The Western Influence on Japanese Weddings

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Introduction

Marriage ceremonies present a lens into a modern society's cultural values and traditions. Recognition of marriage as a social and legally binding union between two individuals marks a rite of passage rich with cultural and traditional values, embedded in not only the ceremony but also in society. The contemporary Japanese Western-style wedding exhibits many various eastern and western ideals amalgamated into a new and unique culture of wedding ceremonies. The shift away from traditional Shinto to the Western-style wedding highlights a shift in the ever-changing idea of culture.   However, why do such shifts occur in wedding practices and lifestyles, and how have western influences played a role in changing Japanese culture?

While studying abroad in Japan during my junior year of college in 2015, I visited many shrines and temples throughout the Tokyo area. One day in particular, I happened to stumble across a wedding procession at a Shinto shrine near Mitaka, Japan. The experience sparked my interest in the subject of Japanese marriages. Previously, when I was in the 4th grade, my father's Japanese friend had his wedding in Tokyo. I remember it being very similar to a Western-style wedding, such as in the decor, while retaining some Japanese elements such as the dress (kimono). Through these contrasting experiences, I am interested in exploring the interconnection between Western and Japanese cultures that largely influences the practice of Japanese weddings.

The ways in which Japanese society is shaped comes from a number of factors that have influenced its modern culture. Exploring the reason why society adopts and

transforms its culture allows one to understand the societal values and directions towards which differing civilizations can shift. Dr. Ofra Goldstein-Gidoni states that the exchange of information has contributed to the stimulus of western culture through media avenues such as television or the internet in modern Japan. A differing view from Michael Fisch believes that the wedding industries' promotion of fantastical, once-in-a-lifetime wedding opportunities is the root cause for the increase in Western-style weddings. These contrasting views indicate that there are multiple avenues through which cultural shift can occur. Consequently, the adoption of western values has found its way into symbolic actions and meanings within the wedding ceremony.

However, I contend that the major shift from Japanese Shinto-styled weddings to Western-style weddings can be attributed to the "Western princess" ideal, which was influenced by the Walt Disney Company and historical events. Starting in 1937 with the release of "Snow White" in Japan, the presence of the Western princess ideal was introduced via the media. This was followed by a continuation of the various Disney princess movies such as "Cinderella" (1949) and "Sleeping Beauty" (1959). Furthermore, the monumental Prince Charles and Princess Diana's wedding (1981) provoked interest for the Japanese who saw this wedding from their television sets and perpetuated the "princess" image. The opening of Disneyland Tokyo Park in 1983 further pushed the constant presence of "prince and princess" that has been a part of Japanese social life (Oriental). The cultural stimulation of the Western princess ideal has inspired numerous young women to fulfill their childhood dreams of becoming a princess via their wedding ceremonies. The wedding manager of the Tokyo and Kyoto Four Seasons representative,

Chitose Kamiyama, confirmed this notion, stating that the majority of Japanese women preferred a Western-style wedding where they could dress up like a princess.

When examining the western influence on Japanese weddings and the symbolic rituals that take place, one must realize that the Western-style wedding is not entirely a copy of western tradition, but merely an adaptation. Japanese Western-style weddings combine numerous native elements into the wedding, such as a Shinto ceremony followed by a western reception. Since the mid-1990s Christian wedding ceremonies have displaced the Shinto rites and ceremonies (LeFebvre 185). Nowadays, public preference for such weddings is as prominent as ever. In my thesis I will seek to ask why the younger generation has chosen to participate in more Western-style weddings as opposed to the traditional Japanese-style wedding and what factors have influenced their choice.

This paper is organized into four parts. The first chapter will present a brief history of marriage institutions in the world. This chapter will explore the varying reasons and purposes for marriage throughout different time periods of the world. Although my focus is on marriage ceremonies, I will first need to provide a history of the institution of marriage in order to expand upon the connection present between Japanese and Western marriage ceremonies.

The second chapter provides a historical background of the different periods of Japan's marriage history and customs while explaining the cultural changes, such as the changing concept of *ie* (家), family, and the influence of Confucianism (儒教). Additionally, I will explain and discuss how these cultural changes have permeated into modern marriage customs, along with the mixture of Western influences. A discussion of

the difference between Shinto and a Western-style wedding style ceremony will also be included.

The third chapter discusses the various reasons for why Western-style marriages rose in popularity. This literature review provides an analysis of the shift in culture from traditional to modern and from eastern to western, as well as a look into the wedding industry, and the consumer market. Additionally, I examine how weddings integrate themselves into one's life, family, and relationships. Through these relations, I discuss the importance of Disney's influence and bring together the various arguments that brought new changes to the Japanese wedding scene.

Lastly, the fourth chapter presents a case study of the current popular trend in Japanese wedding styles. To investigate these trends, a qualitative Japanese survey questionnaire was given to college-aged students, mostly from the International Christian university in Mitaka, Japan. The survey is composed of questions inquiring about wedding preferences, to questions about the respondent's opinions on the value of marriage.

Chapter 1: The World History of Marriages

This chapter provides an overview on the changing purpose of marriage. Different time periods and various civilizations have characterized marriage in a number of ways. The concept of choosing one's partner for the sake of marriage via love has only been a modern phenomenon, arising during the past two-hundred or so years. However, marriage itself has been a universal social institution that has been recorded throughout history for the past five thousand years. Obviously the biological urge to mate and reproduce has been a major driving force for the different sexes to come together; however, the most important function of marriage throughout most of history has been to establish cooperative relationships between families and communities (Coontz 31). This summary touches on the political, religious, economical, and social aspects of marriages, and seeks to understand the underlying reasons for marriage that will help better understand the implications of changes to Japanese marriage customs.

The Start of Marriages

During the three-age system, (Stone Age, Bronze Age, and the Iron Age) scholars have stated that a collective hunting and gathering society was essential for human survival. Archaeologists Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn asserted that all human societies comprised of bands of mobile hunter-gatherers that were built upon groups of families until about twelve thousand years ago (Coontz 38-39). As a result, marriage often became dependent on a man's hunting ability and his capability to provide for his spouse,

who in turn was responsible for other forms of daily work. Once these groups of nomads became larger, their social networks stretched far beyond a single camp or group of families, which would eventually lead to their settlement of a specific area or territory. Consequently, marriage was used as a vehicle to primarily extend cooperative relations and distribute people and resources beyond individual groups.

The Era of Political Marriages

As these hunter-gathers began to settle down, regional chiefdoms and small-scale warrior societies grew into the mighty states of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley in the Middle East and the Nile Valley of Africa. Over the next two thousand years other empires such as those in India and China established powerful kingdoms as well (around 800 B.C.), and a thousand years later the Mayan empire covered the whole of Central America, with the Aztecs in Mexico and the Incas in South America. Although these societies were distinct from one another in their cultural practices, their reliance on marriage for personal and family ties, recruiting and rewarding followers, making alliances, and establishing familial legitimacy were all universal expectations (Cootz 53). For instance, in China, the dynasty's absolute rule was derived from the emperor's bloodline and marriage. Whether their claim to authority was from a religious deity or from an earlier king or legendary hero, the upper class bolstered their legitimacy through marriage. As for the common folk in different societies, marriage was the best way to acquire new sources of wealth by adding workers to their family enterprises, establishing new business ties, and preserving and passing on their wealth (Coontz 54). As established by Roman statesmen and moralist Cato the Elder, it was important for Roman landowners to

find a wife who would be able to assist and oversee the part of the business for which the

husband did not have the time (Cherry 67). Moreover, due to the fact that one would

only meet a handful of potential marriage partners during the course of one's life, the

opportunity to seek marriage for love was not as important as the need for a work partner.

In these early civilizations, the function of marriage for the upper class was more political,

while the lower class's use of marriage was for economic reasons.

