

Discussion on the Cultural Differences of Love and Marriage between China and Japan from Their Television Dramas——Taking *the First Half of My Life* and *We Married as a Job* as Examples

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Abstract. As an important carrier to present the cultural form of a country, teleplay plays a vital role in promoting cultural level and cultural export. To study and analyze the cultural differences between China and Japan is conducive to promoting the understanding of each other's cultures, reducing the misunderstanding and friction caused by the cultural differences, and promoting the exchanges and cooperation in politics, economy and culture.

1 Introduction

The concept of love and marriage is a timeless human topic that often talked about. As one of the embodied aspects of a country's society and culture, it will also be reflected in the language, living habits and other aspects of the country. At the same time, the TV series are a popular form of entertainment in modern society. Therefore, the study and analysis of a specific type or different types of TV dramas is conducive to a better understanding of the different cultural features of Japan. Through the comparison of TV dramas, it is possible to clearly understand the differences between the two countries, such as customs and living habits, the styles of communication, and to contribute to the deepening of communication and understanding between China and Japan, so as to achieve substantial development of bilateral relations.

2 Analysis of the marriage values in *the First Half of My Life* and *We Married as a Job*

2.1 *The First Half of My Life*

The love drama *the First Half of My Life*, which hit the airwaves during the summer vacation of 2017, tells the story of a woman's transformation after a failed marriage. Luo Zijun, in the beginning of the teleplay is a pretentious stay-at-home wife. Since marriage, she has given up her job, the life she lives everyday is privileged. But after she broke up with her husband Chen Junsheng, her life

changed a lot. Because of this, she saw through her former life and started a new one. And the concept the drama wants to convey to the audience is, first of all, to be an independent individual. The independence is not only in economy, but more importantly in spirit. Just like Luo Zijun, her husband Chen Junsheng did fulfill his promise of 'I will support you', and it was for this reason that Luo Zijun gave up her economic independence and became a full-time housewife dependent on her husband. Human beings are emotional animals, but any relationship which is not reciprocal, even with great affection, will not last long. Luo's best friend, Tang Jing, is a positive embodiment of female self-reliance, but also promote Luo's awareness of the main body of the important figure. She has never been attached to men, but completely independent, become her own master. So when she finds problems in emotional aspect, she can also keep calm and solve the problem imperturbably. It can be said that her role is a subversion of the identity of contemporary women as 'the other.[1]' The spirit contained in this role is the reflection of thoughts about love and marriage of most women in China in recent years: be independent and be yourself.

2.2 *We Married as a Job*

The teleplay is an excellent drama about the common existence of unmarried people in Japan and their views on love and marriage. And the main line of it tells such a story: a well-educated woman with a master's degree called Mikuri Moriyama who had a hard time finding a job. Finally, she got a job in a big company but she was fired. Then her father introduced her to do household chores for a man called Hiramasa Tsuzaki to earn money. After

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careful consideration, the two young people choose to become a fake couple by signing a contract and Mikuri takes a housewife as her profession. For the plot, the most central element of this teleplay is the discussion about the 'housewife'. This also reflects the traditional Japanese view of love and marriage. As one of the developed countries in Asia, with a higher level of productivity and relatively optimistic employment and survival pressure, most families can afford daily living expenses by being feed by men. As for women, many of them cannot continue to work under the pressure of conventional wisdom and public opinions, can only stay at home to take care of the whole family and run the household chores. These are the norm in eastern patriarchal societies, especially in Japan, where housewives are heavily objectified[2]. But the teleplay clearly argues for breaking gender boundaries. Mikuri gets the corresponding remuneration by doing housework for Hiramasa, that is, equating the marriage relationship with the employment relationship. We can see the idea it wants to convey to the audience: men and women are equal and the housewives are no longer just attached to the male, but also need to be treated with the same understanding and respect. Apart from that, when Japanese people express their feelings, they are extremely subtle and ambiguous. In the emotional aspects, they pay more attention to the inner world and values. From the teleplay we can know that even quarrel is measured, there will not be a fierce fight or argument, they focus more on showing emotional subtle changes. This is also inseparable from its national promotion of tolerance and compromise[3].

3 Comparison of the cultural similarities and differences between Chinese and Japanese views on love and marriage

The views on love and marriage, which means the basic views, attitudes and opinions of adults on issues related to love and marriage. Choosing the right partner to set up a family, has always been a very important life event for a person, affecting his or her happiness and future development. As for the choice of a partner, due to the geographical location, the same roots of history and culture, the long-term mutual influence and penetration of Chinese and Japanese views on love and marriage have some similarities, but they also have their own criteria.

