japanese marriages—20,264, mostly the result of contact with Filipino entertainers (Philippine Statistics 1994).

As to the manner of introduction between the spouses, 32–43 percent was in the place of work, 26–41 percent through personal introduction, 21–30 percent through pen pals referred by relatives, 0.2–1 percent through pen pals seen in columns or ads, 0.5–2 percent through Pen Pal club, and 0.2–4 percent through the marriage bureau. It can be seen from this figures that Filipinos still prefer personal referrals or referrals through relatives whom they can trust, rather than virtual unknowns, in their search for Japanese partners.

Filipino women are preferred by many foreign nationals to be their marriage partners because of their reputation as good wives. They are generally known for their modesty, industriousness, friendliness, and good values. Moreover, they understand and speak English.

### **Filipino-Japanese Marriages**

For the purpose of actual studies of Filipino-Japanese marriages in rural Japan, a farming village, Yamagata in Northern Japan, was chosen to be the site of our investigation. It is a place where there is a big number of cross-cultural marriages. Since 1980, many women have been coming to the prefecture as foreign brides. In 1994, the Yamagata Prefectural Office's Summary of the Survey on Foreign Workers and Foreign Brides, there were foreign wives living in Yamagata, mostly coming from Korea, China, and the Philippines (*Yamagata Statistics* 1994).

Yamagata prefecture is located in the Tohoku area of Japan, the northeastern portion of Honshu Island. Because it is located away from the centers of commerce and industry in Japan, its development has been slow. Hence, traditional values, attitudes and practices are still much in use. Yamagata is extremely mountainous. With mountains occupying 70 percent of the total prefectural area. The climate shows extremes of temperature, with extreme heat in summer, and severe cold during winter, with snowfall of 30–50 cms. in the plains. In 1993, Yamagata had 184 cloudy days, 82 snowy days, 137 rainy days and only 14 sunny days. This weather situation is typical in any given year.

Total population in Yamagata is 1,258,410, with senior citizens or persons aged 65 and over accounting for 16 percent of the population. The population density is 135 persons per square kilometer, compared to 327.4 and 326 for Tokyo and Japan, respectively.

Yamagata has always been an agricultural place, with rice as the main agricultural product. Flowers and fruits are also produced, and it is famous for a variety of fruits such as cherries, pears, grapes, peaches, persimmons and apples. Livestock is 15 percent of agricultural production, famous for its Yamagata beef. Main industries include manufacturing of machines, food processing, and textiles.

In the 1980s, foreign brides started coming in large numbers in Yamagata. According to officials from the International Affairs Division of the Yamagata Prefectural Government, the past several years have shown a great increase in the number of Korean and Chinese wives, in contrast to the very slight increase in the number of Filipino women. This may be a reflection of the tightening of the law in the Philippines regarding marriage to foreign men through various types of marriage services. Local people also believe that Korean and Chinese women tend to blend physically better, and that

they will adjust better to Japanese culture because of many similarities with their cultures.

Support services are provided to foreign brides by the prefectural government, but actual marriage policies and agreements are left to the decision of each local government. The Prefectural government offers counseling services in the foreign brides' native languages or in English, and a guidebook for daily living written in English, Chinese, Korean, and Spanish. The International Affairs Division of the prefectural government branches in several locations offers seminars on cross-cultural issues, and get-togethers that serve to encourage cross-cultural understanding.

A study of the municipalities in rural Japan would lead to a better understanding of the situation of the foreign brides. The town of Asahi typifies the general situation in rural areas, being the first municipality in Japan to actively intermediate in cross-cultural marriages of Japanese men and foreign women. Asahi is located in the Murayama area, about one hour away by car from the prefectural capital, separated from Yamagata City by mountains. The main industry is agriculture. Rice was the main product until the 1970s, but since then, there has been a shift to fruits such as apples, pears, and grapes. Other major industries are textile fiber industries, food processing, and woodcraft (*Profile* 1993).