The Middle Ages and Religion

In medieval Europe, society was built upon unions between nobility and highly

influenced by Christianity. With the fall of the Roman Empire in the fourth and fifth

centuries, Christianity survived and dispersed throughout Europe. In this time period,

marriage still held a very important role in maintaining political power, but was now

dependent on the Church to legitimize marriage. As the major authority figure in all of

Europe, the Church prohibited polygamy and limited divorce and remarriage, which

would go on to largely shape the traditional intrigues of political marriages. The Church

enforced all marriage rules, including the three requirements necessary for a valid

marriage: the bride's dowry, banns that had to be published beforehand, and a wedding

that had to take place in a church (Coontz 107). The establishment of such laws gave

people "rules" on how to marry

However, the division of labor within marriages still lay at the heart of rural

economics and political arrangements of this period. The occupations in Medieval

Europe continued to follow this structure. This can be referenced through a 1413

document from the Derbyshire gentry who wed off his daughters for his business and

political use (O'Day 115-116). Subsequently, parents who dictated their children's lives often influenced marriage choices in the countryside. In terms of living in the city, a man who was married could have greater access to job opportunities - for example, the right to serve as a juryman, warden, or local official. On the other hand, a women's freedom was restricted as to who she could contact outside of her family and lacked any legal standing (Coontz 115). Being in the city allowed for greater freedom, but women were still held to the same expectations established by the church.

18th Century: The Emergence of Love

During the early 1700s, the old-fashioned political and economical marriages were no longer as emphasized. With the spread of Enlightenment and the market economy, profound changes occured in record time. Marriage became more of a social idea and individuals were now encouraged to marry for love (Coontz 146). After five thousand years, marriage now stood as a private relationship as opposed to a link in a larger system of political and economic alliances. In this time period, the husband's duty was now to provide for the family, while the wife's role was to provide emotional support for her family. As historian Jeffrey Watts stated in *The Making of Marriage* the 18th century "exalted marriage even further by making love the most important criterion in choosing a spouse" (Coontz 359). Furthermore, these ideals were soon disseminated across the globe; for instance, Russia's Tsar Peter the Great outlawed forced marriages, requiring the bride and groom to swear their consent in the match (Pushkareva 121). Factoring love in marriage certainly revolutionized the way marriage was viewed.

19th and 20th Century: Modern Era

Nowadays, men and women begin to form relationships through love, and the political or economical reasons are less significant. Marriage today is primarily the unification of two people who love each other. Decisions are more individually centered, as opposed to society as a whole. However, the decision to marry is also not as important as it was in the past. With the modernization of the world and the focus on having a successful career, many individuals feel that marriage may not be necessary for their livelihoods. Instead, the new social structure embodying love has become the primary focus of marriage. As we will see in the next chapter, the Japan's timeline for marriage follows a similar trend of marriage for political, economical, religious, and social reasons.

Chapter 2: The Evolution of Japanese Marriages

In Japan, the institution of marriage continues to transform, maintaining and producing both old and new traditions. These changes parallel the overall structure of the global history of marriage as seen in Chapter 1. Throughout the different time periods of Japan, the concept of marriage has shifted to fit whatever is the current status quo. By examining what people consider as a "Japanese" wedding, one will realize that this ever-changing process is fluid, constantly evolving and adapting to each circumstance. Thus, I will first describe the historical evolution of Japanese marriages to provide an understanding of the cultural nuances provide in contemporary Japanese marriages, and ultimately Japanese society.

A Historical & Cultural Background on Japanese Weddings

Heian Period (794 – 1185)

When one compares the past to the contemporary Japanese wedding Japan's historical lineage of wedding traditions and customs has dramatically evolved. Beginning in the Heian Period (平安時代, *Heian jidai*), the main purpose of marriage was to produce offspring who would inherit the best possible lineage in the hierarchical society. As seen with the *Tale of Genji* (源氏物語, *Genji Monogatari*) by Murasaki Shikibu (紫式部), Genji's first marriage with Aoi, the daughter of the minister, clearly highlights the uniting of families through political means. Moreover, polygamous marriages after the first wife were also the norm for the aristocracy. From a period of

months to years, aristocratic lovers would exchange letters and poetry. It was only when a man would spend three consecutive nights with a woman that one would be considered married, followed by a banquet held by the wife's parents for the couple. On the other hand, members of the lower class used their marriage as a way to elevate their social standing. Overall, marriages of this time functioned as a means to escape one's role in the Heian hierarchy and pursue a better life if the marriage made such an opportunity achievable.

Kamakura Period (1185 – 1333) & Muromachi Period (1336 – 1573)

During the Kamakura Period (鎌倉時代, *Kamakura jidai*) and the Muromachi Period (室町時代, *Muromachi jidai*) the beginnings of a patriarchal authority came into existence. The marriage custom of this time involved the bride going to the groom's house to get married. Originally, this was first started by the samurai class and eventually spread to all social classes (Nihon). Again with the samurai class, political marriages still were still a relevant part of the society in order to maintain or increase their social standing.

Azuchi-Momoyama Period (1573 – 1603)

The Azuchi-Momoyama Period (安土桃山時代, *Azuchi momoyama jidai*), followed the samurai-style patriarchal marriage, but became more grand in scale and was composed of more traditions. Before the marriage, the groom would arrive at the bride's house accompanied by two people riding horses. At the bride's house, a series of gifts would be given such as armor, a sword, and a horse. Once this was completed, the bride

was then transported to the groom's house via a palanquin. The marriage ceremony would take place at the groom's house, where for a period of three days, the couple would exchange three nuptial cups of sake (Nihon). After this was completed, the bride exchanged greetings with the groom's family and was then accepted to the family.

Edo/ Tokugawa Period (1600 – 1868)

Following the Azuchi-Momoyama Period, social hierarchy still played an important role during the Edo Period (江戸時代, *Edo jidai*), but concepts of the *ie* (家、 "family" or "household") and Confucianism arose as major elements during this time. The concept of *ie* emphasized the patriarchal family structure and defined the gender roles within the family – the husband serving as the breadwinner, while the wife was tasked with the responsibility of household chores and raising children (Dunn 351). This concept was not in most samurai families, but in the commoners. These ideas are heavily influenced by Confucian values as seen with the importance of filial piety and social hierarchy (Hashimoto 182). As a result, marriage most commonly took place between individuals with equal social standings, helping to solidify family alliances and perpetuate the family line. Political alliances rooted in marriage were an important part of Edo society.

The *ie* 家 & Family Structure

Family life in the wealthier classes was organized around the extended household, the *ie*, which consisted of the head of the family, his wife and children, his parents, and an assortment of unmarried relatives, servants, lodgers, apprentices, and sometimes even

concubines (Holloway 29). Husbands and wives rarely shared a romantic, loving relationship, but were simply matched as a way to advance the families' economic and social positions. Based on Confucian philosophy, elders were held in high respect and women did not share equal standing with the men. Moreover, the eldest son was usually named the successor and sole heir to the family property (Holloway 30). A patriarchal society was built into the nation, and the emperor ruled the people in observance with the traditional roles of position and gender. Children were not raised by their mother, but by the mother-in-law and other family members depending on social class. Confucian ideas influenced the *ie* structure.

Confucianism

The ideas of Neo-Confucianism rapidly spread during the Edo Period. The core values of this doctrine valued filial piety and maintaining gender roles for the sake of the society. Patriarchal families were the norm for this age. The legitimacy and authority of one's elders demonstrated the absolute hierarchy found in the social system, and was rooted within family and society (Hashimoto/ Ikels 190). This notion of obedience and deference to one's parents was deeply influenced by the Confucian education received during the Edo period of Japan.

Gender roles in Confucian ideology are a key element in this school of thought. For instance, women were expected to follow the *Ceremonial Rites'* teaching of the "three obedience's" (三從の道, *sanju no michi*) referring to a women's obedience to her father before marriage, her obedience to her husband, and her obedience to her sons as a widow. Matsunaga Sekigo (松永尺五), a philosopher of Japanese Confucianism, also

stated that when this ideology was followed, the relations between fathers and sons would be loving and harmonious.

The idea of maintaining an ordered and structured family plays a crucial role in the Confucian beliefs that existed around marriage. Many thought that by maintaining one's family, society would then be in harmony as well. Within the family structure, defined gender roles dominated social lives. Men were expected to lead in all decisions and earn income for the family, while women were expected to preside over domestic matters (Huang 57). Working towards a harmonious society, this moral code produced a complex interplay of relations between family members and the society. Thus, marriage was seen as a way to properly conduct oneself in not only family life, but also in society as well.