3.1 The same section

Japanese women's traditional view of marriage and love believe that marriage is a lifetime of happiness for a woman, no matter what they want to get married, so most of them through blind date to meet the marriage partner. After marriage, even if the marital life is not satisfactory: husband cheating, domestic violence, etc., Japanese women will not easily choose divorce, but for the sake of children, for the integrity of the family and insist, and this concept is still recognized by some Japanese women. Such ideas also exist in China: In the feudal society, there was no such word as "love", especially in the marriage, people could not choose the marriage object freely, but usually

"arranged by parents and arranged by matchmakers", which was in line with the concept of "matchmaking between families of equal social status and economic ability" at that time. And family atmosphere, lifestyle and other aspects of the close or fit. After all, in that society, marriage was not based on love, but more on the combination of interests of both parties, and catering to the needs of the time to carry on the family line. Although China has already entered a civilized society and people's ideas have changed dramatically compared with the past, there are still some people who hold the traditional view of marriage and love. They believe that once they start a marriage, no matter what happens, they will not easily choose to divorce and insist on maintaining the operation of the marriage, even though the relationship has already deteriorated or caused serious problems.

With the progress and development of society, Chinese and Japanese people have more advanced ideas about whether to keep faithful and monogamous in marriage, which reflects the rational progress in ideology. In ancient times, no matter in China or Japan, polygamy was a very common social phenomenon. For example, the emperor of China could have "three palaces and six houses" and "three thousand concubines in a harem", while the aristocrats or wealthy businessmen could have "three wives and four concubines". Japan has "great Ohashi" -- the Edo era Tokugawa shogun general's birth mother, children, main room, side room and the residence of female officials, is actually the Tokugawa shogunate harem. It is quite normal for a man to have more than one spouse, but in modern society, such a situation is neither legal nor ethical. People insist that the couple need to be sincere to each other, in the love period of both men and women to maintain loyalty and dedication, can not change one's life.

'Marriage is more than being together'(Kefalas et al.,2011). Nowadays, young adults not only marry and have children later than previous generations, but they also take more time to get to know each other before tying the knot[4]. In recent years, whether in China or Japan, late marriage and childbearing seems to have become a trend. There are more and more "non-marriagers", mainly the young generation. Several factors are known to lead to non-marriage or delayed marriage. For example, people may delay marriage to pursue higher education[5]. It's possible that young people are more focused on work and personal life, and don't want to be bound by family; On the other hand, the life pressure is so great that they can not afford to support the family and raise children. However, there is also such a phenomenon in China: when the two sides get married, the man should have a house and a car, which is a "must condition", that is to say, economic ability is highly valued by the women when they get married, often more important than whether the two sides are suitable for living together, have common values and other aspects. But in the final analysis, Chinese and Japanese views on marriage and love will change with the changes of their own economic and social development, which will have an impact on different aspects of society.

In both China and Japan, and in much of Asia, factors such as the low popularity of highly educated women and the harsher employment realities women face than men

also play a role in how women view marriage and relationships.

3.2 The differences

3.2.1 China

Under the influence of traditional Confucianism, many Chinese people have formed the concept that ‘an individual must be in a marriage in order to become a truly completely person’. ‘Take my hand. Take my whole life too’ which means a couple grow old together, is the beautiful yearning/aspiration of many people for love and marriage. They hope that sweet love could lead to a happy marriage. As a result, the view ‘men and women should get married when they reach a certain age’ has also been advocated by most people. On the contrary, nowadays a lot of modern women believe that couples should have common interests, love and tolerate each other, rather than just ‘respect each other like guests’; on the other hand, women believe that insisting on a loveless marriage is meaningless and should end it peacefully, instead of making do for the sake of their children or because being influenced by the society[6].

Puppy love has been a common problem in education sector in China, and it is also the germ of many teenagers’ views on love and marriage. It is so common for a young person to fall in love with someone at an early age. And lots of Chinese students in junior or senior high schools are burdened with heavy academic pressure and usually choose to relieve the pressure by choosing the way of puppy love, however, this is not accepted by society and most parents and teachers. As far as they concerned, puppy love is a ‘great scourges’ and all the students should devote themselves to their studies rather than spending precious time to do things which are ‘harmful to physical and psychological health’. Such perceptions have an impact on the understanding and views of some adolescent students, some of them still cannot overcome their fear of love after becoming adults.

3.2.2 Japan

Compared with China, Japanese people have not experienced many stages of change in their views on love and marriage. Distinctive features of the Japanese context allow us to shed new light on multiple sources of change in marriage behaviour[7]. For most of them, even if they crush on somebody, maybe they don’t show it too much because they are not good at expressing their sentiment adequately, they show their thoughts in a more euphemistic way before being in love with someone and keep observing each other’s behavior as a criterion to judge whether he or she could become a life partner.

As for puppy love, Japanese people have a more liberal attitude. In Japan, it is a common phenomenon that students fall into puppy love, many teachers and parents basically do not hold any objection. After all, education about sex in Japan is more open and sound. Parents do not restrict their children’s thinking too much, but encourage them to express their emotions, so most students do not

shy away from talking about their romance in front of their parents, and parents can better guide their kids by knowing their situations.

Influenced by the idea of gender equality, many Japanese women no longer see marriage as their ultimate goal in life. They increasingly tend to be economically independent women, who believe that when they get married, they will not only do housework, but also have children, take care of them and take on the responsibility of assisting husband and bringing up children. In addition, giving up their current good job and carefree life, which makes them feel that the burden is too big. And when their children is a little older, even if they want to re-employment, it is difficult to find a great job with their energy and state, can only do some short-term or temporary jobs, which cannot reflect their value well[8].