The current population in Asahi town is 10,156. Its population indicates three trends, most important of which is depopulation, followed by aging of the population, and an imbalance of the male to female ratio, wherein there are more males in the marriageable age. As in the national and prefectural population, Asahi has a big population of older persons. Almost half of the population, 45 percent are fifty or older, 27–32 percent are aged twenty to forty-nine, while 22 percent are nineteen years and below. There is therefore a large number of single men aged thirty and above.

To ensure the continuance of rural households and the town's preservation, the local government had to act to help look for marriage partners for its single old men. A marriage consultation service was set up in 1976, 1981, and in 1986. This service provided consultations concerning marriage, regular exchange of information, publication of a manual promoting marriage, arrangement of meetings or parties for single men and women, among others. Since then, sixty-two marriages were reported. Measures to attract young people to settle permanently were also made. The local government also made a policy of assistance on the matter. Local government offi-

cials decided that the choice of countries was made on the basis of the availability of connecting routes, or availability of contacts in the local countries who would act as intermediaries. Asahi is a pioneer town for cross-cultural marriages arranged through the intermediation of the local government. In 1985, there were four marriages between Japanese men and Filipino women. To date, there are nine Filipino, five Chinese, and two Korean wives. Filipinos are preferred as wives because being Catholics, they are presumed to be moral, and they are perceived as kind and compassionate.

After marriage, there is a continuation of the support by the local government in the form of seminars and symposia, with topics on Japanese cooking, husband and wife relations, raising of children, and other practical and ordinary topics to help the wives adjust. Private groups and local organizations also help in the form of organizing community activities which encourage sharing of cultural practices, and counseling. Instruction in Nihonggo is provided to the foreign brides.

### Japanese-Filipino Marriages in Yamagata

The investigation in Yamagata was done on two occasions: 25–28 October 1994 and 22–28 November 1994. Because the Filipino wives did not live in a single place but were scattered over a large area, preliminary arrangements with the local government officials to gather them in places like the hotel, local government offices, or in homes of some wives, were made. A total of sixteen Filipino wives were available for the interviews.

A socio-demographic profile of the Filipino wives and their husbands was made, while another study focused on marital satisfaction.

The following tables gives socio-demographic pictures of Filipino wives and Japanese husbands.

Table 1. Filipino Wives

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A. Age	
Range: 22–38 years	
22–25	7
26–30	3
31–38	6

B. Province of Origin	
National Capital Region	2
Bataan	4
Bicol	2
Cavite	7
Leyte	1
C. Educational Attainment	
College graduate	2
Some college education	3
Vocational school	6
Some vocational training	1
High school graduate	4
D. Occupation Before Marriage	
Factory work	6
Office/sales	5
Baby-sitter (part-time)	1
None	2
Students	2
E. Length of Stay in Japan	
Range: 8 months – 7 years	
Less than 3 years	6
3–7 years	5
7 or more	5
F. Manner of Meeting their Partners	
Intermediation of local government	
Marriage broker	11
Direct local government	
intermediation (local study groups)	3
Natural way (while working as entertainer)	1
Through an entertainer friend	1
G. Present Occupation	
Factory work	10
Non-family agricultural work	1
Housewives	5
G. Children	
With young children in elementary school	12
One child only	7
Two children	3
Three children	2
I. Living with In-Laws	14

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Table 2. Japanese Husbands

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A. Age	
Range: 30-50 Years	
35 and below	1
36-40	8
41-45	4
46-50	3
Average age: 41 years	
B. Occupation	
Full-time farmers	4
Service industry	3
Part-time farmers	8
Construction industry	1

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### Analysis

It can be seen from their profile that Filipino women who entered into marriage with Japanese men were mature, of legal age, twenty-two years being the youngest and six out of sixteen were more than thirty years old. The latter might have been afraid to become spinsters, or tagged as "old maids," and latched on to the "last trip"—a common joke among Filipinos of Filipino women getting to be desperate to find someone to marry once they reach the age of thirty and are unattached. They were all literate, so they knew what they were getting involved in, with the lowest education being high school graduates. Their types of employment show that although ten had jobs before marriage, they were low-paying in nature. Both these factors—advancing age and low or no employment, plus the fact that they agreed to go to rural areas are evidences of the economic reason for these marriages. This is further proved by the fact that the intermediation was mostly the manner of meeting their partners.