Meiji Period (1868 – 1912)

With the Meiji Period (明治時代, *Meiji jidai*) the period of modernization, the rigid class structures of earlier eras gradually began to dissolve. Meiji marriages supported the freedom to marry without being confined to the same social class. In the beginning of this period, the marriage ceremony was conducted at the groom's house where the bride was adopted into the groom's family. Additionally, Shinto-styled weddings were also prevalent in this time period as well. Couples would visit a Shinto shrine and confirm their marriage together in front of the god or deity that presided over the temple, which was led by the Shinto priests. Afterwards, the couple registered their marriage with the city government, in compliance with the new family registration law

(Nihon). The cultural norm of this time also emphasized the traditional concept of filial

piety and the continuation of the family line as seen in the previous periods.

Taishō Period (1912 – 1926)

The Taishō Period (大正時代, *Taishō jidai*) developed interesting new cultural

trends in regards to the status of women. Nuclear families accounted for 54 percent of all

families in the 1920s, while the remaining 46 percent were extended families of three

generations living under one house (Gordon 250). Additionally, the term modern girl (モ

ダンガ-ル, *modan gaaru*) became the new identity of these so-called new women who

were free to enjoy economic, sexual, and political independence (Gordon 155). Similar

to the Hollywood film's "flapper" image of America's "Roaring 20s" the cultural image

of the modern girl gave way to the further development of affectionate relationships.

Due to the fear of modernity and the new changes that it brought, many believed that the

modern girl signaled a social decay. Some went as far as labeling them as un-Japanese

and even criminal. There was still a majority of people who preferred the traditional

arranged marriage customs. With the cross marriages between different social classes

arranged marriages called *omiai* (お見合い), which were led by *nakōdo* (仲人,

matchmaker) were commonly used in the process of searching for a spouse. This method

of matching people together subsequently became popular (Gordon 255). The

introduction of these new ideals and values would soon give Japanese society a taste of

western marriage partner selection principles, but would first be delayed by other events in the Shōwa Period.

Shōwa Period (1926 – 1989)

The Shōwa Period (昭和時代, *Shōwa jidai*) contains a number of major historical events including a financial crisis, militarism, World War II, occupation, post-occupation, and finally the bubble economy. From the financial crisis in the 1930s to World War II, wedding ceremonies took place at large rural homes or at temples and shrines (Gordon 251). These wedding ceremonies were generally commemorated in a relatively intimate setting. Many of the old Shinto traditions continued until World War II.

Figure 1 Hiroshima Wedding[1]

During World War II, the boom of Shinto wedding ceremonies became the norm, due to the government authority promoting Shinto values during the war period. It was not until after World War II (1939 – 1945), that a revival in Shinto marriage customs and traditions became present. The concept of the *ie* was legally abolished by the Japanese constitution and replaced by a new conventions, the *kazoku* (家族, family) and the *kakukazoku* (核家族, nuclear family). These conventions replaced the *omiai* as the fundamental basis of choosing a marriage partner. Although the *omiai* still took place, the younger generation had greater control in whom they could choose as a spouse. As a result, dating became a more common activity in daily life. The increase in the growth of love marriages spread throughout Japan; however, there still remained an underlying emphasis on child rearing. This was perpetuated through ideal gender roles that mandated a division of labor (Matthews 2003, see Dunn 352).

In the 1959 wedding of Crown Prince Akihito and commoner Shoda Michiko, their union symbolized the modern postwar ideal of marrying for love and forming a new nuclear family (Nihon). Crown Prince Akihito's decision to break tradition and choose his own spouse strongly influenced the popularity of love marriages. Later, with the end of the Tokyo Olympics in 1964 and the start of the economic bubble, the large hotels originally meant to accommodate the large influx of guests were now repurposed as wedding halls (Takehiko). As a result, the rapid growth of the wedding industry took place. The rise of television in the 1970s similarly saw an influx of wedding-related advertisements.

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[1] "Nihon Kekkonshi." Nihon Kekkonshi. Otashi Johokan, n.d. 4 Apr. 2017, http://www.100nen-shuppan.com/kekkonshikinorekishi

With the modernization of Japan and the economic boom of the 1980s, the wedding industry took root and propelled itself to great profits. The shift towards small houses in major cities such as Tokyo prevented people from holding wedding ceremonies in their individual homes. The wedding industry capitalized on this, and offered all wedding services, ranging from the ceremonial wedding clothing to a centralized location where all of one's guests could gather, as a single package.

Heisei Period "Modern Period" (1989 – Present)

With the peak of the economic bubble in 1990, weddings became grand and very luxurious. Some examples include holding the ceremony in a foreign country, at fancy resorts, and other non-traditional wedding settings.   It was not until 1991 that the economic bubble burst and most Japanese lost a great amount of wealth. However, the number of people getting married, despite the hard economic times, continued to increase.

Within the last few decades, contemporary marriages consist mostly of marriages made for love. As stated above, the shift from the extended family *ie* to the *kakazoku* (the nuclear family) has become the norm in modern society. Although the historical traditions that extend themselves into the present can still be found within modern society such as defined gender roles, a trend of working women has become more popular in recent years as seen with the independence of the "modern women" from the 20s.

A Modern View on Marriage

In contemporary Japan, modern marriages no longer stress the importance of family alliance; however, the importance of child rearing still bears a heavy significance.

With outside pressure from cultural and economic stresses, Japan not only faces a decreasing marriage rate, but also a decrease in birthrate and population. Bringing up children in modern society makes it very difficult for both parents to work, and as a result many wives end up assuming the role of *shufu* (主婦, professional wife), devoted entirely to household chores and child rearing (Holloway 94). At the same time, the husband takes on the role of providing for the family, prioritizing work over child rearing (Holloway 99). This allocation of duties explains why fewer and fewer adult women have the desire to marry, as they do not want to potentially compromise their career.

An important reason for marriage also comes from how society views and values the individual as a person. In the workforce, marriage is considered an essential requirement after one turns thirty. Men who have not married and are over thirty years old are often times viewed as unreliable and not grounded in society by their bosses, which can limit their career opportunities. The idea of placing trust in those that are married creates an unjust social dynamic in modern society. The notion itself can be traced back to the Confucian views that state maintaining one's family leads to maintenance of society.

Modern Day Marriage Customs & Traditions

Shinto-styled marriages were first recorded around the 1880s. However, they did not become popular until after the imperial wedding of Crown Prince Yoshihito and Kujo Sadako (1924). Lately, Shinto-styled weddings have begun to decrease in popularity as more and more Japanese turn to the Western-style weddings. This may be due to the emphasis of western weddings as an event for the couple, as opposed to the Shinto-style

emphasis, which focuses on the tying of the knot between two households (Goldstein-Gidoni 29).

By the 21st century, Christian chapel-style weddings have become the most popular form of weddings, followed by Shinto and Buddhist weddings. During the early 1990s, Goldstein-Gidoni notes that less than 10% of urban Japanese held Christian-style chapel weddings. In 1998, this number grew to 53.1%, while only 32.3% held Shinto ceremonies - compared to over 90% in 1991 (Goldstein-Gidoni). This general trend in western-styled weddings can be attributed to television and movie stars such as the wedding broadcast of actor Miura Tomokazu (三浦友和) and vocalist Yamaguchi Momoe (山口百恵) in 1980 and television stars Kanda Masaki (神田正輝) and Matsuda Seiko (松田聖子) in 1985. Additionally, the church used in Kanda Masaki and Matsuda Seiko's wedding ceremony appeared as the setting of the 1991 popular Japanese television series *Itsu ka, sarejio kyōkai de* (いつか、セレジオ教会で, One Day at Sergio Church), further increasing the popularity of the Western-style wedding (Lefebvre 187). The broadcast of Prince Charles and Princesses Diana's wedding in 1981 sparked interested in the popular 'Princess Diana' wedding dress (Goldstein-Gidoni 32). A trend by wedding industries soon offered 'Princess Diana'-styled wedding dresses. With the start of globalization and the quicker exchange of information through mediums such as the television, western wedding ceremonies spread throughout Japan.