4 Reason for the cultural differences between China and Japan

Although China and Japan have maintained cultural exchanges over the years, the development has led to the formation of Japan’s own unique cultural system, which has created differences with Chinese culture.

4.1 The difference in values

China is a socialist society and practices a socialist system. While Japan is a capitalist constitutional monarchy. Therefore, Chinese and Japanese values show obvious differences. After thousands of years of feudal rule and the edification of Confucianism, the concept of family and country has been deeply rooted in the hearts of the Chinese people and they especially pay attention to the consanguineous relationship. It is a symbol of kinship for Chinese people. Besides, it is generally believed that immediate family members and adjacent relatives are the two groups that have blood relation with them.

Japan has fewer nationalities than China. As a single nation, the Japan people have lived on the island for a long time since ancient times and have been greatly influenced by the farming culture. People have developed a strong sense of group in the long-term joint work. Although the hierarchical concept in Japan is very strict, there is a kinship-like force that binds everyone together under the influence of group consciousness[9]. Although Japanese people also have a strong sense of home, the family activities are mainly production-oriented and strictly follow the rules of the family, even those who are not related to the family can also be a part of it. If these unrelated people make a great contribution to the family, their relationship with the family may even exceed that of collateral relatives.

4.2 The difference in cultural development

Chinese culture originated from the Yellow River Basin, and its rise and development mostly centered on there. During the long feudal society, it formed the traditional Chinese feudal culture, which served for the feudal

monarch and strengthened the centralization of power, so it had certain class characteristics and limitations.

On the other hand, Japan attaches more importance to foreign cultures and actively and extensively absorbs them. The reason is that since ancient times, Japan has held a strong spirit of learning from countries which are more powerful than itself, just as Japan sent envoys to the Tang Dynasty to learn the prosperous culture of China. After the envoys returned to their country, they would further study and innovate the culture they had learned, so as to keep pace with the times.

4.3 The difference in geographical environment

China's land area and population have reached a certain height respectively. With the use of abundant natural resources, China's agricultural civilization has developed and prospered/flourished. Because of this, the tradition of emphasizing agriculture and suppressing commerce was pursued in the feudal society, and agricultural production was carried out in an orderly way with the state as the leading role, which had an impact on the development and formation of the characteristics of Chinese traditional culture. China's geographical environment was sufficient to provide people with considerable resources for survival, so the nation did not need to choose to plunder in order to survive.

The situation in Japan is the opposite of that in China. Japan is an island nation surrounded by sea on all side, which is more suitable for communication with the outside world through the development of navigation technology. Relying on the convenience of navigation, the Japanese people have developed some excellent qualities such as perseverance, indomitability and tenacious? in the process of fighting against and conquering the sea. In addition, because of Japan's special geographical location, the lack of domestic resources and frequent earthquakes have led to a strong sense of crisis among Japanese people. The feeling of insecurity drove them to seek security by invading foreign countries, and this was the reason why Japan launched aggressive wars against China and other countries.

5 Perspectives on the cultural differences between China and Japan

It is inevitable that there are cultural differences between China and Japan. Only with full cultural exchanges between China and Japan can the world's cultural diversity blossom. Both Chinese culture and Japanese culture have certain redeeming qualities. No matter Chinese or Japanese culture, it has certain merits. After all, China and Japan have different national conditions, different development progress, and different cultural traditions. Therefore, in terms of marriage and love, people of the two countries have different choices.

5.1 Mutual respect and friendly communication

As a close neighbor of China, although Japan is deeply influenced by Chinese culture since ancient times, it is

significantly different from China in many aspects, such as living habits and ways of expression. When people from different cultural backgrounds meet, they will usually understand each other's culture from the perspective of their own culture with the values they have formed. One of the important ways to respect other cultures is to break prejudice. Therefore, we cannot unilaterally view the Japanese culture that is different from Chinese culture with inherent concepts. We should understand the different customs of love and marriage between China and Japan, so as to avoid friction and misunderstanding in communication and achieve mutual respect.

5.2 Look at it objectively and take its essence

Any culture has its own uniqueness. We need to look at Japanese culture in a fair and objective manner, take its essence and dross, learn and apply the advantages of its culture, so that it coexist harmoniously with Chinese culture and jointly promote the prosperity and progress of culture.

6 Conclusion

In the process of cross-cultural communication, there will inevitably be the link of Chinese culture transmission and foreign culture introduction. Chinese culture is extensive and profound. Only by exchanging and colliding with each other can different cultures produce gorgeous/brilliant sparks and promote the diversity of world cultures. Whether it is the inheritance of traditional culture, the influence of modern society, or the impact between different cultures, the ideology of people in China and Japan are constantly changing and developing, showing their own national cultural characteristics. The emergence and development of Chinese and Japanese marriage views ultimately take stable and harmonious family relations and civilized and upward marriage and family as the ultimate ideal[10]. Through the two TV dramas of the same type in China and Japan, this paper compares and analyzes the cultural differences in love and marriage between China and Japan to achieve the ultimate goal of respecting the cultural differences, enhancing cultural self-confidence and promoting the friendly cross-cultural interaction and communication between China and Japan.

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