The women were not choosy of their partners, who were definitely much older, all of them above thirty years, seven of them forty-one to fifty years old, and mostly farmers. They were not also particular about their partners' physical appearance, whom they had not even seen.

The expectations of the Filipino women respondents were typically similar: a relatively easy life, their own comfortable home, and enough money so they could send home to their folks in the Philip-



piners. They expected to do household work, and not have to work outside their homes. They also expected to reign supreme in their homes, which is the usual custom in their country. They were therefore unprepared for what their situation would be like; that they would stay with their in-laws, that they were expected to work either in the farm or outside, that it was the mother-in-law who was the powerful figure in the household, that whatever earnings they would make should be given to the mother-in-law who controlled the purse, and that it would also be the parents-in-law who would take care of their children while they were away at work, and bring them up largely in the Japanese way.

As to the expectations of the Japanese husband and her in-laws, the foreign wife is expected to produce an heir to succeed the father, provide labor inside and outside the house, and render service to her husband's family. She is also supposed to be under the authority of her mother-in-law, and this is where the greatest conflict is. There is a very close interdependency relationship between the mother-in-law and her son, often leading to jealousies on the part of the wife. The Filipino wife was not prepared for the set-up in the Japanese household, and the obedience expected of her by her in-laws. The Japanese family was also unprepared for the independent spirit of the foreigner wife. According to a psychiatrist, Norihiko Kuwayama (1993), who has treated Filipino wives in Yamagata, it was the stress associated with characteristics peculiar to the Japanese family that was the most heavily felt stress among foreign wives. Likewise, there were adjustment problems regarding the new environment, a totally different climate, and a communication barrier. There was no time for the partners to know much about each other, much less about their cultural differences, leading to misunderstandings and conflicts.

These conflicts however decreased and were eventually somehow resolved with the passing of time which allowed them all more understanding of each other's culture. The Filipino wife's values of obedience, respect for elders, desire for harmonious relationships, responsibility, and friendliness helped her adjust to a new life, and paved the way to mutual understanding. With the lines of communication open, they discovered more about each other's cultures and learned to resolve their differences.

In a study done by Angelica C. Escalona for her thesis among the same Filipino wives in Yamagata, which focused on marital satisfaction, she noted that moderate satisfaction was felt in general. Around

13 percent professed strong feelings of love for their husbands, 85 percent had some feelings, while the rest had not much love for their partners. However, they trusted their husbands, and have not had serious thought of separation or divorce, inasmuch as the latter is not allowed in the Philippines. Their disagreements center on in-law relations. Money is also a major source of conflict, especially in the early years of marriage. Filipino wives are bound by the value of *utang na loob* to their parents—a sense of responsibility to repay the hardships and sacrifices of their parents for the children's sake. In Yamagata, all members of the household, including the Filipino wife, are expected to turn in their incomes to the mother-in-law, the sole person who holds the purse, and who just gives them their allowances. The Filipino women view their income as their own property, and it is their right on how to dispose of it. They do manage to send money to their folks from their own earnings, and give about half to their mother-in-law.

The Filipino wives were also willing for their children to be brought up by the Japanese way because they are Japanese citizens and will live in Japan. However, they intend to teach them Filipino customs and values too.

Most of the women belong to the Catholic faith but are unable to go to church regularly because of the remote location of the churches. They do not object to participating in the rituals of their own Japanese family's religion in their desire to please them for a harmonious relationship.

To resolve the conflicts, positive attitudes on the part of the Filipino wife, the Japanese husband, and the Japanese family, are necessary. A willingness to respect each other's culture and adaptation over a period of time is needed. A give-and-take relationship, compromise, open communication on all sides, and love and respect for one another will make them accept each other's differences. Filipino wives should show them the Filipino culture—the Filipino way of thinking and doing things. Because while the situations and their respective reasons for marrying remain the same, these Filipino wives and their Japanese husbands need each other.

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