The Modern Shinto Wedding Ceremony

Nowadays it has become a universal practice in Japan to hold one's wedding ceremony in a commercial wedding hall, hotel, or Shinto shrine (Smith 28). The whole

process generally follows a typical pattern of first holding the wedding ceremony in the Shinto style, followed by a Western-style reception. Only the couple and their immediate family are in attendance for the Shinto ceremony. The preparation undergone by the bride and groom consumes a lot of time, since multiple aesthetic features must be arranged. For instance, the bride's makeup, special wig, and the proper marriage *kimonos* (着物) known as *shiromaku* (白無垢), a white kimono symbolizing purity and willingness of the bride to be "dyed" with the groom's color, are all important parts of the ceremony. The bride also wears a traditional hat called the *watabōshi* (綿帽子, literally translated as cotton hat), a main headdress for the Shinto weddings. On the other hand, the groom wears a type of kimono called a *montsuki haori hakama* (紋付羽織袴, traditional Shinto wedding garb). Once the extensive preparations are complete, the first part of the Shinto wedding, called the *shinzen kekkonshiki* （神前結婚式, literally translated as the wedding before God), begins with a procession led and accompanied by the shrine priests and maidens. As bride and groom are escorted inside the pavilion of the shrine by their entourage, the Shinto priests will announce their marriage to the Shinto gods. A ritual called *sankon no gi*（三献の儀) occurs, a process where the couple exchange three nuptial cups of sake, said to promote the strength and bond of their relationship. In addition to a few more prayers and offerings, there is a vow read to the Shinto gods and the exchange of wedding rings known as the *yubiwa kokan* （指輪交換), both gaining their influence from western-style weddings in the 1950s. Concluding the ceremony, the *shinzoku katame no sakazuki* (親族の杯) takes place, a celebration in

which the two attendant families come together to drink sake, symbolizing the bonding of the two families.   (Please refer to Figure 2.)

Figure 2 Shinto Wedding[2]

The Modern Japanese Western Style Wedding

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[2] Japanogos. "Our Japanese Wedding Ceremony | 私たちの新前結婚式, *watashitachi no atarashi zen kekkon shiki*." Online video clip. Youtube. Youtube, 05 Dec 2016. Web. 21 Jan 2016.

Generally, contemporary marriages can include both the Shinto ceremony and then transition to the Western part of the reception. The "Western" reception is generally held at a hotel or commercial wedding hall. Unlike the Shinto part of the wedding ceremony, attendants include not only family, but also friends and colleagues who were not invited to the intimate marriage. During the reception, the bride will typically change her outfit two to three times, all signaling a change in the flow of the reception. The first part of the reception generally starts off with the walk down the aisle, usually to the music of Mendelssohn's 'Wedding March', where the bride is escorted by her father to the altar, followed by the groom and then by the groomsmen and the bridesmaids. At the altar, a "priest", who generally holds no relation to the Christian church, officiates the wedding process by reading a Bible scripture from Corinthians I, Chapter 13.[3] A prayer and message on the sanctity of marriage and the importance of wedding vows typically follow. Moreover, if the rings were not exchanged during the Shinto ceremony, then they are exchanged here. Similar to Western weddings, the groom will then lift the veil and kiss the bride. Up until this point, the whole part of the wedding reception retains a very familiar western feeling.

Subsequently, the Master of Ceremonies (MC), will begin the opening speeches, followed by speeches from various family members, friends, work colleagues, and others. The bride and groom then perform Western style events such as the cake-cutting

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[3] Bible verse Corinthians I, Chapter 13: "Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes in all things, hope all things, endures all things."

ceremony, candle service,[4] bouquet toss, and the toast (乾杯 *kanpai)*. At this point, the ceremony ends with a short flower presentation ceremony where both the bride and groom thank their parents for raising them to this day (Goldstein-Gidoni 27).

Chapter 3: The Rise of Western-style Weddings

A Cultural Examination of the Western-Style Wedding

Investigating cultural models of marriage reveals many insights into the cultural understandings of marriage. Even though the contemporary Japanese wedding exhibits a Western-style, there still exist numerous Japanese subtleties found in the expressions and events of the ceremony. The Japanese conception of marriage ceremonies continues to be created and re-created throughout time.

The fanciful weddings in which the Japanese choose to participate reveal the growing appeal of Western products. The opportunity to have a Disney-esque wedding highlights the increasing trend in the consumption of Western life. Through the expansion of technology via television and the internet, consumption of information becomes more readily available. The glamor in the romantic Western-styled wedding completely deviates from the Shinto-styled wedding. Women in Japan are increasingly seeing their marriage day as something to be grandly celebrated in the midst of family and friends. Considered to be an entrance into adulthood, western weddings place an

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[4] A candle service is a part in the wedding where all the attendants of the wedding will light candles one by one in a circle signifying the unity of marriage.

emphasis on the husband and wife unlike Shinto weddings. In contrast Shinto Weddings value the tying of the two families. This "once in a life time opportunity" of marriage attracts many young couples towards something different.

Role of Globalization in Western-Style Weddings

The western trend can be seen through the hybrid Japanese and Western-style weddings that have been popularized in the late 1980s. Is the result of Western style weddings simply a result of globalization or something more? This chapter seeks to explain how native countries adopt foreign ideas and how globalization takes a part in this process. Moreover, it also asks what other forces have contributed to the popular desire for foreign ideas.

Globalization & Japanese Adaptation

In Goldstein-Gidoni's "Hybridity and Distinctions in Japanese Contemporary Commercial Weddings*"*, she asserts that the foreign and local interaction of ideas in this era of globalization contributes to a traditional and modern mixture of customs. Although theorists of globalization as heterogenization predict that at the end of globalization all cultures will be creolized, she argues that this creolization produces a distinct cultural form in the experience of the social actors themselves (34). She highlights the Shinto and Christian aspects found within a wedding ceremony such as the display of the Shinto kimono wedding attire, as well as the western white wedding ball gown. Within the ceremony itself, there are many overlapping cultural traditions that have evolved to create a distinct Japanese-style wedding.   Furthermore, she argues for the dynamics of culture are being continuously constructed and imagined as opposed to

being a rigid object or essence being studied by experts on culture. Goldstein-Gidoni

remarks that in the early 1990s, less than 10% of urban Japanese held chapel weddings,

and in 1998 53.1% had chapel weddings, while only 32.3% held Shinto ceremonies as

compared with over 90% in 1991 (28). As evidenced through time, cultural tastes and

preferences shift to meet consumer demands. With the spread of Western products in the

world such as McDonaldization (Ritzer 1993, 1998) and Coca-colonization (Hannerz

1992: 217) this has been seen as 'cultural imperialism,' which is regarded as the spread of

modernity and even considered a cultural loss. In reality, the trends of Western-style

cultural shifts have merely become an adaptation of Japanese society. For instance, most

contemporary Japanese are not interested in the difficult and timeworn process of a

Shinto wedding, and in turn reach out to the new fads or spectacles that foreign identities

offer (Goldstein-Gidoni 32). Overall, the way in which the West is perceived or

imagined is extremely vital in understanding the cultural play between Western and the

Japanese culture. Goldstein-Gidoni essentially argues that there is a production of an

imagined "Japaneseness" that is consumed rather symbolically than inherently

understood or practiced.

Social & Cultural Trends

In Walter Edwards' "The Commercialized Wedding as Ritual: A Window on

Social Values" states that although Japanese culture has shifted towards Western

weddings, it still retains a Japanese touch of values mixed into Western tradition during

1987. He presents the notion that relevant social relations can be discovered through the

rites of passages as seen with weddings, despite a change in the tradition. Throughout

this article he summarizes a typical Japanese wedding and the different types of

ceremonies that take place in a wedding hall company. Additionally, he proposes that the success of the commercialized wedding company is due to the fact that the organization brings a variety of services together, making the facilitation of one's wedding more convenient (60). However, what makes the wedding companies even more distinct is the introduction of the wedding cake ceremony, the candle service, and the flower presentation – each representation a symbolic gesture of Japanese societies' social values within the Western-style wedding. Cake cutting symbolizes fertility through the sweetness of the cake, a harmonious marriage, and a cooperative relationship (72). The candle service represents a couple's continual dependence on others in the portrayal as a social unit always embedded in a network of social relations (75). Lastly, the flower presentation dramatizes the end of the parent-child relationship and selfless parental sacrifice and a sign of proper filial gratitude (76). Although this article begins to touch upon newer standards of marriage relationships, it was written before the popularization of chapel style weddings.

Another area that reveals insight into marriage can be seen with the metaphors present in speeches given at Japanese wedding receptions. The three most common metaphors found in the speeches analyzed by Cynthia Dunn's "Cultural Models and Metaphors for Marriage: An Analysis of Discourse at Japanese Wedding Receptions" are Marriage is a Joint Creation, Marriage is a Union, and Marriage is a Journey. The most commonly used metaphor, "building a new *katei* (家庭) together," symbolizes the creation of a new nuclear family as a joint effort. These speakers stressed the couple is building a "rich life" or "bright future" would then be lead to "new dreams" and "happiness" (Dunn 358). Unlike the traditional model of marriage where the

continuation of the *ie* was stressed, the modern day marriage emphasizes creation of the nuclear life as a new family. Additionally, the notion of marriage as a union highlights the couple's mutual reliance and cooperation. Dunn cites how one speaker utilized the phrase "better half" explaining how the better half put together makes a single whole. Such images show consistency with the gender roles found in traditional Japanese marriages. Lastly, marriage as a journey underlines the departure or birth of the bride and groom as a new family who will overcome life's obstacles together. In comparing these values to western metaphors and models, an overlap of themes is clearly present. The idea of marriage as a joint creation resounds with the concept of one's marriage as something that is actively created with each other. The contrasting emphasis on the couple, instead of the Confucian idea of family ties seen in a Shinto wedding display the change in thought that has occurred in recent Japan.

The Western-style wedding is clearly an adaptation of marriage embraced by the Japanese, yet still displays a trace of Japanese customs. With the search for an 'authentic' Japanese 'self' the idea of *nihonjinron* (日本人論) has created a genre of Japanese uniqueness and national identity. In order to not lose this authenticity, couples have opted to have a Shinto ceremony, while having a Western-styled reception (Goldstein-Gidoni 152). The construction of the cultural identity of being Japanese, definitely takes its place among the wedding scene. One could argue that by participating in both Japanese and Western identities that it satisfies the desires of wanting a fanciful wedding like in the west, while retaining the core identity of being Japanese.

Wedding Industry

Michael Fisch's "The Rise of the Chapel Wedding in Japan Simulation and Performance" recounts his experience as a hired priest in conducting wedding ceremonies and underscores the growth in chapel weddings as a response of glocalization, which is the practice of conducting business according to both global and local considerations. Fisch explains that the uniformity of the chapel wedding model gives the customer a feeling of security in that he or she knows exactly what to expect. The "global is made manageable, rendered knowable" (James 1996, 83), and at the same time the "foreign" allows the individual to take on a new identity and lifestyle through the "authentic" taste of America. As a result, Fisch claims that this expression attempts to reject the various cultural nationalism emerging in the late 1970s and 1980s that were claiming Japanese uniqueness. Similar to Goldstein-Gidoni, he states that the model of a paradigm global homogenization cannot accurately categorize the chapel-style wedding. While the popularity of the chapel-style wedding is clearly identified as a European and American phenomenon and not *Japanese*, Fisch remarks that this has become a model that has been created through a modality specific to the contemporary cultural environment of Japan. The imitated weddings all reveal a "tainted originality" that has diluted the actual worth of a chapel wedding. Lastly, as the uniqueness of a chapel wedding becomes too familiar within Japanese culture, Fisch suggests that a search for a new wedding model will begin. Evidence of such searches can be seen in the emerging Bali weddings[5] that have begun to spring up in Japan. Consequentially, the fluid shift in cultural norms and practices continue to evolve and adapt to Japanese cultural society.

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[5] A tropical island type wedding in Bali.

No doubt the multi-billion yen wedding industry is involved with the production of traditions. Meeting the demand of the consumer clearly reflects the cultural and traditional value that is alive and current with contemporary Japan. A great example of this can be found through Japan's largest wedding magazine provider, *Zexy* (ゼクシ). The majority of the wedding venues in Tokyo shown in this magazine portray a Christian chapel atmosphere with little Shinto-style weddings. This further emphasizes the point that Japanese youth are still learning towards the Western-styled wedding. The entrepreneurial nature of the wedding industry endlessly tries to capitalize on new ideas. Such an instance can be seen with the industry's promotion of Prince Akishino and Princess Kiko's wedding dress, the *junihitoe* (twelve layers), to the general public. However, this was not as popular as the Princess Diana's wedding dress seen in the Diana and Charles wedding (Gidoni 145), again underscoring Japanese interest in Western-style themes. Such advertisements saturate the internet, television, and much more, shaping the public's opinion of the "ideal" wedding.

Walt Disney's Influence in Japan

Since the start of the release of Snow White in 1937 to the present, Walt Disney's influence has had a major impact on Japanese culture, especially in regards to Japan's Western-style weddings. As reported by Japanese wedding magazine, *Zexy*, from the 1990s to the 2000s the number of Christian Western-style weddings nearly doubled.

Wedding Style Changes

	2000年以降	1990年代	1980年代	1970年代	1960年代
■ Christian	64.2	38.3	14.5	6.8	2.2
■ Shinto	18.2	55.7	78.3	85.1	84.4
■ Nonreligious	17	6	3.6	7.4	11.1
■ Other	0.6	0	3.6	0.7	2.2

Figure 3 Wedding Style Changes in Japan[6]

  Goldstein also mentions how in 1998, over 51% of weddings were conducted in the Western-style, highlighting the increase of interest. To understand what influences had affected those who were married in the year 2000, we will first begin looking at the average age of marriage in the 2000s. According to the White Papers, published by the Japanese government, the average age of marriage for men in 2000 was about 29 and for women about 25 years old. Please refer to the graph below:

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[6] "結婚式スタイルうつ変わり, *kekkon shiki sutairu utsu kowari*, 'Wedding Styles Changes'." *Zexy*. N.p., 20 Apr. 2012. Web 3 Mar 2017.
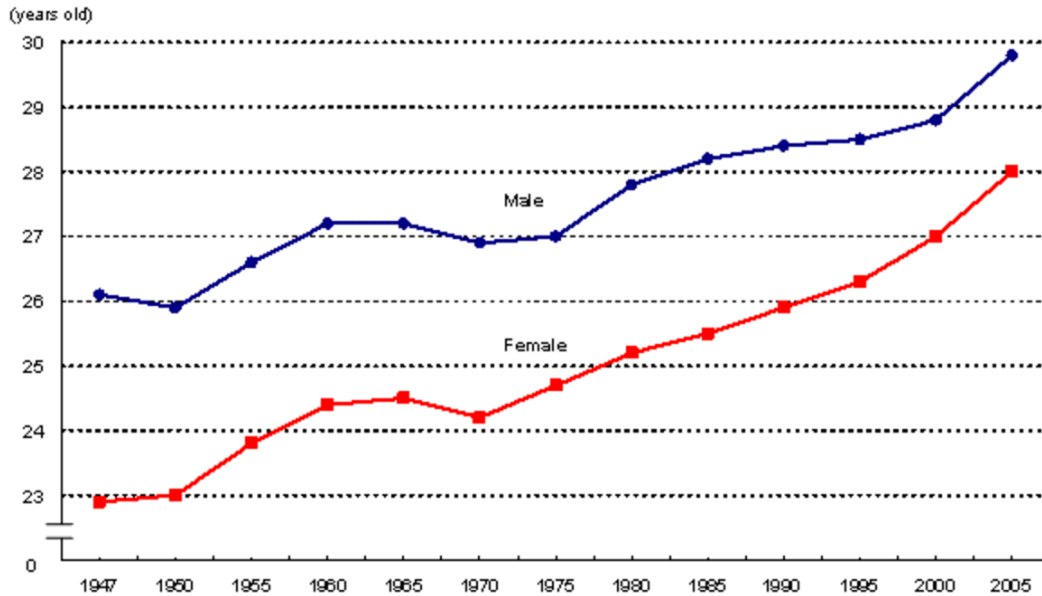
Note: 1. Figures up to 1972 do not include Okinawa data.
         2. Figures for 2005 are approximate figures.
Source: "Population Trend Statistics," Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

Figure 4 Average Age for First Marriages in Japan[7]

Starting from the 1970s until the year 2000, Disney's influence over this population has

been present through entertainment. The first being the release of Disney's movies into

Japan starting with "Snow White" in 1937, "Cinderella" in 1949, "Sleeping Beauty" in

1959, "The Little Mermaid" in 1991, and "Aladdin" in 1992. With all of these movies,

the 'happily-ever-after' wedding scene is a major part of the ending. The image of the

princess in her dress with her crown accompanied by her prince charming is a common

theme found within these Disney movies.

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[7] "Population Trend Statistics," Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. *White Paper*.
N.p., Web 16 Jan 2017.

Figure 5: Disney Princess Wedding Scenes[8]

The exotic Western marriage was a completely new concept to the Japanese. Although it is Japan had their royalty and empresses, the Western princess image was idealized as something new and trendy.

Tokyo Disneyland

On April 15, 1983 the first Disneyland Park located outside of the United States was opened in Chiba, Japan. Attracting over 10 million people the first year it opened, Disneyland was a huge success and highly received by the Japanese. Thanks to Japan's

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[8] ForeverTheDisneyKids. "Top 15 Disney Endings." Online video clip. Youtube. Youtube, 21 Sep 2012. Web. 04 Apr 2017.

booming economy in Japan, many Japanese were able to vacation at Disneyland and experience all of western culture through the lens of Disney. Guests could experience such wonders in places such as Fantasyland, where Cinderella's castle was located. Additionally, the Disney parades and attractions featured the Disney princesses such as the Main Street Electrical Parade or Snow White's Scary Adventures ride. These attractions helped disperse the fascination with western culture in the eyes of the Japanese. An important role that helped spread awareness of the Disney princess image was the yearly school pilgrimages (修学旅行, *shūgaku ryokō*). In 1988, it was recorded that 1,171,000 of the park visitors were students on such organized school trips (Brannen 217). This large influx of student visitors likely helped shape the awareness of the Disney princess image.

With the next ten years, a good portion of those who were married had some exposure to the Disney princess, whether through the movies or their visit to Disneyland.

By 1993, Japan's number one wedding magazine, *Zexy*, and other magazines such as *Hotel Wedding* and *Tokyo Wedding Collections* helped to promote the Western-style wedding that was sought after by many Japanese. Advertisements in these magazines often took inspiration from Disney and used allusions to market their wedding products. This marketing technique can still be seen today, such as *Hotel Wedding Magazine's* wedding dress advertisement. (Please see Figure 6) I have translated the test as follows: "The chosen concept of the dress is from Cinderella. The bodice and the skirt's embroidery are popular." As Fisch mentioned above, the foreign allows for the individual to personify a new identity and experience a taste of western-culture. Around the 1990s, such allusions to Disney and wedding advertisements were another major force in the rise of Western-style weddings. The wedding industry has always been responsive to the desires of its clientele, and has reached a point where the customers have become the driving factor in determining wedding styles and trends (Edwards 90 – 91).

Figure 6: Wedding Dress Advertisement[9]

Easily influenced by magazines, TV, and the internet, young Japanese have set the

standard for the wedding industry. A move from family-centered practices based in

communal relationships to the pursuit of romance and love has set a new course in

defining the status quo of marriage, and thus the wedding ceremony.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Procedures

My study abroad opportunity in Japan allowed me to network with friends and

conduct a study of their thoughts on the subject of weddings. Prior to my departure for

Japan, I created a survey and questionnaire for my participants in Japanese asking them

about Japanese wedding culture. As this study involved human subjects (college

students), the survey was checked and accepted by Colorado College's Institutional

Review Board (IRB). Additionally, a consent form was included at the beginning of the

survey, allowing the participants to decline the survey if they so chose. The consent form

also informed the participants that their name and personal information would be kept

confidential.

Data Collection & Analysis

Survey Instrument

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[9] "Palace Hotel Tokyo." *Hotel Wedding.* 13 Oct. 2013: 73. Print

The first part of the questionnaire, attached as Appendix I (pp. 54- 56), was composed of

three different parts (Introduction, Part A) with 9 response questions. The initial segment

of the questionnaire asked for basic demographic information from the respondents, such

as nationality (country), sex, and age. In the following parts A to B, questions were

either a fill in the blank response or on a Likert Scale[10] of five categories. Part A:

"Participation in Japanese Weddings" includes a general questionnaire asking

participants about their knowledge of Japanese-style of weddings, how many weddings

they have been to, and the type of wedding they have been to. Part B: "Personal

Wedding Preferences" section includes questions such as determining their personal

preferences about their own wedding if they were to get married.

Participants

The participants were mostly Japanese undergraduate college students. They

numbered 42 people in total, 27 female and 15 male. The sample was done by students I

had met at the International Christian University[11] – a nondenominational private

institution located in Mitaka, Japan – during the month of November 2016 academic year.

The Japanese students were all enrolled in various departments and their age range was

from 18 to 24.

 Hypothesis

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[10] A Likert scale is a "scale often used in survey research in which people express
attitudes or other responses in terms of several ordinal-level categories (e.g., agree,
disagree) that are ranked along a continuum" (Neuman 2012, 396).
[11] The participants were mainly chosen from the tennis circle that I belonged to when I
studied abroad in Japan, with a few additional students from the university cafeteria.

In order to discern whether Western-style Christian weddings still remain popular in Japanese modern society, my hypothesis asserts that the general Japanese college population is still interested in the Western-style Christian wedding.

Data Analysis

Since the questionnaire was primarily composed of fill in the blank responses by the respondents, their answers will be discussed below. Likewise, the parts of the survey that utilized a Likert scale will also be analyzed. The data will be examined to see if there are general trends between male and female respondents.
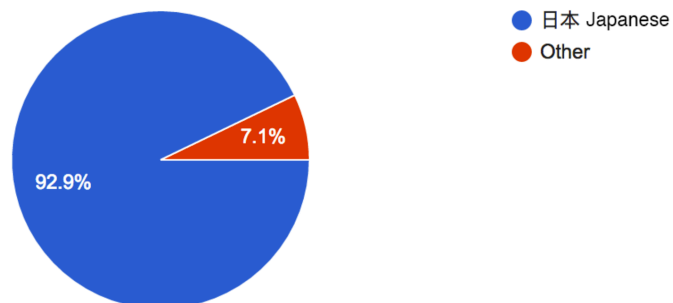
Findings

General Information

Table 1 Nationality

Your Nationality: Japanese/Other (please specify) (あなたの国籍： 日本　その他(明記して下さい)

(42 responses)

● 日本 Japanese
● Other

92.9%

7.1%

The 7.1 percent "other" represents students of Japanese origin, but who do not hold Japanese citizenship. Many of these students include the returnees who have studied or lived abroad in different countries like the United States and then returned back to Japan for their university schooling, or who are students currently studying abroad in the United States from the International Christian University. Students were given a questionnaire in person or via an online survey.

Table 2 Sex

Your Sex: Female or Male (性別: 女　男) (42 responses)

● 女 Female
● 男 Male

35.7%

64.3%
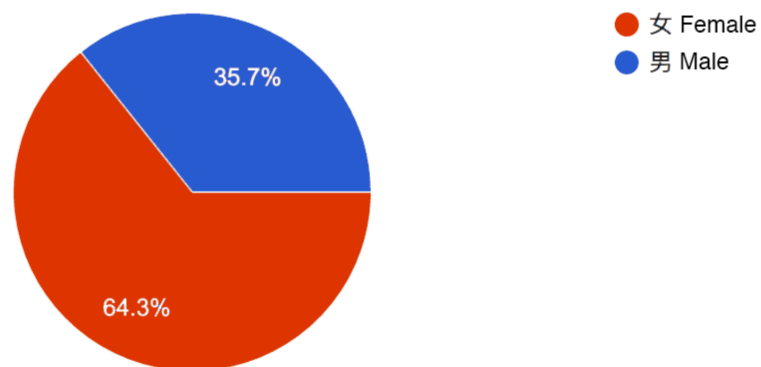
As mentioned above, the survey had a total of 27 females and 15 males.

Age Table 3

Your Age (年齢) (42 responses)
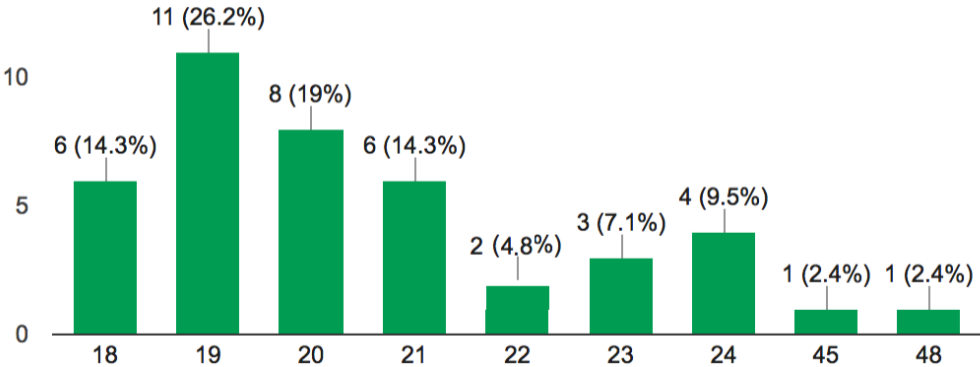
The 45 and 48-year-old individuals can be considered outliers.

Religion Table 4

Religion (宗教・信仰) (42 responses)
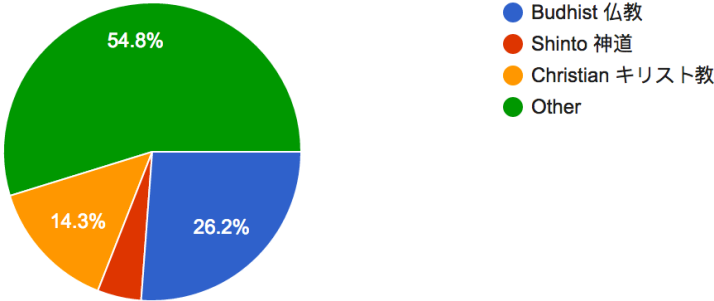
The 26.2 percent of the Buddhist portion accounted for 11 students, the 4.8 percent

Shinto portion accounted for 2 students, the 14.3 percent of the Christian portion

accounted for 6 students, and the 54.8 percent of the Other accounted for 23 students who
did not identify with a religion.

University

There were 32 students from International Christian University, 2 from Colorado College,
1 from Waseda University, 1 from Kyoto Foreign Language University, 1 from Asia
University, 1 from Doshisha University, 1 from Kanto Agriculture University, and 1 from
Kanto University Graduate School.

Part A: Japanese Weddings

Table 5

How many weddings in Japan have you been to? Please check all that apply
日本の結婚式にいくつ参加したことがあります。該当する項目全てに記入し
て下さい。
(42 responses)
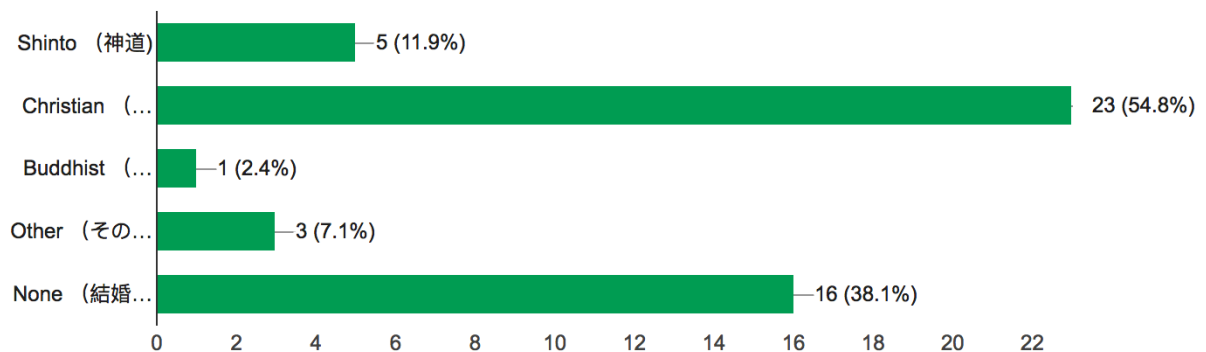
Part B: Personal Preferences

Table 6 Shinto Wedding

What are your chances of having a Shinto wedding?あなたは自分が神道の結婚式を挙げるとは思いますか。
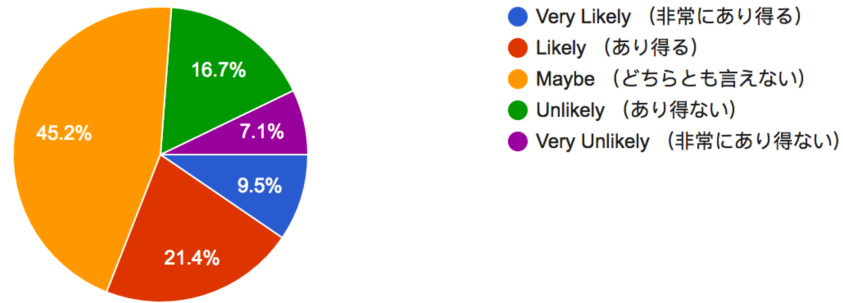
(42 responses)

Table 7 Buddhist Wedding

What are your chances of having a Buddhist wedding? あなたは自分が仏教の結婚式を挙げるとは思いますか
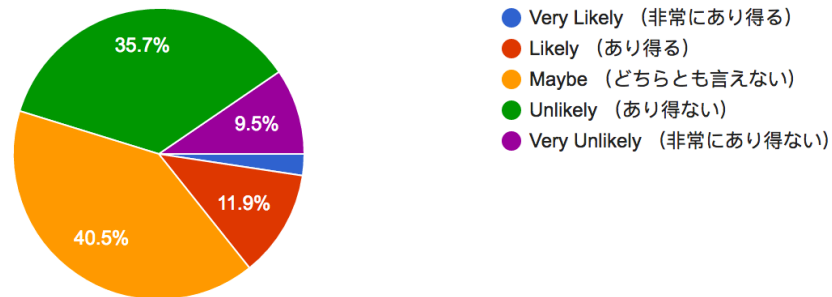
(42 responses)

Table 8 Western-style Wedding

What are your chances of having a Western-influenced wedding?あなたは
自分が西洋化西洋式の結婚式を挙げるとは思いますか
(42 responses)

- Very Likely （非常にあり得る）
- Likely （あり得る）
- Maybe （どちらとも言えない）
- Unlikely （あり得ない）
- Very Unlikely （非常にあり得ない）

54.8%

33.3%
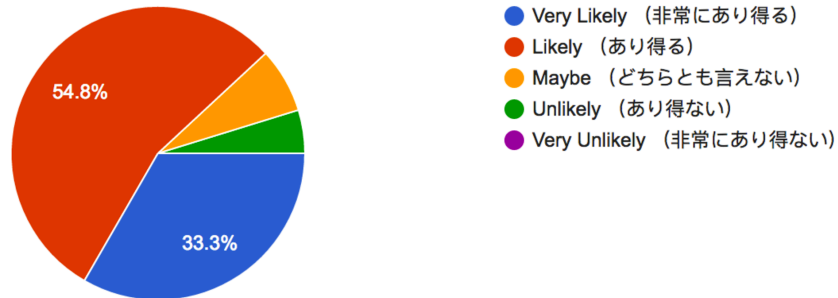
Table 9 Location

Location　（ロケーション）　(42 responses)

Label	Value
Wedding Par…	15 (35.7%)
Hotel Venue…	23 (54.8%)
Shinto Shrin…	12 (28.6%)
Buddhist Shr…	4 (9.5%)
Christian Ch…	25 (59.5%)
Home （自宅)	3 (7.1%)
Guest House…	2 (4.8%)
Restaurant…	5 (11.9%)
Other	5 (11.9%)
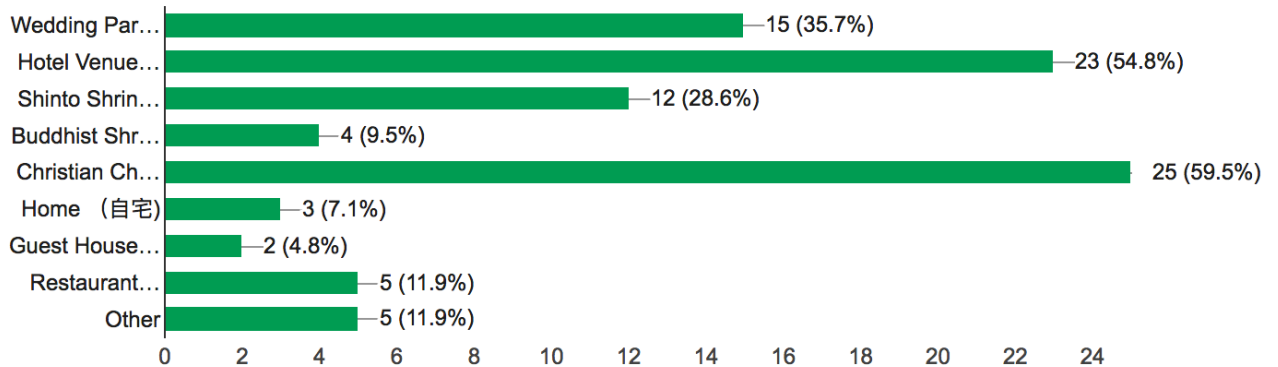
Starting from the top to bottom, the labels are Wedding Parlor, Hotel Venue, Shinto

Shrine, Buddhist Shrine, Christian Church, Home, Guest House,[12] Restaurant, and Other.

In the "Other" section, students mentioned places such as foreign countries.

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[12] A Guest House is a location where couples can rent a restaurant or house and hold their wedding.

Summary

As can be seen from Table 6 and Table 7, the majority of college-aged Japanese students indicated that they would maybe have a Shinto or Buddhist-style wedding. while in Table 8 and Table 9, the overwhelming majority of Japanese college aged students would prefer to have a Western-style wedding. These results directly line up with past evidence that the Western-style wedding still holds prominence and continues in modern society. This supports my hypothesis that the general Japanese college population is still interested in the Western-style Christian wedding.

I also interviewed employees from the wedding industry such as Escript, a Japanese wedding consultant, and the Tokyo Four Seasons Wedding manager as to why the Japanese continue to pursue the western-style wedding. They responded by stating that from a young age many Japanese girls have often desired to be like a princess and with their wedding they are now able to make their dreams into reality. Moreover, the Escript employee interviewed also mentioned that the media was a large influential factor, such as the movie "About Time" and especially Disney movies. This can be further underscored through the married couples I interviewed. Young women stated responses such as "it has been a dream of theirs since childhood to wear a white gown like a princess" or that "marrying in a church was something sought after and new." These statements help emphasize the notion that some prior influence led them to their decision of having a Western-style wedding.

The responses support the idea that the Disney princess image has largely contributed to the rise and continuation of Western-style weddings. As Goldstein points out, in recent years there has been an increase in Western-style weddings, a trend that can

be seen in my study. I believe this can be directly correlated to the influence that Disney

may have had on those married in the year 2000, who would have grown up surrounded

by Disney products and movies. Additionally, this exposure was followed by

advertisements seen in different wedding catalogues that marketed Disney princess-

themed weddings. This desire to imitate the Disney princess wedding is further

underscored in the 59.5 percent selection of the chapel-style wedding in Table 9. As

evidenced in my study, the continuation of the Western-style wedding remains prevalent

in Japanese modern society.

Limitations of the Study

The current study had two limitations, one being the sample size and the

methodology. Starting with the sample size this was one of convenience so my sample

population was not randomized and large in size. Furthermore, the sample size consisted

of mainly students from International Christian University, who are generally more

globally aware and accustomed to Western culture. As a result, not being able to survey

students outside of the Tokyo region gave a limited perspective. Hence, the

representative value of my findings is too restricted to strongly assert any prominent

generalizations.

In addition, the inherent weakness in the paper-and-pencil or online questionnaire

presents a few limitations. The first one is translation from English to Japanese. Since

no translations can perfectly convey exact identical meaning, certain phrasing or sentence

structures can be interpreted differently.

Future Research

Future research in regards to wedding preferences should aim to poll a larger number of people not only from one area, but other places as well. For instance, since Kyoto is well known for its shrine weddings, there should be a relative contrast between wedding preferences depending on the region in Japan.

Additionally, future research could examine the wedding styles between a non-Japanese and Japanese marriage. Certain interracial couples decide to hold Shinto-style weddings, while others completely dismiss the traditional Japanese wedding style and go for other styles such as the Bali-style. Investigating such cultural nuances could lead future researchers to potential explanations behind why societies adopt certain aspects of cultures and incorporate them into traditional practices.

Conclusion

Nowadays, Western-style Japanese weddings have become the norm for Japanese society. The Japanese wedding ceremony embodies both Japanese and Western traditional ideals that have been intertwined to produce a new cultural identity. Traditional Japanese Shinto-style weddings provide individuals with the connection of being "Japanese" and staying true to their cultural roots, while the Western side of the wedding allows couples to participate in a foreign custom, something that would not be possible on a day-to-day basis. For instance, the blend in tradition has given rise to a transformation of a number of aspects in Japanese society such as the increase in romantic relationships. By studying the shift in Japanese culture, one can discover that what it means to be Japanese encompasses an ever-changing, fluid cultural identity.

My thesis research has shown that the Western influence on Japanese culture has transformed the modern culture and continues to do so. For centuries, Japan had modeled its society through the concept of the *ie* and Confucian principles for the sake of keeping harmony, while modern Japan has gained its western influence from a variety of places

that can be evidenced through the Western-style weddings. The customs and traditions found within the wedding ceremonies provide a lens for the transformation of Japanese society.

The engagement with Western culture has definitely contributed in shaping Japanese identity and influencing its modern culture. Transcendence beyond national bonds allows for all people to engage with one another in a wider human experience. In the case of the Western influence on Japanese weddings, Western-style weddings help the Japanese to participate in a foreign experience. The shift of cultural and societal values that can arise from the interaction between different cultures is influenced by many factors, including the media and popular interest. With each new trend, customs are born and society adapts, producing a constant shift in tradition. Despite the change in tradition and customs, and the modernization of Japan, the culture remains distinctively Japanese.

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Appendix I.

Consent Form
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You are invited to take part in a research study of Japanese weddings & marriages.

What the study is about: The study will examine the current Japanese wedding & marriage traditions.

What you will be asked to do: You will be given questionnaires to fill out.

Risks and benefits: There are no anticipated risks to you if you participate in this study, beyond those encountered in everyday life.

All participants will be entered into a lottery to win a $20 gift certificate.

Taking part is voluntary: This study is completely voluntary. If you choose to be in the study you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. Participating in this study does not mean that you are giving up any of your legal rights.

Your answers will be confidential: The records of this study will be kept private. Data will be kept on my personal account, which will be transferred and password protected on my computer. The physical data will be destroyed. Any report of this research that is made available to the public will not include your name or any other individual information by which you could be identified.

If you have questions or want a copy or summary of the study results: Contact the researcher at the email address or phone number above. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records. Some of the information will be withheld until the end of the study. If you have any questions about whether you have been treated in an illegal or unethical way, contact the Colorado College Institutional Research Board chair, Amanda Udis-Kessler at 719-227-8177 or audiskessler@coloradocollege.edu.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions. I affirm that I am 18 years of age or older. I consent to take part in the research study of temperature and body posture.

_____   _____
Participant's Signature   Date

Survey Questionnaire

Japanese Weddings

Your Nationality: Japan   Other (please specify)_____

Your Sex: Female   Male   Your Age:____ College Class: 1   2   3   4

Religion: Buddhist   Shinto   Christian   Other:_____   None

Part A: Japanese Weddings

How many weddings in Japan have you been to? Please check all that apply

Shinto	
Christian	
Buddhist	
Other	

Part B: Personal Preferences

Please mark all that would apply in regards to your preference in your own wedding.

Events

Shinto Ceremony	
Sankon no gi (three sake cup exchange)	
Ring Exchange	
Christian Ceremony	
Vow Readings	
Cake Cutting	
Candle Ceremony	
Bouquet Toss	
Other (please explain)	

Location

Wedding Parlor	
Hotel Venue	
Shinto Shrine	
Buddhist Shrine	
Christian Church	
Home	
Guest House	
Restaurant	
Other (please explain)	

What sort of wedding ceremony would you most likely have?

	Very Likely	Likely	Maybe	Unlikely	Very Unlikely
Shinto					
Buddhist					
Western					
Other (explain)					

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION!