

**Perceptions of “the Other”: Overseas Experiences of  
Japanese and Chinese University Students**

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Perceptions of “the Other”: Overseas Experiences of Japanese and Chinese University Students

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This study examines how Japanese university students studying in Beijing and Chinese university students studying in Kyoto construct and reconstruct their perceptions of the other society and its people as a result of their overseas study experiences. It focuses on how overseas experiences change the students' understandings of “the other,” and how their self identities are constructed and reconstructed through the identities of “the other.” As “the other” described in the present study refers to the other society and its people, self-identity refers more specifically in this case to the students' understandings of themselves as Japanese or Chinese people. The study argues that the students' perceptions of “the other” are shaped by Japanese and Chinese media discourses of “the other,” cultural power relations between Japan and China, the students' national identities, their reasons for studying abroad and their financial situations as well. It suggests that the Japanese students tend to stress their cultural uniqueness as Japanese, while the Chinese students generally confirm their state-based national identity. The study is based on four weeks of fieldwork in Beijing, China, and another four weeks in Kyoto, Japan in the summer of 2008. The major data collection methods comprised semi-structured in-depth interviews involving 29 Japanese university students in Beijing and 27 Chinese university students in Kyoto.

## 摘要

本研究探討在北京的日本大學生，及在京都的中國大學生如何透過他們的海外生活經驗，建構和再建構對他者社會與其人民的認識。主題圍繞海外生活體驗如何改變學生對「他者」的認識，以及他們如何透過對「他者」的認識，建構和再建構自我身份認同。文中，「他者」指日本或中國的社會與其人民，而自我身份認同則指學生對自己作為日本人或中國人的理解。本文提出學生對「他者」的認識見建基於：日本與中國媒體對「他者」的論述，日本與中國的文化等級概念，學生的國家身份認同，他們留學的原因，以及他們的經濟狀況。最後，總結日本學生傾向於強調自身的日本文化特質，中國學生則多強調對自己國家政府的認同感。本研究主要以深入訪談收集資料。於二零零八年夏天，筆者在中國北京和日本京都各四週，訪問了二十九位在北京的日本大學生，以及二十七位在京都的中國大學生。

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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 Statement of Purpose**

This study examines how Japanese university students studying in Beijing and Chinese university students studying in Kyoto construct and reconstruct their perceptions of the other society and its people as a result of their overseas study experiences. It focuses on how overseas experiences change the Japanese students' understanding of China and Chinese people, and how the experience of studying in Japan change the Chinese students' understanding of Japan and Japanese people. Which aspects of their overseas experiences do students emphasize in their narratives of "the other"? And how do such young people view "the other" both before and after going abroad?

When students narrate "the other," they inevitably make statements about themselves. In other words, when they construct and reconstruct the images and identities of "the other," they also construct and reconstruct the images and identities of themselves. Perceptions of "the other" and the self are interrelated, and self identities are constructed through the identities of "the other." For example, Ben-Ari claims that Japanese expatriates in Singapore reinforced their identity of a unique

Japanese culture through “its distance from local [Singaporean] culture” (2000a: 47). Ben-Ari points out that the Japanese expatriates in Singapore created a sense of Japanese identity by emphasizing the Singaporean’s lack of “teamwork” and “loyalty” (2000a: 45-48). Similarly, self-identity is a theme which underlies the perceptions of the other society and its people by both Japanese and Chinese students. The self-identity that we are concerned with here refers to the students’ understandings of themselves as Chinese or Japanese people.

Some quantitative surveys indicate that many Chinese people view Japan in a negative light (Searchina China Information Bureau 2005: 140-143; Fang, Wang and Ma 2002: 118-120). A Japanese information company, Searchina China Information Bureau (Searchina) carries out a survey research related to Sino-Japanese relations in China. In December 2003, Searchina interviewed 5,000 Chinese people between the ages of 20 and 34 among five provinces in China. 45.2% of the interviewees answered that they thought that Japan was not friendly to China, while 26.5% said that Japan was not very friendly to China. Only 21.6% of the interviewees thought that Japan was friendly or somewhat friendly to China (2005: 141). When asked about what images came to mind when they thought of Japan, 25.4% of the interviewees answered “invasion,” which constituted the largest proportion, and 23.6% answered with “aggression.” More positive images, such as “inventive” and

“wealthy,” constituted less than 16% of the responses (2005: 143). Results were similar in another survey carried out by *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao*, a Chinese youth magazine (Fang, Wang and Ma 2002: 118-120). The magazine received 15,000 responses from Chinese young people with an average age of 25.2 among thirty provinces in China. The survey aimed to investigate how Chinese young people viewed Japan. According to the survey, 41.5% of the young people answered that their over all impression of Japan was “bad” (27.1%) or “very bad” (14.4%), and only 14.5% of the young people said that their impression was “good” or “very good” (2002: 119).

Moreover, in March and April 2005, a series of anti-Japanese demonstrations broke out in more than ten cities in China, including Chongqing, Chengdu, Beijing and Shanghai. Yokoyama claims that the discontent of the Chinese public towards Japan emerges in part from China’s patriotic education which is rooted in the establishment of the communist China (2005: 73). Kondō writes that, during World War II, the Chinese communist party gained the support of the general public thanks to its strategy of emphasizing the fight against the external Japanese enemy rather than its internal enemy, the Chinese Nationalist Party (1997: 228-245). Yokoyama explains that since establishing the People’s Republic of China in 1949, the Communist Party has continued its policy of condemning Japanese wartime

atrocities in order to glorify communist heroes and enhance patriotism among the Chinese people (2005: 131-136). In recent years, in an attempt to sustain a stable society and friendly Sino-Japanese relations, the Chinese government has condemned the extremists' hatred towards Japan and suppressed the anti-Japanese demonstrations. Even so, general impressions of Japan among the Chinese people remain unfavorable.

According to recent surveys, Japanese people also tend to hold negative views of China. In July 2008, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* conducted a Japan-China Joint Survey and interviewed 1,828 Japanese people in Japan. 77.9% of the interviewees said that China was untrustworthy to some extent or completely untrustworthy (Yomiuri Online 2008). Moreover, Genron NPO interviewed 1,000 Japanese people in Japan in 2007, and according to the survey 66.3% of the interviewees said that their impressions of China were not good (57.6%) or very bad (8.7%). Only 33.1% of the interviewees answered that they had good or somewhat good impressions of China (Genron NPO 2007).

Some scholars also point out that Japan tends to hold negative views of China. Liu argues that, because of the great success of its economic development, in the late 1970s the Japanese government claimed that Japan was a member of the developed and civilized Western camp rather than the backward Eastern camp (2007a: 43). Liu

further explains that this attempt to deny membership in the Eastern camp reflected Japan's tendency to look down upon Eastern countries including China (2007a: 43-34). Zhuo also states that China's recent rapid development has not resulted in much improvement of Japan's negative views of China as a backward country (2000: 305-311). He argues that many Japanese government officials, scholars and journalists treat the growth of China as a threat to its development and status in Asia, and in the world as well (2000: 305-311). The mutual dislike among the general publics of Japan and China raises the question of whether Japanese and Chinese students' overseas experiences would lead to greater understanding and increased communication between the young people of those countries, or whether negative stereotypes generated from both sides would simply be reinforced. Would they hold on to their original views of "the other," or began to change when they directly encountered "the other"?

Despite the mutually unpleasant images held among the general publics of China and Japan, a growing number of Japanese students are studying in China and large numbers of Chinese students are studying in Japan as people become more highly mobilized in our rapidly globalizing world. In 2005, 16,084 Japanese university students studied in China (MEXT 2006). These accounted for 20.2% of the total number of Japanese students who studied abroad, and China was the second

most popular destination for studying abroad among Japanese students. The number of Japanese students studying in China increased 16.5% when compared with the figure in 2003 (MEXT 2004; MEXT 2006). Moreover, 61,923 Chinese students studied in Japan in 2005, comprising 66.5% of the total number of foreign students in Japan (MEXT 2006). This number increased by 13.4% in two years (MEXT 2004; MEXT 2006). Foreign students have a growing influence in these two societies and present new implications for the cultural relationship between China and Japan, and yet no detailed research has been conducted on this topic. The present study intends to fill this gap. Additionally, foreign university students are the elites of society and have high potential to be future leaders who have great impact on society. Thus, it is important to understand their views.

## **1.2 Literature Review**

Because the present research focuses on perceptions of “the other” among Chinese students in Japan and Japanese students in China, the following review of literature first examines perceptions of “the other” in relation to theories of identity, including national identity from an anthropological perspective. I will then discuss how scholars describe Chinese views of Japan and Japanese views of China. Finally, I will address Chinese and Japanese identities in general and identities among Chinese and Japanese who have experiences overseas.

### 1.2.1 Identity and perceptions of “the other”

To analyze how the Chinese and Japanese students construct their identity through their perception of another national group, it is necessary to understand the globalized world which profoundly influences their experiences and self-identity. According to Appadurai, the new global situation must be understood “as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order that cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models” (1990: 50). The global flows of cultural economy can be explained in five dimensions, including ethnoscaples, technoscaples, financescaples, mediascaples and ideoscaples (1990: 50-53). These dimensions allow us to describe the fluid, disjunctive and irregular shapes of globalized landscapes (1990: 50). In the present study, Chinese and Japanese students who study abroad form a part of ethnoscaples as they move from their own country to another. The students also experience a high mediascape level. As images and information flow rapidly through mass media, the students perceive the other society and its people from different angles and sources including the media in their own country, as well as those in the other society. Moreover, ideoscaples in China and Japan may be at a relatively low level because of their governments’ conservative approaches. However, when the students move to another country, they bring their own ideologies with them which are different from the local ideology, and thus experience ideoscaples

further.

In the fluid world which Appadurai describes above, Giddens points out that our self-identity is a reflexive project (1990: 5). Self-identity is a self narrative which can be continuously revised, and “takes place in the context of multiple choice as filtered through abstract systems” (1990: 5). It is different from identities which were established at the birth of pre-modern societies. There are many choices available in our current world, and trust in a person or system is decisive in making choices (1990: 4-6). When we make choices, we continuously maintain a narrative of the self, and a unique narrative about the self forms our identity. Self-identity is fluid, and is continually produced and reproduced through individuals’ reflexive activities. (1990: 52).

In the present study, the Chinese and Japanese students’ identities are not fixed, but are in a fluid context when they go abroad and meet different people. The students’ perceptions of “the other” change in response to their overseas experiences and, at the same time, they also rethink their own identities. When students have face-to-face interactions with people from the other society, their understanding of the others does not necessarily increase, and sometimes misunderstandings may even be produced. This is greatly dependent on context. In the present study, I will explain that in the context of Japanese students studying in China, they began to question

their previous stereotypes of China and Chinese people. Nevertheless, they also maintained some misunderstandings and created new images of China and Chinese people. In the context of Chinese students studying in Japan, they mainly created and recreated their negative images of Japan and Japanese people.

As self-identity is not fixed and changes constantly in different contexts, Bourdieu's ideas of practice and taste are useful to analyze how the Chinese and Japanese students practically constructed and reconstructed their identities when they found themselves in another living context. Bourdieu explains how people make distinctions from other groups of people and construct their own identities. Bourdieu claims that "every sort of taste ... unites all those who are the product of similar conditions while distinguishing them from all others" and "taste is the basis of all that one has – people and things – and all that one is for others" (Bourdieu 1984: 56). He points out that taste is a key element of social identity. People classify themselves according to their tastes and preferences, and are also classified by others (Bourdieu 1984: 54-56). In daily practice, the positions of individuals are determined by the amounts of their processed goods or resources, namely capital, which can be divided into four categories: economic (money), social (relations with others), cultural (legitimate knowledge) and symbolic (prestige and honor) (Bourdieu 1991: 229-231). Through imposing and accumulating capital, people can feel secure in their identities

and confirm their superiority. Although Bourdieu does not talk about national groups, I believe that his theory is also relevant here. This is because when students go to another country and become temporary residents, their distinction between the self and the other national group in the same society is similar to the distinction between different classes in society.

Overseas Chinese and Japanese students also shaped their own identities and distinguished themselves from the other national group through tastes and possessed capital. For example, a Japanese student in China criticized the Chinese government's policy of destroying *hutongs*<sup>1</sup> in Beijing. She wondered why her Chinese friend agreed with the government and why she was unaware of the value of *hutongs*. She distinguished herself from her Chinese friend as possessing cultural capital, namely, knowledge of the *hutongs*' value, which her Chinese friend did not have. In this way, she constructed her identity as being different from, if not superior to, her Chinese friend.

While Bourdieu's ideas of practice and taste analyze how the students impose and accumulate the capital to construct their identities, Goffman's theories of performance and face explain their interactions with the other national group and

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<sup>1</sup> *Hutongs* are old streets and alleys in Beijing which are regarded as a cultural and historical heritage by tourists. As a part of the preparations for the Olympic Games in Beijing, the government renovated many *hutongs* in order to develop a clean and well-organized appearance for the city.

how they present themselves. Goffman states that performance refers to “all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers” (1959: 19). During interactions among individuals, each individual wishes to present a certain self-image. We are all social actors performing on stage, and we seek to control how others see us through our performance (1959: 19-21). It is a form of impression management through which we attempt to control other people’s perceptions of us (Goffman 1959: 15-66). In addition to performance, Goffman also notes the face-work by which people tend to act out “a line” (1967: 5). A line refers to “a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he [a person] expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself” (1967: 5).

The theories of performance and face-work can help to explain the students’ interactions with the other national group. Students stand on the social stage of the foreign country in which they study, and they practice their acting in accordance with their views of their situation and evaluations of the other national group and themselves. These views and evaluations which direct their actions then create differences between themselves and the other national group, thereby leading the students to construct not only the identity of the other national group, but their own

identities as well.

### **1.2.2 National identity**

As the present study focuses on how the Chinese and Japanese students construct their identities through the perception of another national group, the self-identity discussed here refers to national identity among the students. Before discussing national identity, it is first necessary to define the term “nation” as the origin of national identity. According to Anderson, a nation is defined as a socially constructed and imagined community (1991: 1-7). It is imagined, since no one has ever met all of the other members in the community. It is not based on face-to-face interactions, but rather imagination. In addition to the imaginary nature of nations, Smith (1991) and Yoshino (1992) describe the different dimensions of national identity. Smith argues that two principles construct national identity, one being the ethnic concept and the other being the civic concept (1991: 8-15). The former emphasizes the historical attributes of the community and involves only birth and no choice, while the latter stresses political and legal commitments to the community and involves choices (1991: 8-15). Yoshino categorizes national identity in a different way, saying that it consists of cultural and political national identity. According to Yoshino, cultural national identity involves “the distinctiveness of the cultural community as the essence of a nation” (1992: 1); while political national identity stresses citizenship

and the “collective experience [of] a political reality” (1992: 1). In short, national identity is a multi-dimensional concept, since it can be defined in ethnic and civil terms, as well as cultural and political terms.

In the case of the Chinese and Japanese students, their national identity can be categorized as ethnic rather than civic because they both emphasized the historical attributes of their communities. The Japanese students’ national identity is cultural rather than political. They believe in their cultural uniqueness as Japanese, but do not pay much attention to what their government does and other political matters. The characteristic feature of the Chinese students’ national identity was a bit different, and can be described as both cultural and political. This is because the Chinese students exhibited pride in their traditional culture, and at the same time, they showed their belief in the Communist Party’s leadership and stressed its importance in stabilizing Chinese society.

Furthermore, Mathews explains how the globalized world influences our national identity (2000). He claims that while the material supermarket brings goods to every place in the world, the cultural supermarket spreads information, concepts and potential identities everywhere as well (2000: 9). In the cultural supermarket, Mathews points out that there is a conflict between the two principles of identity: state and market. We form our cultural identity through the struggle between these

two contradictory principles (2000: 10-11). The discourse of state refers to the idea that one must cherish and defend one's own particular culture, society, and nation, while the discourse of market refers to the idea that one can buy and be anything in the world that one desires (Mathews, Ma and Lui 2008: 147-8). The state attempts to occupy our cultural identity and convince us that state identity is the "master identity" through the promotion of its ideology. At the same time, the market provides us with a plethora of identity choices and invites us to choose (2000: 10-11). Mathews, Ma and Lui argue that Hong Kong people tend to choose a market-based national identity (2008: 148-167). People in Hong Kong have a cognitive sense of belonging to China, but do not fully accept the concept of "loving a nation" (2008: 153). Hong Kong people's shift to a market identity suggests that "the world of capitalism [is] transcending national borders" (2008: 160).

People from different places have different tendencies in choosing a state-based or market-based national identity, and the flexibility of their national identity depends on the context. In Mathews, Ma and Lui's research, the Hong Kong people freely chose their identities in the global market (2008: 160). However, the Chinese and Japanese students I interviewed are in positions different from those of Hong Kong residents. The Chinese students tended to hold firmly their state-based national identities, and show affectionate feelings towards their country. Their narratives of

Japan and Japanese people constantly reflected how they wished to defend the image of China, including the Chinese government, and showed their love of their own country as well. The Japanese students were less patriotic than the Chinese students, with their national identity being relatively flexible. The Japanese students believed in Japanese cultural uniqueness. Although the belief in their own cultural uniqueness is also a form of state-based national identity, the narratives of the Japanese students reflect a more flexible identity, as they did not constantly defend their own culture and their beliefs. During their study in China, the Japanese students sometimes questioned their original negative views of China when their experiences did not match their previous impressions. Nevertheless, they sometimes explained their experiences by stressing the superiority of Japanese culture.

### **1.2.3 How do Japanese and Chinese people view each other?**

Many studies focus on the themes of how Chinese people view modern Japan and Japanese people (Duan 1999; Jiang 2009; Liu 2003; Su 2001), as well as how Japanese people view modern China and Chinese people (Hein and Hammond 1995; Robertson 1998; Morris-Suzuki 1998; Söderberg and Reader 2000; Iwabuchi 2002), and they are important materials in the understanding of recent Sino-Japanese cultural relations. In this section, I will analyze how Chinese people view Japan, and then how Japanese people view China.

China has many complex perceptions of modern Japan. Both the appreciation for Japan's attractive aspects and hatred towards Japan can be found in China's view of that modern country. There have been two waves of enthusiasm for studying in Japan among Chinese students which indicate the attractive aspects of Japan. Jiang points out that the first wave was in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He writes that the success of the Meiji Restoration and the growth of Japan as a military power attracted many Chinese students to study in Japan. He claims that most of the Chinese students aimed to learn Western knowledge through Japan during that period. Jiang further explains that the Chinese students went to Japan instead of Western countries because Japan was geographically closer to China and they believed that Japan was proficient at selecting valuable knowledge from the West (2009: 1-3). Duan describes the second wave (1999: 2-4), in which he claims that, in the 1980s, the rapid economic growth of Japan encouraged numerous Chinese students to study in Japan (1999: 2-4). Duan writes that during that period, the Chinese students focused on learning Japanese culture and knowledge. Until recently, some Chinese people have continued to view Japan as an ideal place because of its high technology and attractive popular culture (1999: 3).

China admires Japan's highly developed economy, technology and popular culture. Yet, many Chinese academic books criticize Japan for not taking

responsibility for its actions during World War II (Liu 2003; Su 2001). Liu condemns previous Japanese Prime Ministers' visits to Yasukuni Shrine<sup>2</sup> and argues that the revisions of junior high school history textbooks<sup>3</sup> indicated the possible rise of militarism in Japan in the late 1990s (2003: 1-2). Su also accuses Japan of not making sufficient apologies for its invasion of China in World War II (2001: 174). Liu (2003) and Su (2001) both portray negative images of Japan, and describe Japan as a possible external enemy of China. Their claims echo the Chinese government's attempt to establish a common external enemy in order to unify the Chinese people. In this sense, China's discontent with Japan has an underlying link with the enhancement of internal nationalism.

According to some academic publications, Japan has posited itself above other Asian countries in World War II and especially during the past two decades (Hein and Hammond 1995; Morris-Suzuki 1998; Söderberg and Reader 2000; Iwabuchi 2002). Japan considers China to be a part of Asia and thus looks down on China as well. We can see this sense of superiority in a wide range of public expressions in the past, including the Takarazuka Revue. Robertson suggests that, during World War II, the performances of Takarazuka were a part of Japan's colonial project to emphasize

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<sup>2</sup> The Chinese government is discontent with previous Japanese Prime Ministers' visits to the Yasukuni Shrine because it enshrines Japan's war dead, including war criminals from World War II.

<sup>3</sup> The Chinese government protested many times regarding the insufficient content about World War II in Japan's junior high school history textbooks. The Chinese government suspects that the Japanese government intends to hide the truth of the history about Japan's actions in the war.

the superiority of Japanese culture (1998: 91-97). The Revue performances promoted the Japanese spirit and intention to assimilate the colonial Asian people into the “Japanese” (1998: 94). Although the Japanese colonial project was discontinued after Japan’s defeat in the war, this sense of superiority over Asian countries can still be found in modern Japan. Hein and Hammond argue that, in the 1990s, Japanese scholars’ claim to bolster connections with other Asian countries was an attempt to uphold internal national identity, and was not really concerned with the relationships with other Asian countries (1995: 3). The evidence is that most of the reasianization works of literature portray many unattractive images of these countries, such as in the article, “A Proposal for Japan’s Reasianization” published by Kobayashi Yotaro in 1991 (1995: 6). From the viewpoint of Hein and Hammond, it is hard to say that these works promote relationships between Japan and other Asian countries, but instead they seem to simply reconfirm Japan’s national identity as number one in Asia (1995: 3-5). Additionally, similar to Liu’s (2007a: 43) claim, Söderberg and Reader point out that Japan tends to view itself as a developed country in “the Western camp,” and look down upon other Asian countries as developing countries (2000: 12).

Furthermore, Morris-Suzuki mentions national hierarchy in personal interactions between Japanese and other Asian people (1998). She points out that

personal interaction made on socially and economically unequal terms may lead to disdain. She provided the example that in Taiwan, the Chinese employees experienced discrimination in Japanese companies. When they worked longer for the Japanese managers, they would gain more negative images of the managers (1998: 11). As these works suggest, national superiority is an underlying concept when Japan views other Asian countries. This is closely linked with Japanese self-identity, and sometimes reflected in personal interactions in cross-cultural contexts. The present study explores how the students' overseas experiences may confirm or conflict with the viewpoints addressed above.

#### **1.2.4 Chinese and Japanese national identity**

As I have described in the section above, the ways in which China and Japan view each other are influenced by their underlying logic of national identity. In the following sections, I will explain the common discourses of national identity among Chinese and Japanese people, which are especially relevant to the students' perceptions of the other national group.

Some recent studies claim that Chinese national identity is multifaceted (Guo 2004; Wei and Liu eds. 2001). Wei and Liu write that, since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, state nationalism led by Communist ideology has been dominant in China (2001: 2-3). However, as the Mao era ended in China

and the Cold War concluded in the early 1990s, the Communist influence in China decreased (2001: 9-10). Wei and Liu claim that in response to modernization and the opening of China's society in the 1990s, Chinese people constructed their national identity through encounters with the "foreign" (2001: 9). Wei and Liu further suggest that the recent Chinese uneasiness with the "foreign" may be rooted in China's semi-colonial past, as well as its insufficient understanding of the "foreign" (2001: 10).

In addition, Guo (2004) and Liu (2001) point out that a cultural national identity has emerged in China since the 1990s. Guo claims that the main features of the Chinese cultural national identity include resistance to the West, identification with a cultural nation and the vision of a Pan-Chinese cultural nation (2004: 134-135). First of all, the cultural nationalism in China resists the influences of the West, especially the cultural imperialism of the United States (Liu 2001: 211). It is constructed against the concepts of Westernization, such as aspirations for material wealth and belief in freedom, liberty and democracy (Guo 2004: 129). Moreover, the ideology of a cultural nation highlights China's own path (Liu 2001: 211). It seeks socialism with Chinese characteristics. The traditions of national culture, such as Confucianism (*rujia*) and commemoration of the Yellow Emperor (*huangdi*)<sup>4</sup>, have experienced a

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<sup>4</sup> The Yellow Emperor (*huangdi*): A legendary Chinese legend hero said to be one of the emperors who established China. Many Chinese people feel pride in being descended from the Yellow Emperor.

revival in Chinese society (Guo 2004: 135). Moreover, Chinese cultural nationalism stresses a Pan-Chinese ideology which imagines a Chinese nation that includes all ethnic groups. It upholds not only the status of the Han ethnic group, but also includes Tibetan and Mongolian ethnic groups which had previously been marginalized (Guo 2004: 134-135).

Cultural nationalism emerged earlier in Japan than in China. Japanese cultural nationalism can be traced to the postwar period. Political nationalism and a mixed ethnicity ideology were linked with extreme nationalistic ideology during the Second World War, and lost ascendancy in the post-war period (Oguma 1995). Instead, the cultural explanation of Japanese identity, *nihonjinron*, became popular among the Japanese (Befu 1993; 2001; Yoshino 1992; Oguma 1995). *Nihonjinron* emphasizes the concept of a homogeneous ethnicity (Oguma 1995), and it explains that Japan has a wet rice culture which demands intensive cooperation among community members (Befu 1993: 110-111). Many Japanese people believe that this tradition has led to distinctive Japanese characteristics, such as their tendency to group-oriented, hardworking and psychologically dependent, and Japanese society can be characterized as being harmonious among members, oppressive and hierarchical (Befu 1993: 110-111).

The rise of cultural nationalism in China and the dominance of the *nihonjinron*

discourse in Japan provide us with an essential background to study self-identity and perceptions of others among Chinese and Japanese university students. I will speculate how the discourse of nationalism emerges from the students' narratives of the other society and its people, as well as how the students reinforce or resist their national identities.

### **1.2.5 Identity and foreign experiences among overseas Chinese and Japanese**

The following section examines self-identity in international contexts, which is especially relevant to overseas experiences among Chinese and Japanese students. Most studies on Chinese people living abroad focus on migrants and transnational businessmen. Ong describes overseas Chinese identity as “flexible citizenship,” and claims that identity is conditioned by the disciplinary effects of regimes of truth and power. These regimes include the state, family and economic enterprises (1999: 6). She explains that the “flexible citizenship” of overseas Chinese refers to the cultural logic of “capitalist accumulation, travel, and displacement” which fluidly and opportunistically responds to changing political-economic conditions (1999: 6). With the aims of accumulating family capital and searching for a politically stable place to live, overseas Chinese maintain flexible identities to fit different nationalities (1999: 7). Moreover, Ong claims that because of their economic success, overseas Chinese hold new narratives of their identity, and they feel pride in their Chinese cultural

identity. Chinese culture has become a new cultural representation of global capitalism in Asia (1999: 7), and self-Orientalism among Chinese people overseas has diminished (1999: 18).

Other studies of Chinese migrants around the world highlight aspects which differ from Ong's research. McKeown points out that the Chinese migrants in the United States have pride in the modernization of China and seek a link to China (2001: 23). He comments that Chinese nationalism is an important theme in those migrants' identities (2001: 24). Sinn also claims that over the last half century, Chinese migrants around the world have shown an increasingly greater attachment to their cultural roots as time goes on (1998: 6). Their studies suggest that Chinese cultural and national identity is emphasized among overseas Chinese.

Numerous studies have investigated the identity and foreign experiences of overseas Japanese businessmen and career women in Western countries (Kelsky 2001; Sakai 2000) and in developed areas of Asia, such as Singapore (Ben-Ari 2000a; 2000b; Thang, MacLachlan and Goda 2002). Most Japanese businessmen go abroad because their companies send them to manage local staff. Since they do not choose to live overseas by themselves, they tend to emphasize their "Japaneseness" and feel the need to secure their Japanese identity when living in foreign countries (Sakai 2000: 7).

Identities among overseas Japanese career women are more complicated than those for Japanese businessmen. Most career women make the decision to leave Japan themselves, usually in hope of having a better life, such as enjoying greater gender equality and more freedom to express themselves (Sakai 2000: 166-167; Kelsky 2001: 3). However, many career women are disappointed by their unsuccessful adaptation to foreign cultures (Sakai 2000: 188-197; Kelsky 2001: 18). Sakai describes the Japanese identity of career women in London as “floating.” Their Japanese identity is imaginary as they are living in a foreign country instead of Japan. Their British identity is also imaginary since they have not successfully integrated into the local community. Therefore, their identity seems to be floating between two societies (2000: 202-208).

Kelsky examines power relations in foreign experiences among overseas Japanese women (2001). She describes the narratives of internationalism which some Japanese women use to justify their shift of loyalty from Japan to the West (2001: 3). They tend to view Japan as a symbol of oppression, tradition and gender inequality; while the west as representing emancipation, modernity and gender equality. Referring to Foucault’s argument that desire is always an expression of power, Kelsky claims that the women’s desires for the Occident show the power relations between Japan and the West (2001: 10). In this way, the internationalized Japanese

women actually place themselves in other global hierarchies of race, gender and capital. They are discontented with their marginalized roles in Japan, but in overseas societies they are once again on the margins of Western culture (2001: 18).

Similar to Kelsky's research theme, Sakai points out the role of power relations in shaping identity. She views culture as shared imagination, which is defined by power relationships between groups (2000: 8). She claims that individual narratives reflect an individual's cultural identity, and express power relationships between the self and others (2000: 13). Sakai cites examples of cultural identity and power relationships in the narratives of employees of Japanese companies in London. These Japanese employees regard the strength of Japanese ethnicity as the main reason for post-war Japanese economic success (2000: 4). At the same time, British employees view their culture as universal and standardized, and therefore they think that the Japanese should adapt themselves to it (2000: 5).

The above studies suggest that when Chinese and Japanese people go abroad, their national and cultural identities are strengthened when they feel the need to secure their identity. Nevertheless, their national and cultural identity assumes a floating state when they seek out new identities. Power relations, that reflect national, racial, cultural, and economic hierarchies, are particularly important in the analysis of identity and foreign experiences among overseas Chinese and Japanese. On one

hand, an important cultural theme of Japan is that it views itself as superior to China. On the other hand, China holds complex views of Japan which include both admiration of its excellent development and disdain for its past invasions. The recent success of China as a new economic power in Asia and the rise of Chinese cultural nationalism are new elements which are shaping the identity of Chinese people overseas. All of these elements are reflected in the Chinese and Japanese students' overseas experiences and their perceptions of the other society and its people.

### **1.3 Methodology**

In this study, I collected data through semi-structured interviews and written sources. I interviewed 29 Japanese students in Beijing, China and 27 Chinese students in Kyoto, Japan. I also collected written materials in Beijing and Kyoto, and through Internet searches as well. This section explains the selection of field sites, addresses the process of conducting the semi-structured interviews, and then explains the written sources. Finally, I will discuss my own reflexivity as the researcher, and limitations of the research methods.

#### **1.3.1 Beijing, China and Kyoto, Japan as field sites**

During the summer of 2008, I conducted the interviews and collected published materials for this study. I stayed in Beijing, China for approximately one month (11

May to 6 June) and in Kyoto, Japan for another month (18 June to 21 July). I chose Beijing as my field site in China for the following reasons. Being the capital of China, Beijing is a center of higher education, since China's most famous universities and many foreign language colleges are located here. Also, the population of Japanese university students is relatively large when compared with other major cities in China. Moreover, my Department in Hong Kong organizes a short-term exchange program with the Japanese language department at a prestigious university in Beijing every summer, and thus I was able to join the program and gained the opportunity to meet potential informants.

In Japan, I chose Kyoto as the primary field site. Kyoto was selected because of the accessibility of informants. Kyoto is a higher education center in Japan, and although Kyoto is the seventh largest city in terms of total population, the population of university students ranks third in the nation after Tokyo and Osaka (Statistics Bureau of Japan 2008). Moreover, having studied in Kyoto for two years, I am familiar with the student societies and university environment. This personal experience enabled me to get closer to potential Chinese informants studying there.

### **1.3.2 Semi-structured interviews**

#### *1.3.2.1 Locating informants*

In this study, I located informants using snowball sampling, since the target informants in this research constituted a small proportion of the population in both the Chinese and Japanese societies. To avoid the inherent bias in snowball sampling whereby the individuals in the sample are often connected with one another, several snowballs were used to initiate meetings with different networks of informants. In practice, I found some Japanese informants through students majoring in Japanese language at the university where I joined the exchange program in Beijing. My Japanese friends who had studied at universities in Beijing also introduced their Japanese friends to me. In Kyoto, I found Chinese informants through friends from student organizations, dormitories and the foreign students' offices of the universities where I had previously studied. After conducting interviews with the first few informants, I asked them to introduce to me any Japanese or Chinese friends who might be willing to take part in my interviews. In addition, to eliminate gender bias in the collected data, I interviewed roughly equal numbers of female and male students. Among the Japanese students, I interviewed 15 female and 14 male students. Among the Chinese students, I interviewed 13 female and 14 male students.

### *1.3.2.2 Format of interviews*

I used in-depth interviews as my primary method of data collection because it is an effective way to discover the thinking of the informants and the narratives of their

overseas experiences, including their perceptions of the other society and its people. I met most informants once. Within a limited amount of time, asking a set of prepared questions is more effective in recording their opinions when compared with non-structured interviewing. In addition, semi-structured interviews allowed more interactions between the interviewer and interviewees than fully structured interviews. This interview format also encouraged interviewees to provide data related to focused topics.

Most interviews lasted for one to two hours. A few exceptional interviews lasted for three to four hours, when the informants were especially eager to talk about the details of their daily lives, life stories and future plans. I prepared 16 questions to learn about the informants' narratives of their experiences in China or Japan, their views of China or Japan and the local people, as well as the sources of their comments. The questions included why they chose to study in China or Japan, what they usually did throughout their daily lives in China or Japan, if they had any Chinese or Japanese friends, what the nature of their relationships was, if they experienced any culture shock, what they thought about China or Japan and Chinese or Japanese people, if their views of China or Japan changed before and after going to China or Japan, how they felt as a Japanese living in Chinese society or as a Chinese living in Japanese society, if they encountered any discrimination, and if

they changed because of their experiences studying in China or Japan.

The interviews took place in student cafeterias and coffee shops which were convenient to the informants and provided a comfortable and relative quiet environment for interviews to be carried out smoothly. The interviews were audio recorded, and then later transcribed.

### **1.3.3 Written sources**

In order to get an idea of popular discourses regarding the ways in which Chinese and Japanese people view each other, I collected written sources through two means, namely, popular books and news reports. I went to the major bookstores in Beijing and Kyoto to find relevant popular books. The collected books included those written by Japanese writers describing China's society, culture and people and those written by Chinese writers portraying Japan. The main themes of the books were cultural aspects of the other society. Additionally, in order to further understand the attitudes of mass media towards the other society, I searched for both Chinese and Japanese news reports via the Internet. I selected two incidents, Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni Shrine on 15 August 2006 and the poisoned dumpling incident affecting Japanese consumers in late January 2008. I chose these two incidents because the former reflects how the Chinese media expressed discontent with Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi's action, while the later reflected how Japanese media viewed the

problems of food safety in China. In other words, I looked at how the Chinese and Japanese media reported negative aspects of the other society. In addition, the two selected incidents were extensively reported on by both the Chinese and Japanese media, and arguably influenced the cultural relationship between these two countries. I collected and analyzed the news reports concerning these two incidents from major newspapers.

#### **1.3.4 Reflexivity of the researcher**

As ethnographic writing inevitably reflects the viewpoints of the writer, it is necessary to state my background and my personal understanding of the topic. Born in a small town in mainland China and having lived there for ten years, I regard myself as Chinese in terms of my cultural roots. After moving to Hong Kong in 1991, when Hong Kong was still a British colony, I felt that I was living in a foreign place which did not belong to China, and the citizens there described themselves as Hong Kong people rather than Chinese people. I have lived in Hong Kong for more than sixteen years, and I received my elementary, secondary and tertiary education here. Although I had been enrolled in an elementary school in mainland China for four years and studied in universities in Japan for two years, I consider my main identity construction as a member of Hong Kong society.

My self-identity is different from the Chinese informants I interviewed. When

some Chinese informants showed their enthusiasm to support the Chinese government's viewpoints and supposed that I would agree with them, it was somewhat embarrassing for me when I did not support any of their points. My claim of being Chinese was not based on the same assumptions as my informants. I appreciate Chinese culture and Chinese people, but I do not think that Chinese culture and the Chinese government are unquestionably better than others. Some Chinese informants were aware that my background was different from theirs. More than one informant reminded me that I came from a well developed capitalist city, Hong Kong, while they were from a developing socialist country. Having said this, most Chinese informants felt that I was on their side when they talked about their perceptions of Japan and Japanese people. After all, from their point of view, I did not have a different cultural background when compared with the even larger difference between the Chinese and Japanese cultures.

My Japanese informants did not totally regard me as a person from China either. Although Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997, the Japanese students thought of Hong Kong as a wealthy and westernized place, and distinguished it from China. Many times, my Japanese informants asked me if I spoke English and if English was popular in Hong Kong. When I mentioned that I used English to learn about Japanese culture, they were surprised and confirmed their assumptions that Hong Kong was

totally different from the rest of China. Sometimes I found it easier to communicate with the Japanese students than the Chinese students. This might be because I had studied in universities in Japan for two years, and thus was more familiar with university life in Japan than in China. In addition, because the Japanese students distinguished Hong Kong people from people in other parts of China, they were willing to tell me their views of China and Chinese people, including the negative aspects.

Having studied Japanese language for four years and lived in Japan for two years, I was able to communicate with the Japanese students effectively. In addition, I am a native speaker of Putonghua, and I have lived in mainland China for ten years, so I did not encounter great difficulty in interviewing the Chinese students. In order to protect the privacy of the informants, I have ensured anonymity for all persons.

### **1.3.5 Limitations of the Research Methods**

For purpose of comparison, I attempted to select similar groups of Japanese and Chinese university students. Most informants were from prestigious universities. All informants had lived in the host countries for at least 8 months, and possessed intermediate or above level of the local language. However, due to the practical constraints of research time and resources, the Japanese and Chinese students I interviewed still had significant differences in status that might affect the research

results. For example, I interviewed 14 Chinese students who had lived in Japan for a long period (above 2 years), but only 5 Japanese students who had lived in China for a long period. The majority of the Japanese students I interviewed had lived in China for a short period (8 to 10 months). This might affect the result in that the students who had lived abroad for a long period might hold negative views of the host society as they might encounter more problems and discover darker aspects of the society.

Additionally, I chose written sources to explore media discourses, instead of television news which had a greater impact on the students' views of "the other." This was mainly because of the practical reason that I did not have equipment to record television news during my field trips to Beijing and Kyoto. To obtain information similar to that found in the media discourses reflected in television news, I collected relevant books and reports from newspapers. The major television companies in both Japan and China are closely linked to the newspaper companies in each place in terms of corporate ideologies and management. Therefore, the study of news reports from newspapers could reflect the major discourses in television news to a certain extent. Moreover, I studied popular books because they significantly reflect the popular discourses of "the other" in the societies, and the informants' perceptions of "the other" are partly shaped by those popular discourses in their societies. Nevertheless, lack of data from television news was a limitation of the

research methods.

#### **1.4 Structure of the Thesis**

After outlining the statement of purpose, literature review and methodology in the introduction, the second chapter goes on to discuss how Chinese media view Japan and how Japanese media view China. Published sources are used in this chapter, and it analyzes the viewpoints of popular books and the attitudes of the major newspapers through news reports of two influential incidents. It argues that Chinese media views Japan in a complex way with both positive and negative aspects, while Japanese media tends to view China in an overwhelmingly negative way. This chapter provides a study of popular discourses in these societies and the viewpoints of the media which influence the way that the Chinese and Japanese students view each other.

The third chapter discusses the Chinese students' perceptions of Japan and Japanese people. It points out that the Chinese students mainly held pleasant images of Japan and looked forward to their experiences there before traveling abroad. However, after living in Japan for a year or more, most Chinese students adopted more negative images of Japan and Japanese people. They constructed new stereotypes of Japanese people, and felt that they were discriminated against in Japanese society.

The fourth chapter analyzes the Japanese students' perceptions of China and Chinese people. The majority of the Japanese students held negative impressions of China before they went to China. Their stereotypes of China and Chinese people were sometimes reinforced through their experiences in China, but nevertheless, some Japanese students began to question their own negative views and discovered positive characteristics of Chinese people.

The fifth chapter focuses on both the Chinese and Japanese students' narratives of media in the other societies. As media formed a powerful way of shaping their impressions of the other society and its people, the students frequently mentioned how they viewed the media in the other society as well as the media in their own society. Their narratives of the media partially explained their perceptions in the second and the third chapters. They also further reflected the students' views of the other and their self-identity discourses.

In the sixth chapter, I make my conclusions about how the Japanese and Chinese students constructed and reconstructed their self-identity and perceptions of "the other" through their overseas experiences. The chapter provides a summary of how the Japanese students tended to stress their cultural uniqueness as Japanese, while the Chinese students generally confirmed their state-based identity. It points out that the students' experiences with media in the other society were important

elements in the formation of their concepts of “the other,” and their self-identities as well. It also argues that the cultural theme of Japan’s sense of superiority over China can be seen in both the Japanese and Chinese students’ narratives. Finally, I address the value of this study, which is that it provides a better understanding of Sino-Japanese cultural relations, the experiences of Chinese and Japanese students overseas and the national identities held by such students.

## Chapter Two

### Perceptions of “the Other” in the Japanese and Chinese Media

This chapter will explain how China and Chinese people are described in the Japanese media, and how Japan and Japanese people are portrayed in the Chinese media. Many Chinese and Japanese students who I interviewed mentioned their views of the media. As an influential part of their overseas experiences and their narratives of “the other,” I will explore images of “the other” in the Chinese and Japanese media.

When Giddens discusses self-identity in late modern society, he points out the impact of media on people’s day-to-day life experiences and self-identity (1991: 84-85). Giddens describes how in late modern times, media reorganize time and space, and distant events intrude into our everyday consciousness through such media (1991: 26-27). He states that “the media do not mirror realities but in some part form them” (1991: 27). According to Giddens, mediated experiences provide potential lifestyle choices, and that the choice of one’s lifestyle is a part of self-identity (1991: 80-84). Giddens further explains that, under the influence of media, life stories are developed “in such a way as to create narrative coherence with which the reader or viewer can identify” (1991: 199). In this sense, mediated experiences form a part of the narrative of oneself, and according to Giddens this

narrative is reflexively open to change “in light of the mobile nature of self-identity” (1991: 81).

According to Giddens, media form a part of life experiences and are influential in the narrative of oneself which shapes self-identity. Thus, I will examine discourses of “the other” in the Japanese and Chinese media, which in turn form a part of the students’ perceptions of “the other,” as well as their personal narratives. Before the students went abroad, media discourses in their own country of the other society and its people formed their major images of “the other.” After living abroad for nine months or more, the students’ perceptions of “the other” changed as a result of their new experiences with media in the other society. They experienced how the media in the other society narrated their own country, and rethought the media in their own country in light of “the other’s” media. Moreover, their own new understandings of media were reflected in the creation of new perceptions of “the other.”

In our current globalized society, various forms of media, including television, films, magazines, books and the Internet have become a part of our daily lives. I selected currently published popular books and news reports for my study of media discourses of “the other” because these two sources significantly reflect the popular discourses of “the other” in the societies, and those popular discourses are particularly important in the formulations of the students’ perceptions of “the other.”

Many Chinese and Japanese students who I interviewed talked about their impressions of “the other” from news reports in both the Chinese and Japanese media. Several students mentioned the books related to the other nation which they had read before going abroad, and the books related to their own nation which they came across during their study abroad.

Moreover, a “Japan-China Joint Public Opinion Survey” conducted by Genron NPO in 2007 indicated the importance of popular books and news reports, citing them as two major sources for Chinese and Japanese people to gain information about the other nation and Sino-Japanese relations (Kudō 2008: 28-29). The survey interviewed 1,000 members of Japanese general public, and 300 educated Japanese people, including office workers, government officers, and journalists in Japan. It also interviewed 1,609 members of the Chinese general public, and 1,096 Chinese university students in China. The results suggested that for all four groups of interviewees, news reports from media in their own country were the most popular source of information. Over 84% of interviewees in each group chose this option. Books and television programs in their respective countries ranged between the second or third most popular source depending on the group. For both the Japanese educated people and Chinese university students, books published in their respective countries were a more popular source than television programs. 55.6% of the

Chinese university students and 38% of the Japanese educated people chose the option of books as one of their main sources (2008: 28-29). Since the data from the Chinese university students and Japanese educated people are more relevant to the present study than the results from the other groups, I will make use of the results from these two groups here.

In the sections below, I will discuss how images of China are portrayed in Japanese popular books and how images of Japan are portrayed in Chinese popular books. Then, I will analyze how news related to both China and Japan is reported in the Japanese and Chinese newspapers.

## **2.1 Images of “the Other” in Japanese and Chinese Popular Books**

Many Japanese popular books discuss the negative aspects of China. These books focus on the discourses of *kenchū* (dislike for China) (Kō 2006; Liu 2007a: 88) and *chūgoku kyōi ron* (the China threat)<sup>5</sup> (Hiramatsu 2007: 34; Jimbo et. al. 2007: 156-158). The *kenchū* discourse refers to a dislike for China, and emphasizes the dark aspects of China. These books accuse China of having serious problems with hygiene, as well as various social issues. The *chūgoku kyōi ron* discourse claims that, since Chinese economic and military power is growing rapidly and the country

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<sup>5</sup> The *chūgoku kyōi ron* appears not only in popular books in Japan, and I also heard of this concept from a Japanese journalist who I met in Beijing during my research trip. He had worked for a Japanese newspaper company for more than twenty years and had rich experience in writing reports related to China. He told me that *kyōi* (threat) was the key concept when Japan viewed China. He explained that the rise of China as a new power is a threat to Japan.

possesses vast amounts of human and natural resources, China poses a significant threat to Japan (Zhuo 2000: 308-310; Liu 2007a: 93-94; Hiramatsu 2007: 2-4; Jimbo et. al. 2007: 156-158). According to Zhuo (2000: 308-310) and Liu (2007a: 93-94), the discourse reflects the situation wherein, after a long-term economic recession, Japan has lost the confidence to maintain its status in Asia. These authors argue that the discourse also reflects Japan's defensive position regarding its status as the number one power in Asia (Zhuo 2000: 308-310; Liu 2007a: 93-94).

In contrast, Chinese popular books write about both the positive and negative aspects of Japan. Some Chinese popular books criticize the attitude of the Japanese government towards certain sensitive historical issues, such as previous Japanese Prime Ministers' visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. However, some books admire Japan's current economic and technological development, as well as its popular culture. The diverse standpoints of these Chinese popular books reflect the attitude of the Chinese government. Nichitaka points out that the Chinese government emphasizes Japan's mistake of invading China during World War II in order to glorify the justice of the Communist Party which fought against Japan at that time (1995: 194-196). Nevertheless, Liu claims that the government hopes to maintain good relations with Japan so as to maximize its own economic and political benefits which may be gained through bilateral relations (2007c: 104-105). Thus, while some Chinese

popular books condemn the attitude of the Japanese government towards historical issues, at the same time other books promote Sino-Japanese friendship and report the positive aspects of Japan.

### 2.1.1 Heavy focus on negative images of China and Chinese people in Japanese popular books

Among the top ten best-selling books related to China on Amazon Japan's homepage<sup>6</sup>, eight books mainly describe the negative aspects of China. The book titles and brief introductions provided on the website make the approaches of the books clear. For instance, the titles of the top three best-sellers are *Chūgoku keizai ga dame ni naru riyū* (Reasons Leading to the Downfall of the Chinese Economy) (Mizuhashi 2009), *Chūgoku hinkon zetsubō kōjō "sekai no kōjō" no karakuri* (China's Poor and Desperate Factory: Mechanisms of "the World's Factory") (Harney 2008) and *Zetsubō no taikoku, chūgoku no shinjitsu: Nihonjin ha chūgokujin no koto wo nani mo wakatteinai!* (Desperate Great Nation, the Truth about China: The Japanese Know Nothing about the Chinese!) (Miyazaki 2009). The words *dame ni naru* (downfall), *hinkon* (poor) and *zetsubō* (desperate) suggest that the main themes of the books are unpleasant aspects of China. Nevertheless, there are books which describe China and Chinese people from a relatively neutral standpoint or

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<sup>6</sup> I searched the Amazon Japan homepage on 25 May 2009 using the keywords of "*chūgoku* (China)," "*hon* (book)" and "*besutosera* (best-seller)," and found the current best-selling books related to China under the categories of "best-selling books - history and geography - regional studies - China."

from a positive point of view. Two examples from among the top ten best-sellers are *Chūgoku to iu sekai: Hito, fūdo, kindai* (The World of China: People, Climate and the Modern Era) (Takeuchi 2009) and *Shanghai/yomigaeru sekai toshi* (Shanghai/Reviving World City) (Tajima 2000).

In addition to searching for best-sellers on the Amazon Japan homepage, I also found Japanese popular books related to China and Chinese people in the large bookstores of Kyoto. I visited several bookstores in Kyoto's city center in the summer of 2008. In each large bookstore I visited there was a corner for books related to recent Chinese culture, society and economy. In this corner, which was sometimes marked as *chūgoku kanren* (China Related), I found that, upon reading the titles and cover page introductions, most books emphasized the negative aspects of China. Among the hundreds of books in the corner, I could hardly find more than twenty books which assumed a neutral or positive stance when describing China.

A few books, however, describe modern China in positive terms. For example, Morinaga writes about the Chinese people who he met during his journeys in China in *Hajimete no chūgokujin* (The First Chinese I Met) (2008). He spoke with Chinese people from various regions, and he describes the respectful nomads (2008: 240-254) and the amazing magicians (2008: 105-115) of China. In addition to books about modern China, other books also formulate images of China from various other

perspectives, such as books related to Chinese literature, language and history, as well as travel. In these fields, the Japanese books tend to portray exotic images of China. For example, in Tōyōbunkakenkyūkai's *Pekin tanbō: Shirarezaru rekishi to ima* (Visiting Beijing: Unknown History and Now) (2009), the author introduces current events and the history of Beijing to attract tourists. In *Ōchō no miyako, hōjō no michi: Chūgoku toshi no panorama* (Capital of the Dynasties, Prosperous Streets: A Panorama of Chinese Cities) (2006), Ihara writes about the colorful ancient culture of China.

Many Japanese books related to China, however, state the unattractive aspects of the country. The titles of these books express the negative viewpoints of the authors. They include *Chūgoku no hen: Gendai chūgoku rojō kōgengaku* (The Strangeness of China: On the Road Observing Modern China) (Raisumaunten 2008), *Dakara chūgoku ha sukuwarenai* (This Is Why China Cannot Be Rescued) (Hoshino 2003), and *Chūgokujin to ha ai wo katarenai: Monomane to nisemono no haikinshugimonotachi* (We Can't Talk about Love with Chinese People: Money Worshippers with Imitations and Fake Goods) (Kawasoe 2007). The words and phrases of the titles express discontent with China in a direct way, such as *hen* (strangeness), *sukuwarenai* (cannot be rescued) and *ai wo katarenai* (can't talk about love). In these books, Chinese society is portrayed as being rife with problems, and

Chinese people as having undesirable habits and intolerable characters.

Those books with the theme of *kenchū* (dislike for China) describe China as a dangerous society in an exaggerated way and without sound references. Hoshino claims that the Chinese medical treatment system is in chaos. She states that all outstanding Chinese doctors choose to live outside of China (2003: 48), and claims that many drug companies in China do not list the ingredients of their drugs (2003: 142). She does not, however, provide any concrete data to support her claims. She further cites an unnamed book which claims that over 90% of China's prostitutes have sexually transmitted diseases (2003: 153).

The authors tend to use isolated pictures to generalize about the entire country. For example, Raisumaunten<sup>7</sup> advises Japanese people who go to China not to look at police officers at night, since doing so might easily cause trouble. He says that Chinese police may stop you and ask you many questions if you glance at them at night. Raisumaunten thus concludes that it is horrible to have any kind of interactions with Chinese police (2008: 84-85). Raisumaunten does not provide any substantial examples to support his claim, and what he says about an individual Chinese police officer cannot represent all of the Chinese police. Raisumaunten further mentions the

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<sup>7</sup> At the end of the book, a short paragraph explains the reason for the author's unusual pen name. Raisumaunten actually refers to two people who are interested in strange culture and comparative cultural studies. Perhaps the content of the book is full of bias and discontentment, so that the authors are not willing to reveal their true names. Or, perhaps the authors simply wish to emphasize their interest in strangeness.

strange penalties for criminals in China. He writes about thieves who are given an “exposure penalty,” whereby the criminals are required to carry a board with the word “thief” and their own name written on it, and then stand in front of the public (2008: 30-31). Raisumaunten mocks the situation, and describes the judicial system in China as backward (2008: 31), but it seems unfair to conclude that the Chinese judicial system is backward simply because of the “exposure penalty.”

Moreover, *kenchū* books describe Chinese people in highly negative terms. They tend to create stereotypes of Chinese people and use examples to generalize the common characteristics of Chinese people. Kawasoe describes Chinese people as uncivilized because, according to her, they do not care about public hygiene. She is astonished that many people spit on the streets and claims that the waitresses use the same cloths to clean toilets and tables (2007: 49-54). Similarly, Igarashi describes Chinese people as dirty because they do not wash their hands after going to the toilet. Besides, she writes that Chinese people are corrupt thieves and liars because what they say is not consistent with what they do (2007: 93-96). Washio claims that Chinese people are self-centered and ignore rules and contracts. For example, even though university courses are supposed to start in September, he was asked to teach in China in August (2007: 78-80). He also says that Chinese students who are late for class never apologize to the teacher (2007: 92).

The books related to the *kenchū* theme also explain how Japan suffers from China's influence. Igarashi's best-selling book titled: "*Hito*" *wo kū chūgokujin; wari wo kū nihonjin* (Chinese Exploit; Japanese Are Exploited) (2007) claims that it is natural for Japanese to hate Chinese, as it is an instinctive defense mechanism (2007: 283). She points out that the Japanese government spends a great deal of money on supporting Chinese students in Japan; however, she claims that because of these students the crime rate in Japan is on the rise (2007: 282). She makes this point without providing any solid data or sources to prove what she says, making her comments unreliable. Igarashi further argues that the Japanese government provides a large portion of money to China through Official Development Assistance (ODA)<sup>8</sup>, but China does not think that Japan has paid for its aggressive actions during World War II (2007: 144). However, it is perhaps difficult to imagine that ODA is equivalent to war compensation.

Another theme, *chūgoku kyōi ron* (the threat of China), frequently appears in popular Japanese books about China. The *chūgoku kyōi ron* basically echoes the *kenchū* theme, and goes even further to emphasize the idea that China is a threat to Japan. Many popular books describe how China's military power and rapid economic growth threaten Japan. These books claim that, since China possesses huge military

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<sup>8</sup> ODA is a form financial assistance provided by developed countries to developing countries. Until recent years, China was the biggest receiver of ODA from Japan.

power, it may one day attack Japan (Hiramatsu 2007: 160-162). These books also argue that the growth of Chinese economy is harmful to the Japanese economy. For example, one argument asserts that China's production of many inexpensive products is causing Japanese industries to decline (Jimbo et. al. 2007: 156-168).

The *chūgoku kyōi ron* also appears in books related to social and cultural issues. These books argue that the Chinese people are ignorant and aim to include Japan as a part of China. Raisumaunten asks why maps of China which are sold in China also include a map of Japan. He claims that since Japan is not Taiwan, it is strange to show Japan on a map of China. The author feels suspicious that China seeks to extend its national territory to include Japan as well (2008: 44-45). It seems irrational to say that China intends to occupy Japan because Japan can be seen on maps of China. In fact, according to the map which the author provides, the map of China clearly draws the country's border, and Japan is outside of the boundary. Japan is shown as part of the background, which includes not only Japan, but also other neighboring countries, such as Russia and Korea. Similarly, Okata claims the Chinese people think that Japanese people are Chinese. He explains that because there are many different spoken languages in China, even Japanese people who speak Japanese can be thought of as Chinese. Moreover, he writes that since Japanese people use Chinese characters (*kanji*), it is natural for the Chinese people to regard

Japanese people as Chinese (2008: 128-131). However, he does not provide evidence that China has any intention to invade Japan.

In summary, there are some Japanese popular books which portray the attractive aspects of China, such as its long history and traditional culture. Some Japanese authors show their respect to Chinese people of different social statuses and tell their stories. Nevertheless, many Japanese popular books describe China and Chinese people in exaggerated ways and regard them with suspicion. The *kenchū* books are full of negative stereotyping. The authors tend to use the standards of Japan to evaluate Chinese society and Chinese people. For example, when the authors compare hygienic standards in China with those in Japan, they find a large gap between the standards. The authors claim that Chinese people do not care about hygiene as much as Japanese people. The authors think that this is unacceptable, and thus argue that China is an uncivilized society. They ignore the social and economic conditions of China.

### **2.1.2 Diverse views of Japan and Japanese people in Chinese popular books**

In contrast to the large coverage of negative stereotyping China and Chinese people in the Japanese books, both negative and positive descriptions of Japan and Japanese people can be found more equally in the Chinese books. Although some Chinese writers criticize Japan for not being sincere enough in taking responsibility for its

actions during World War II (Liu 2007c: 144), many popular books present Japan in a neutral or positive light.

Among the top ten best-selling books related to Japan in China, nine books describe Japan from a neutral or positive perspective, according to my search on the homepage of Amazon China<sup>9</sup>. Most of the books are translated from Chinese from Japanese or English. For example, four different Chinese versions of Ruth Benedict's *Ju yu dao* (The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture) (1990; 2005; 2007a; 2007b) are among the top ten best-sellers. The book was first published in 1946 in English and described the contradictory characteristics of Japanese culture. To promote the book, the introductions to the Chinese versions point out that it offers an analysis of Japanese culture from an objective viewpoint (2005; 2007a). Similarly, the selling point of Watanabe's *Yukishiyo no omokage* (Images from a Vanished World) (2009) is also a neutral description of Japanese culture and society. Other top ten best-selling books include books which introduce Japanese food culture (Xu 2009) and Japanese manners (Igaki 2007). The only book among the top ten best-sellers which focuses on negative aspects of Japan is Jin's *Xin choulou de riben ren* (The New Ugly Japanese People) (2008). According to the introduction of the book provided by the publisher, Jing describes Japanese culture as naïve and Japanese

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<sup>9</sup> I searched the homepage of Amazon China on 25 May 2009 by using the keyword *riben* (Japan), and then used the keyword *xiaoshou paihang* (sales ranking) to sort the results. I found the results under the category of "books - regional culture – Japan."

society as full of problems.

In addition to the top ten best-selling books on Amazon, I also searched for Chinese books related to Japan in Beijing. I visited several large bookstores in the city center of Beijing in the summer of 2008. I mainly searched for Chinese books related to current Japanese culture and society which were written by Chinese authors. Unlike the Japanese books related to China in Japan, there were no corners for Chinese books related to Japan in the bookstores that I visited. I found approximately ten books related to Japan at most in any one bookstore. I collected a variety of books which represented different themes. According to the books I collected, my findings are as follows.

Some authors mention the historical consciousness of the Japanese people in a positive way. As part of a project organized by China Central Television (CCTV), Yan Song, a Chinese journalist, visited Japan and interviewed several Japanese public figures in 2006. In his book, *Yansong kan riben* (Japan in the Eyes of Yan Song), Yan describes his interview with Watanabe Tsuneo, head of the *Yomiuri Shimbun* (2007: 20-25). Watanabe talked about his discontent with Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine and emphasized that Japanese people should take responsibility for their actions in World War II. Yan admired the sincere attitude of Watanabe. He points out that not all Japanese people ignore history (2007: 20-25).

Moreover, Li introduces Inoue Kiyoshi in his book, *Ribian zhan riben* (Viewing Japan on the Edge of the Sun) (2007a). Inoue Kiyoshi is a famous Japanese historian who criticized Japanese history textbooks for overlooking the history of World War II. Li reminds readers that some Japanese people have viewpoints which are similar to those of Chinese people, as they also condemn the education of history in Japan (2007a: 206-208).

Chinese popular books also discuss the characters and behaviors of Japanese people. Liu emphasizes that Japanese people have different “faces” in his book, *Riben de miankong* (Japanese Faces) (2007b). Liu explains that some Japanese people support extreme nationalist ideas, while some Japanese people love peace and are friendly to the Chinese. He provides the example of a Japanese businessman who donates money to Chinese overseas students in Japan and also supports poor university students in China’s universities (2007b: 30-36). Moreover, some authors encourage Chinese people to learn from the good characteristics of Japanese people. In *Riben: Daguo xiji* (Japan: Details of Power), Chen and Huang state that the Japanese people are incredibly diligent. They describe factory workers as extremely hardworking, and staff in big companies as being always eager to acquire new knowledge (2006: 86-98). Similarly, in *Ribian zhan riben* (Viewing Japan on the Edge of the Sun) (2007a), Li writes that Chinese people should learn from the

Japanese people who enthusiastically support environmental protection. He mentions that in Japan recycle shops are common and companies print papers on both sides (2007: 131-135).

Some Chinese popular books, however, view Japanese people in negative ways. In those books, the authors tend to view Chinese culture as superior to Japanese culture, and they judge Japanese culture according to Chinese standards. For example, in the book titled *Ling juli de riben* (Japan without Distance), Cheng claims that Japanese people have non-conservative attitudes towards sex because they are not as civilized as Chinese people (2007: 175-183). He pities the Japanese young people who enjoy a colorful material life, but are enslaved by a single fashion trend and wear similar clothes (2007: 151-153). He despises the Japanese culture which is different from China, where people admire conservative sexual attitudes and live less materialistically.

These books also create negative stereotypes of Japanese people by condemning the country's core cultural values. Cheng states that according to Japanese traditional thinking, it is not important to distinguish evil from kindness. He gives evidence that in many famous Japanese mythologies, the respected gods made terrible mistakes, but were not blamed. He claims that, as a result, the Japanese people also overlook their mistakes during World War II (2007: 200-205). Similarly, in his *Riben ren ping*

*shenme* (What the Japanese People Rely On), Zhou also claims that Japanese people do not distinguish evil from kindness. He states that Japanese people believe that so long as others are not aware of their mistakes, they do not need to take responsibility for them (2009: 169-170). He writes that Japanese people regard kindness as weakness and cruelty as the best way to protect oneself (2009: 125-126).

After reading such Chinese books, Chinese people may imagine that the Japanese people are cruel and uncivilized, and have loose morals and are unable to distinguish evil from kindness. At the same time, some books applaud the positive aspects of the Japanese people. These books say that Japanese people can be kind, generous, diligent and good citizens. The Chinese authors seem to be more lenient than their Japanese counterparts who focus mainly on the negative aspects of China.

## **2.2 Reporting “the Other” in Japanese and Chinese Newspapers**

Newspapers also influence how people view other societies and their people. According to an online survey cited in Liu’s book, around 57% of Chinese young people said that the news reports were the main source from which they constructed their images of Japan (2007a: 110). Additionally, Liu points out that the growth of discontent with China among Japanese people was closely related to Japanese news reports about the anti-Japanese demonstration in China in 2005 (Liu 2007a: 110). Thus, it is worthwhile to study the news reports in China and Japan, especially those

concerning both Japan and China. In the sections below, the backgrounds of the Japanese and Chinese newspapers will be analyzed, followed by a discussion of how Japanese and Chinese newspapers reported on two important issues.

### **2.2.1 Background of Japanese and Chinese newspapers**

In Japan, most news is provided by a small number of organizations. Therefore, the opinions expressed by the news reports are not necessarily diverse. The five major national newspapers, the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, *Asahi Shimbun*, *Mainichi Shimbun*, *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* and *Sankei Shimbun*, are affiliated with the major national commercial television networks. For example, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* is affiliated with *Nippon Television*, while the *Asahi Shimbun* is affiliated with *Television Asahi*. The semi-governmental broadcasting agency, *Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai* (NHK), however, is not run on a commercial basis as it is supported by subsidies (Kanayama and Kanayama 2005: 145-146). The other major national newspapers and their affiliated television companies are run on a commercial basis (McCargo 2003: 51-52; Kanayama and Kanayama 2005: 145-146).

The commercial and corporate culture is dominant among newspaper companies in Japan. Feng states that Japanese newspapers have a large number of readers and are highly commercialized. The *Yomiuri Shimbun*, for example, is credited as having the largest circulation of any newspaper in the world (2000: 432). The newspaper

companies emphasize that they are politically neutral and have objective viewpoints. In fact, however, Feng points out that because of the pressure to increase circulation and make profits, it is far more important for the newspapers to have entertaining content and attract readers (2000: 432-434). In other words, the editorial direction of the newspapers is led by market forces to a great extent.

Moreover, McCargo claims that the freedom of Japanese newspapers to provide information to the public is constrained. He points out that kisha clubs (reporters' clubs) control the flow of information to journalists in Japan. The kisha clubs are operated by government organizations and some private sectors, and they are a major source of news for reporters. Reporters who do not obey the rules of the kisha clubs are excluded from the clubs, and in this way the kisha clubs can control the flow of information and influence the opinions of reporters to a certain extent (2003: 52-57). Liu comments that the kisha clubs are, in fact, merely tools of the political parties. These clubs, he states, are used to influence the viewpoints expressed by reporters in the newspapers (2007a: 112-117).

The Chinese newspaper industry, in contrast to the commercial characteristics of Japanese newspapers, is run under official restrictions, and represents the voice of the Communist Party. The official national newspaper, the *People's Daily*, plays a leading role in the industry. Only the *People's Daily* and another official news service,

the *Xinhua News Agency*, are authorized to report on government leaders (Chou 2007: 67). The reports in the *People's Daily* are made from the standpoint of the government. At the same time, the reporters have considerable freedom to report news which is not closely related to the interests and ideology of the government (Ma 2000: 23-24). The situation of the Chinese television industry is similar to that of the newspaper industry. The major national channel, China Central Television (CCTV), represents the government's viewpoints and is under the close watch of government officers (Ma 2000: 22-23). The local television channels, on the other hand, enjoy more freedom in providing various kinds of information (Ma 2000: 23-24).

In summary, similar to the Japanese newspapers, the Chinese newspapers do not provide variety in the expression of opinions. Additionally, both Japanese and Chinese newspapers assume standpoints similar to those of the television channels of their respective countries. This is because the major Japanese newspapers are affiliated with the major television networks, and that both the major Chinese newspapers and television channels are run under government restrictions.

### **2.2.2 The poisoned dumpling incident in Japanese and Chinese newspapers**

To study how Japanese newspapers report on China and how Chinese newspapers report on Japan, significant incidents and issues which are related to both Japan and

China in newspapers are able to provide important clues. The poisoned dumpling incident is a prime example to illustrate how the newspapers in Japan report on and perceive the negative aspects of China. In late January 2008, Chinese-made dumplings sickened at least ten people in Japan, and the Japanese newspapers reported extensively on the incident in the following month. To provide a better understanding of the reporting styles of the two countries, reports from both Japanese and Chinese newspapers on the incident are compared and discussed as follows.

The poisoned dumpling incident was exaggerated in most of the Japanese newspapers. Firstly, the number of people sickened in the incident was inflated in some newspapers. The *Asahi Shimbun* reported that ten people were sickened on 30 January 2008. This was consistent with the reports of *Asahi Weekly* on 24 February 2008 that at least ten people were sickened. The Chinese newspaper, *People's Daily*, also reported that three families in Japan were sickened on 1 February 2008. However, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* reported that 511 people were sickened on 1 February 2008<sup>10</sup>. No data can support the amount of people reported to be ill by the *Yomiuri Shimbun* on this date, and so it seems that the number was exaggerated.

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<sup>10</sup> I was in Hong Kong in early 2008, and I recall that the media in Hong Kong did not report that more than one hundred people were sickened in the poisoned dumpling incident. It seems that the *Yomiuri Shimbun* provided exaggerated data. This may have been because the *Yomiuri Shimbun* counted the number of people who were sickened in different ways. For example, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* may have counted people who did not have any symptoms of being poisoned, but were worried about it and visited the hospital to see a doctor.

Secondly, the seriousness of the poison was emphasized and indignation over the incident was expressed in Japanese newspapers. The newspaper headlines described the poison found in the dumplings as follows, “*Parachion, senmonka odoroku mōdoku* (Parathion, Experts Surprised at Deadly Poison)” (*Sankei Shimbun*, 22 February 2008) and “*Satchūzai nōdo ichimanbai koe, gyōza jiken, chishiryō ni sōtō* (Level of Poison in Gyoza Case Exceeding 10,000 Times Standard Pesticide – Equivalent to Lethal Dose)” (*Sankei Shimbun*, 14 March 2008). Additionally, some newspapers exaggerated the symptoms of poisoning. The *Yomiuri Shimbun* wrote *kyūshi ni isshō* (a narrow escape from death) in the headline, “*Chūgokusei gyōza, yakubutsu chūdoku utagai isenjō, ishi ga chokkan, kyūshi ni isshō* (Chinese-made Dumplings, Stomachs Pumped on Suspicion of Chemical Poisoning, Doctor Felt They Had Narrow Escape from Death),” to describe the people who were poisoned (2 February 2008). The *Mainichi Shimbun* also used *shingoku shōjō* (serious symptoms), *memai* (dizziness), *furatsuki* (lightheadedness) and *hakike* (nausea) in the headline, “*Shūgeki, dokubutsu honnyū, 96 nin jushin, shingoku shōjō, memai, furatsuki, hakike ... shokugo sugu ihen* (Shock, Mixed with Poison, 96 People Seek Medical Attention, Serious Symptoms, Dizziness, Lightheadedness and Nausea ... Felt Unusual Immediately After Eating),” to describe the symptoms (3 February 2008). Moreover, some newspapers expressed anger over the incident. A reporter put

his own feeling in the title, “*Kisha mo tabeteita! Dokuirigyōza ni tsuyoi ikidoori* (The Reporter Ate It Too! Rage Over Poisoned Dumplings)” (*Sankei Shimbun*, 30 January 2008). Another news title also expressed indignation, “*Chūgokusei gyōza chūdoku, ‘mō kawanu’ ikidōru koe, efukoopu kaishū motomeru* (Chinese-made Poisoned Dumplings, Irate Voices Say, ‘I Won’t Buy Anymore,’ Seeking Recall by F Co-op)” (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, 1 February 2008).

Thirdly, the Japanese newspapers exaggerated scope of the poisoned dumpling incident. The reports repeatedly emphasized that the poisoned dumplings were made in China. Even though the incident only involved dumplings, the news reports suggested that Japanese people should worry about other kinds of Chinese-made food. The titles of these reports expressed this anxiety, such as “*Gyōza chūdoku, chūgokusei ‘shoku’ ni fuan hirogaru, tekkyo ‘reitō’ igai mo kuryo* (Dumpling Poison, Anxiety Spreads Concerning Chinese-made ‘Foods,’ Worries about Foods Other Than Recalled ‘Frozen Food’)” (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, 31 January 2008), “*Chūgoku shokuhin, hirogaru fuan, ‘anzen’ takameyō ga ...* (Chinese-made Food, Spreading Anxiety, Can We Be Sure about ‘Safety?’)” (*Sankei Shimbun*, 7 February 2008) and “*Reitō gyōza, ‘chūgokusei’ fushin, kennai mo, toriatsukaiten ni toiawase 1,000 ken koe* (Frozen Dumplings, Distrust of ‘Chinese-made food,’ More Than 1,000 Inquiries to Stores within the Prefecture)” (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, 1 February 2008).

The Chinese newspapers reported the poisoned dumpling incident from relatively objective viewpoints, as compared with those in the Japanese newspapers. Reports in the *People's Daily* mainly described investigation of the incident, as reflected in the titles, “*Chūgokusan reidō gyōza jūdoku jiken, chūgoku keneki tōkyoku danwa* (Chinese-made Frozen Dumpling Poisoning Incident, Statement of the Chinese Inspection Office)” (*People's Daily*, 1 February 2008) and “*Zhijianzongju: Jiaqian dui cukou shipin shengchang jiaguong qiye de qianguocheng jianguan* (Quality Supervision and Inspection Head Office: China Needed to Strengthen Supervision of Food Quality)” (*People's Daily*, 18 February 2008).

Moreover, the Chinese newspapers held a more balanced view of the causes and implications of the incident than the reports in Japan. On the one hand, the *People's Daily* reported that China needed to assume part of the responsibility for the incident and strengthen the supervision of food quality control (18 February 2008). On the other hand, *Xinhua News Agency* pointed out that Japanese official in the Tokushima area acknowledged that the dumplings were poisoned using parathion at the shop in Japan (15 February 2008). Regarding the incident, the responsibilities of both China and Japan were reported in the Chinese newspapers. However, the Japanese newspapers were more concerned with responsibility on the Chinese side. The

reports presented the supposed horrible consequences of consuming Chinese-made food. They repeatedly emphasized that the poison dumplings were Chinese-made and created the impression that Chinese-made food was dangerous. They overlooked the fact that the dumplings were produced by a Japanese company in China, and it was possible that the dumplings were poisoned in Japan.

### **2.2.3 Jun'ichiro Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine in Japanese and Chinese newspapers**

Reports on the poisoned dumpling incident reflect how Japanese newspapers view negative aspects of China, while reports on Prime Minister Jun'ichiro Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine indicate how Chinese newspapers perceive negative aspects of Japan. The historical consciousness of Japanese people is one of the major disputes among Sino-Japanese relations (Nichitaka 1995: 16-17). China argues that the Japanese government does not do enough to recognize the responsibility for its actions in World War II, and thus China strongly opposes Japanese Prime Ministers' visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, which enshrines Japan's war dead including war criminals from World War II. On 15 August 2006, Japan's Prime Minister, Jun'ichiro Koizumi, visited the Yasukuni Shrine. It was the memorial date for the announcement of Japan's surrender in World War II, and because the date has symbolic meaning, the visit further intensified the conflict between the Chinese and Japanese governments. The news reports on the visit in Chinese newspapers reflect

how Japan is perceived in China. For a better understanding of the issue, news reports in Japanese newspapers are also mentioned for comparison.

In most Chinese news reports related to Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine on 15 August 2006, Koizumi's action was largely condemned. Firstly, the reports pointed out that the visit was a mistake, as well as a threat to Asian countries. The titles of those reports included: "*Cong canbai Jingguo shenshe kan cuowu de lishiguan* (Incorrect Historical Viewpoints Reflected through Yasukuni Shrine Visit)" (*People's Daily*, 15 August 2006) and "*Xiang yazhou linguo fuchu tiaozhan xinhao* (Offensive Message Sent to Neighboring Asian Countries)" (*People's Daily*, 16 August 2006). Secondly, the Chinese news reports stated that the visit was condemned by the Chinese government and that it caused damage to Sino-Japanese relations. The reports had titles such as "*Tang Jianxuan: Xiaoquan yanzhong chongji le chongri kuanxi gaishan jincheng* (Tang Jiaxuan [Chinese government official]: Koizumi's Visit Causes Serious Hindrance to Improvement of Sino-Japanese Relations)" (*Xinhua News Agency*, 20 August 2006) and "*Zhongguo waijiaobu fubiao shenming qianglie kangyi* (Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry Declares Statement of Strong Protest)" (*People's Daily*, 16 August 2006). Thirdly, the Chinese news reports stated that other countries also condemned the visit. The headlines included "*Guoji shehui qianglie qianzhe Xiaoquan canbai Jingguo shenshe*

(International Community Strongly Condemns Koizumi's Yasukuni Shrine Visit)" (*People's Daily*, 18 August 2006).

Although the Chinese news reports stated a strong opposition to Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine on 15 August, the reports also mentioned how Japanese people disagreed with the visit. In this way, they seemed to separate the opinions of the Japanese government from those of the Japanese public. They also constructed a positive image of the Japanese public to a certain extent. The report, "*Guoji shehui qianglie qianzhe Xiaoquan canbai Jingguo shenshe* (International Community Strongly Condemns Koizumi's Yasukuni Shrine Visit)," mentioned that the *Yomiuri Shimbun* condemned Koizumi's visit and called for a real understanding of the war history, and praised that newspaper's viewpoint (*People's Daily*, 18 August 2006). The report also pointed out that some Japanese private organizations protested against the visit, while another article, "*Riben guaozhongsheng yanzhong de 8.15* (15 August in the Eyes of Japanese High School Students)," reported how Japanese high school students considered Japan's responsibility for World War II (*People's Daily*, 18 August 2006). The article translated a letter to a teacher written by a Japanese high school student. The student wrote:

Tomorrow is 15 August ... Everyone says that it is "a memorial date for the ending of the war." But it is stupid to say "ending of the war." Instead, it should be "being defeated in the war". Prime Minister Koizumi ... will visit the Shrine on 15 August. However, his visit shows grief for the war dead,

including the war criminals. It will lead to the misunderstanding that Japan praises war criminals.

The student expressed a viewpoint similar to that of the Chinese people in the letter. This expression gained the support of Chinese readers and gave Chinese readers a favorable impression of the Japanese public.

The Japanese newspapers also extensively reported on Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni Shrine on 15 August 2006. The news reports in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* were similar to those in the Chinese newspapers, and condemned the visit. The *Yomiuri Shimbun* reported on the voices of disagreement concerning the visit, with headlines such as “*Koizumi shushō no sanpai, Hatoyama, minshukanjichō ‘Yasukuni ha sensō senbi jinja’* (Prime Minister Koizumi's Visit, Secretary General of the Democratic Party, Hatoyama, ‘Yasukuni is a Shrine Which Glorifies War’)” (12 August 2006) and “*Zennihon bukkyōkai, Koizumi shushōra no Yasukuni sanpai chūshi yōseishō wo teishutsu* (Japan Buddhist Federation Submits Request Letter to Stop Prime Minister Koizumi's Yasukuni Visit)” (5 August 2006). In addition, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* also reported that the visit would damage Japan's foreign affairs. The report was titled, “*Koizumi shushō no Yasukuni sanpai, Ajia gaikō, jiki seiken ni tsuke* (Prime Minister Koizumi's Visit to Yasukuni, Effects to Be Suffered by Japan's Asian Foreign Affairs and the Next Administration)” (15 August 2006).

Many Japanese news reports took a neutral stance when reporting Koizumi's

visit. For example, the *Mainichi Shimbun* reported Koizumi's comments in an article, “‘*Genron fūsatsu, yurusenu*’ Koizumi shushō, Yasukuni sanpai no eikyō hitei (Prime Minister Koizumi Denies Side Effects of Yasukuni Visit, ‘Suppression of Freedom of Speech Will Not Be Tolerated’)” (28 August 2006). Moreover, the *Sankei Shimbun* supported Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine. It reported on the voices supporting the visit, such as in the report titled “*Jūdai no koe, shūsenkinenbi no ‘sanpai’ ha tōzen* (Voice of Teenagers, ‘Visiting on War-end Anniversary’ Is Matter Of Course)” (3 August 2006). Compared with the reports of the Chinese newspapers, the reports in Japan provided a more balanced viewpoint. The reports not only described the arguments opposing the visit, but also arguments supporting the visit. Additionally, the opinions and explanations from Koizumi were reported in the Japanese newspapers, whereas they were absent in the Chinese newspapers.

To conclude, both Chinese and Japanese newspapers performed better than the other when they were in a defensive position to protect their national image. When the Chinese newspapers faced the poisoned dumpling incident which had the potential to damage the country's image, they were able to report on the incident in a relatively objective way. This stood in contrast with to the exaggerated reports in the Japanese newspapers. Similarly, regarding Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, Japan was in a defensive position and so the Japanese newspapers were able to

provide various viewpoints.

In addition, regarding the poisoned dumpling incident, the Japanese news reports exaggerated the effects of the incident, and their reports may have led to an exaggerated negative image of China. However, concerning Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, the Chinese news reports tended to create both negative and positive images of Japan. Those reports explained the mistakes of the Japanese government, especially those of Prime Minister Koizumi, and also wrote about the sense of justice held by ordinary Japanese people and the Japanese media. The viewpoints presented in the Japanese and Chinese newspapers seem to be consistent with the narratives of "the other" in Japanese and Chinese popular books. Similar to the newspapers, the majority of the Japanese popular books emphasize the negative images of China, while the Chinese popular books describe both the negative and positive aspects of Japan.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Stereotypes and Disappointments: Chinese Students' Perceptions of Japan and Japanese People**

While living in Japan for a period of time, many Chinese students' perceptions of Japan and its people seemed to change from positive to relatively negative. Many students who I interviewed claimed that, before going to Japan, they mainly held positive views of Japan's present situation, as Japan had successfully developed its economy and entertainment industry. Although some students stated that they saw Japan in a negative light with regard to historical issues, this unfavorable impression was not so influential as to affect their overall comprehension of Japan. However, most students interpreted their experiences in Japan negatively and formed unpleasant images of modern Japan and its people after studying in Japan for nine months or more. The narratives of the students reflected their disappointments with Japan, as well as their stereotypes of Japanese people which were shaped primarily by their experiences in Japan.

This chapter addresses the Chinese students' perceptions of Japan and Japanese people both before and after living in Japan to illustrate the changes. Describing the two stages of perception clarifies that negative stereotypes of Japanese people were shaped mainly by their experiences in Japan. I will also discuss the students'

experiences of working at part-time jobs and competing for scholarships, which were closely related to the stereotypes that they formed.

Stereotypes are exaggerated images of other groups, which are usually motivated by intergroup tensions or conflicts (Donahue 1998: 90; Maletzke 2001: 111). Maletzke points out that when people evaluate other groups, they tend to use their own standards of value and limited experiences (2001: 111-112). Similarly, Chen claims that people usually admire their own cultural values. When those values contradict those of people who are from other groups, they reject the values of the other groups and view people from those groups in a negative way (1998: 21). People are usually unaware that people from other groups have different cultures and experience different socialization processes which lead to different behaviors and ways of thinking. Therefore, they label those differences negatively and form negative stereotypes of people from other groups (Maletzke 2001: 28-31; 109-123; Chen 1998: 21-23).

Since the students' backgrounds and statuses helped to shape both their lives in Japan and their perceptions of its society and people, I will describe such information below. I interviewed twenty-seven Chinese students in Kyoto, fourteen of which had been living in Japan for a long period of time (three to seven years). The reason for their stay was to pursue degrees in Japan as a sound qualification for future careers.

The other thirteen students had been in Japan for a relatively shorter period (nine months to two years). Twenty-one students were in the advanced level of spoken Japanese, while six students who had stayed in Japan for five to seven years possessed near native competence in spoken Japanese.

The students' statuses of stay partially indicated their financial situations. Twenty students were in Japan to pursue a degree, and most of them were financially self-supporting students, while seven research students (*kenkyūsei*) were enrolled in programs which did not lead to the awarding of a degree. Most research students I met were Nikkensei who were awarded the government scholarship. The Nikkensei were students of a Japanese studies program which is organized by the Japanese government for undergraduate foreign students. The program includes Japanese language and cultural courses, as well as a full one-year scholarship which covers tuition and daily living expenses in Japan. I also interviewed a research student who was not a Nikkensei. She had graduated from university and was preparing for the entrance examination of a graduate program. Students like this may or may not receive the Japanese government scholarship, and they are under a great amount of pressure to pass the entrance examinations. The student who I met was also under financial pressure to earn a living, as she had not been awarded any scholarships.

Most students I interviewed needed to pay the school tuition and daily expenses by themselves. Among the twenty degree students, only four students could gain sufficient scholarships to completely support their lives in Japan. Fifteen students claimed that doing part-time jobs was their major source of income, while one student relied completely on the financial support of her family. Moreover, the twenty degree students, including both undergraduate and graduate students, were from different faculties, including eleven from Social Science, six from Engineering and three from other faculties. Thirteen students were enrolled in master's programs, while five students were in undergraduate programs and two were in doctoral programs.

### **3.1 Initial Views of Japan**

Before going to Japan, most Chinese students who I interviewed held a positive view of modern Japan, although they had gained negative impressions of Japan from the history of World War II. The students' positive impressions of modern Japan played an important role in their choice to go to Japan to study. These impressions included a high academic level, better chances for education, strong economic power, a high standard of living, and attractive entertainment and fashion.

Wang<sup>11</sup>, a male student who majored in Chinese classical literature and was enrolled in a doctoral program which was provided jointly by a Chinese higher institution and a Japanese higher institution, explained the reasons why he came to Japan as follows:

On an international level, Sinology includes Chinese classic literature and philosophy. It is studied not only by Chinese scholars, but by Japanese, European and American scholars as well. I want to know more about foreigners' research methods and results, especially since Japanese scholars are very good at Sinology.

Lin, a male postgraduate student who had been living in Japan for more than two years, also gave a similar comment, saying, "I came here to do research. You cannot do many things in China, especially regarding academic fields ... It is common [for Chinese students] to come to Japan to receive a better education."

Among the Chinese students, another common impression of Japan was its economic strength and good career prospects. As Japan is a large economic power, the students expected that their experiences in Japan would be useful for their future careers, regardless of whether they would stay in Japan or return to China. Ni, a female postgraduate student who had been living in Japan for approximately two years, said, "As you know, Japan is a super economic power ... Chinese students basically come to Japan for the sake of their future careers." Another female

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<sup>11</sup> All students mentioned in this thesis have been assigned fictitious names to preserve anonymity.

undergraduate student made the same point, saying, “I learned Japanese because it is useful, regardless of whether you want to get a job [in China] or go abroad.”

Other reasons, explaining why the Chinese students went to Japan, included Japan’s high standard of living, attractive entertainment culture and fashion. Liang, a Nikkensei, described his impressions of Japan before he traveled there as follows:

I like Japanese animation. I like the life that is shown in the animation: beautiful gardens, quiet places and peaceful families. Japan is a well-developed capitalist country. It is modern, yet keeps its own traditions at the same time. That is an ideal society.

Liang imagined Japan as his ideal society with a high standard of living, and he gained such impressions from his favorite animations. Fu, a female postgraduate student who had been living in Japan for seven years, was also interested in Japanese animation and fashion. She said, “The major impressions I had [about Japan before coming here] were from TV programs, animations and songs. I thought that the young people in Japanese magazines were so cool. I wanted to dress fashionably like them.”

In contrast to the positive impressions of modern Japan, the Chinese students disliked Japan because of its invasion of China during World War II. The students briefly mentioned the war when they described their negative impressions of Japan. However those negative impressions were not the main factors influencing their

impressions of Japan. Huang, a male Nikkensei, said, “Before going to university [in China], my main understanding of Japan came from knowledge about the war [World War II]. That gave me an unpleasant impression.” Although Huang had negative impressions of Japan through history, this did not alter his decision to learn the Japanese language at university. He explained that his negative impressions of Japan were not strong. Similarly, Chen, a student who had been living in Japan for approximately four years and was enrolled in his third undergraduate year, said:

I did not have good impressions about Japan before I came to Japan. This is because of the patriotic education of China. As a science student, I do not have much interest in politics. If I were an art student, I would not have chosen to come to Japan, and would have probably gone to Europe or the U.S. instead.

He emphasized that those negative impressions of Japanese history did not mean a lot to him. He made no comments on the arguments about Japan’s invasion of China during World War II.

In summary, according to the students’ recollections, before they studied in Japan their positive impressions of Japan were prominent in their images of Japan and influential in their decision to go to that country. Most students did not mention their negative impressions before they went to Japan. Even when they did speak about unpleasant historical issues, they did not go into any great details.

### **3.2 Stereotypes of Japanese Characteristics: Strict, Ambiguous and Distant**

While living in Japan for a period of time, the Chinese students had much to say about the negative aspects of Japanese people when they spoke about their daily interactions with them. Some studies point out the difficulties which Chinese students often encounter in Japan (Duan 1999: 91-92; 193-195; Tsuji and Umemura 2004). Duan claims that the Chinese students who do not become used to life in Japan commonly feel that Japanese people are difficult to approach, superficial and inflexible (Duan 1999: 91-92; 193-195). The Chinese students who I interviewed held similar impressions of Japanese people. Based on the previous studies, the following section explains the conditions and situations which shaped the Chinese students' impressions of Japanese people.

Some Chinese students believed that Chinese traditional culture was superior to Japanese culture, and described the Japanese people as superficial and distant. Wang, the aforementioned doctoral student, expressed his view of the superiority of Chinese culture. He explained:

Unlike the believers of Chinese traditional philosophical thinking and Confucianists, they [Japanese people] never talk about what bothers them in front of you. But they will often say something bad about you when you are not present. When you realize what they are doing, you can really get mad at them.

He commented that it was difficult to discuss personal matters with his Japanese

friends. He said, “We chat about things that are unimportant. It is like talking about nothing.” His best Japanese friend in Japan was one who had been to China for two years. He thought that this friend had assimilated Chinese culture, and thus he could communicate well with him. From Wang’s point of view, the Japanese people who failed to act according to Chinese Confusion rules of conduct were troublemakers. He explained that according to those rules of conduct, a person should be honest and express his or her discontent directly. It seems that he sought to make sense of his difficulties in interpersonal relationships using this logic.

Unlike Wang, Ni did not regard the Chinese style of communication as a kind of authority that everyone should follow. However, she similarly discovered significant differences between the communication styles of Japanese and Chinese people. She noted:

All of Japan can be described as *kizuku*<sup>12</sup>. They are very careful – too careful. They do not want anyone to be unhappy, and so they need to think about every possibility and concern. It is too troublesome. For example, when a group of people want to have dinner together, it is so hard for them to decide since they have to care about every single person’s preference. It wastes a lot of time, and no one can make a decision.

Ni regarded her own interactions with Japanese people as superficial. She explained that she spoke with Japanese friends about things unrelated to personal matters, such as movies and fashion. She stated, “We never talk about our own families ... I cannot

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<sup>12</sup> *Kizuku* means “to notice; realize; become aware” in Japanese.

be relaxed when I talk with Japanese people. A wall exists between my heart and theirs.” She concluded that, “It is difficult for a Chinese person to survive in Japan, as many Chinese people are casual and relaxed.” She repeatedly mentioned that she could not bear the superficial communication style of Japanese people. Thus, I thought that this was one of the key factors of her dissatisfaction with her life in Japan.

Similarly, Fu described Japanese people as strict, ambiguous and distant. She thought that most Japanese people believed in perfectionism, and she linked Japanese people’s ambiguity with their strong self-protective consciousness. She described how the strictness of Japanese people was reflected through her interactions with Japanese friends as follows:

I can chat with my Chinese friends freely, but not with my Japanese friends. I cannot talk about illegal downloading [of movies or dramas] with Japanese friends, at least not with normal Japanese friends. Sometimes, I talk with Japanese friends about *taoqi*<sup>13</sup> things, but this can be done only with the Japanese friends who are not typical Japanese people ... *Taoqi* things include illegal downloading of songs ... You may joke and say both proper and improper things to those Japanese friends who are not like typical Japanese people.

She mentioned that, “There are so many rules in Japanese society that you need to obey, including big rules and small rules. Japanese people seldom talk about the rules,

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13 *Taoqi* is a Chinese word usually used to describe minor cases of misbehavior which are not likely to result in serious consequences.

but you are expected to obey them.” I asked, “If they do not talk about the rules, how do you know about the rules?” She gave some examples to explain:

They will say a little bit, but not much. For example, they told me that my clothing should be put away in private places, and should not be seen by others. I then realized that I should not hang up my clothes for any long period of time, not even on my own bed ... You need to pay attention, observe and listen carefully. Sometimes, you can find out that the classmates say different things to the professors and other classmates. Then you can find out the real situation. When my senior schoolmate [*sempai*] was writing his doctoral thesis, he struggled for more than half a year on one of his [thesis] chapters. Right before the submission of the thesis, his supervisor was still dissatisfied with that chapter. He thought about various ways of revising the chapter, and felt very frustrated. I watched the whole process, and I told him that maybe the professor wanted him to delete the entire chapter. He accepted my suggestion, and his thesis was passed. Japanese people are really ambiguous [*aimai*].

It seems that Fu was annoyed by the ambiguity of Japanese people. When I asked if she liked this style of communication, she raised her voice and answered without any hesitation, “No! I do not like it.” She further explained, “Japanese people can only see a small area around them. Their eyes are not open wide enough. They do not allow others to go inside their own area. We are not allowed to come within 50 meters of them.” This was clearly an exaggeration, but she meant that Japanese people were used to keeping a distance from others.

According to Fu’s narratives, Japanese people are obsessively rule oriented. It seemed to her that Japanese people only did things that were one hundred percent correct and could not tolerate imperfection. When Fu was talking about the illegal

downloading of movies and dramas, her facial expressions and statements showed that she was discontent with the strictness of Japanese people. This explains why she claimed that only non-typical Japanese people could be her close friends. Additionally, from her viewpoint, Japanese people were ambiguous because they meant to protect themselves, and this self-protection hindered Japanese people from being open minded and approachable. Similar comments could be found in the words of other students. Li, a male undergraduate student who had been living in Japan for more than seven years, said, “Japanese people are used to protecting themselves. Everyone protects his or her own area. The areas of people do not overlap, and thus no conflicts can occur.” I interpreted his words to mean that Japanese people do not share their personal feelings with others. Instead, they hide their true feelings in order to avoid conflicts with others.

Other than relationships with Japanese friends, the students also mentioned the difficulties that they met in the course of various interpersonal relationships developed while working at their part-time jobs, especially in their relationships with customers. The students commented that the Japanese customers were picky, which was similar to the stereotypes of their strictness. Zeng, a female Nikkensei, told me that, “The Japanese people are very picky. Once, I forgot to give chopsticks to a customer [when I was doing my part-time job]. The customer came back [to the shop]

and scolded me for quite a while. He was very angry, and I apologized many times.” She felt that Japanese customers were extremely difficult to deal with. Another Nikkensei also mentioned that if she forgot to say “Thank you!” after receiving a customer's payment during her part-time job at a convenience store, the customer would scold her. She felt wronged because, in her opinion, the customer was too demanding. Many students constructed negative impressions of Japanese people through such unpleasant experiences in Japan.

In summary, the Chinese students thought that the Japanese people were difficult to approach. They regarded their relationships with Japanese friends as superficial, and provided explanations of Chinese cultural superiority and the unfavorable characteristics of Japanese people, such as strictness and ambiguity. Wang, who believed in Chinese cultural superiority, showed the most explicit discontent with Japanese people. Expressing herself in a different way, Ni tried to objectively describe Japanese people. She explained that Japanese people were ambiguous because they did not want anyone to be unhappy, but she still concluded that she did not enjoy her relations with Japanese friends.

### **3.3 Stereotypes of Japanese Views of China and Chinese People**

The Chinese students who I interviewed frequently complained about how Japanese people held negative views of China and Chinese people. The unfavorable views of

these people exacerbated the students' discontent with them. The students commented that Japanese people viewed China and Chinese people in two ways, one being suspicion about the characteristics of Chinese people, and the other being a fear of China's strength which could threaten the status of Japan as an Asian power. The students felt that the Japanese people's perceptions were unreasonable and unfair. Some previous studies provide a brief description of Chinese students' experiences of discrimination by Japanese people (Wu 1989: 101-105; Duan 1999: 91-95). Further details of how and in what ways the students had such feelings shall be described through their narratives below.

Li described how Japanese people feel suspicious of Chinese people. He told me that, "Sometimes, when iron and steel are stolen in Japan, I am asked by my Japanese friends if Chinese people stole those things. I am upset and feel very uncomfortable when asked about this." Lin also mentioned that it seemed that Chinese people were all thieves in the eyes of Japanese people. He said:

Being Chinese, it is very difficult to enter into Japanese social groups. Japanese people have negative stereotypes of Chinese people. When they see a Chinese person, they automatically check their belongings, and hold on to their wallets.

It was obvious that the students felt uneasy in the face of the Japanese people's suspicion. Similarly, Zeng told me about a story that she had once heard:

One day, when she [her friend] was walking down the street, she heard words

from a truck which was sounding political statements, saying something to the effect of ‘Japan does not need Chinese foreign students’ and ‘all Chinese foreign students are spies from China.’ She was very angry about this.

The students felt that Japanese people had negative stereotypes of Chinese people as untrustworthy, dishonest and harmful to Japanese society. Because of these interpretations, Chinese students were often suspicious about the ways in which Japan and Japanese people view China and Chinese people.

Even without substantial evidence, some Chinese students accused Japanese people. Wang gave a vivid example of how he interpreted Japanese people's perceptions of China. He noted:

I always share with my friends the following point. You can easily recognize the attitudes of Japanese people from their pronunciations of America and China. When one says *amerika* [America], one feels happy. When one says *chūgoku* [China], one feels unhappy as the intonation declines.

Although his example was a type of emotional expression, it reflected how he felt about Japanese people's perceptions of China in daily life.

Some Chinese students explained that Japanese people disliked China and Chinese people because they regarded China as a threat. Huang, a postgraduate student who had been living in Japan for more than six years, told me about a joke that he had heard during his life as a university student in Japan. He noted, “Once, a professor in my department [Electronic Engineering] asked me, ‘If all 1.3 billion people in China were stand along Japan’s coastline and trod on it at the same time,

would the main island of Japan sink?”” Huang dismissed this careless question from the professor as a joke. However, he spoke with what seemed to be a bitter smile, and said that the joke expressed the Japanese people’s fear and explained why they held a negative view of China as an enemy. According to his narrative, it seemed that Japanese people were lacking in confidence, and illogically linked China’s vast resources with an intention to invade Japan.

Although the Chinese students did not directly describe their images of Japanese people in this section, their narratives reflected their unpleasant impressions of Japanese people. Most students were discontent with the negative views of China and Chinese people which were prevalent among Japanese people. Although they sometimes attempted to express their discontent in a humorous way, such as the professor’s joke as related by Huang, it appears that they were generally disappointed with Japanese people’s views. These experiences of discrimination in Japanese society shaped the Chinese students’ negative stereotypes of Japan and Japanese people.

### **3.4 Unpleasant Part-time Jobs**

Many Chinese students went to Japan as financially self-supporting students and encountered financial difficulties during their stay in Japan. Among the twenty-seven students I interviewed, twenty students were financially self-supporting. The cost of

living in Japan is much higher than that in China, and it is not realistic for many Chinese students to seek full financial support from their families, unless they are exceptionally wealthy. According to Chen, for most financially self-supporting Chinese students, if they do not spend two-thirds of their spare time doing part-time work it would be difficult for them to survive in Japan (2004: 178-182). Therefore, most of my informants were doing part-time jobs to support their own studies and lives in Japan. Their financial burden could be revealed in their descriptions of their part-time jobs.

Yan, a postgraduate student who had been in Japan for approximately seven years, told me her story. She said:

It was hard for me in the beginning. Everything was so expensive. On the weekdays I went to school, and I did part-time jobs on weekends. Sometimes I even needed to do part-time jobs on weekdays. It was very harsh. I even washed dishes. I needed to do whatever I could ... The most severe work was the physical work. I needed to move heavy books every day when I worked in a book store. I felt uneasy, especially as the shopkeeper was always keeping an eye on me.

When Yan described her life in Japan, she immediately brought up her part-time jobs.

It seems that her part-time jobs were the center of her life in Japan. She talked about them far more than her studies, even though her main purpose of her stay in Japan was to gain a university degree. Her unpleasant experiences in Japan were mainly related to the harshness of her part-time jobs which reflected the fact that she was

under great financial pressure. She said, “We have no choice. You need to overcome the harshness of part-time jobs if you want to survive here.”

Li told me a similar story about how he began his life in Japan. He noted:

I did not meet with too many difficulties since I had relatives in Japan to help me, but I still had to face practical problems in daily life by myself. I needed to get used to my life here step by step ... I could only do whatever others told me to do. In the very beginning, I moved heavy things and washed dishes in the kitchen. After the first day of my part-time job, I felt that my waist was not straight anymore, and could not be straightened.

When he was saying the last sentence, he put his hands around his waist, and his voice turned down with sad expression in his eyes. In Chinese, the saying that “one's waist is not straight” refers to people in lower social status. I inferred that he meant both physical exhaustion and emotional discomfort. All of these unpleasant experiences doing part-time jobs and the economic pressure mentioned above served to make many Chinese students feel inferior in Japanese society. Their negative feelings and unsatisfactory lives in Japan shaped their unfavorable impressions of Japan.

### **3.5 Stressful Scholarship System**

The stressful scholarship system in Japan and competition among Chinese students served as another painful overseas experience for the Chinese students. It was especially difficult for the students to win scholarships in Japan. Chen commented

that scholarships available for supporting the studies of Chinese students in Japan are highly insufficient (2004: 180). Eight students who I interviewed had won a Japanese government scholarship in China to support their studies and livelihood in Japan. Only two students who I interviewed were awarded the government scholarship during their stay in Japan. Chen, the aforementioned undergraduate student, was one of them. He told me about the intense competition for scholarships among Chinese students. He noted:

When I was a financially self-supporting student, I had many financial difficulties. But since getting the scholarship from the [Japanese] government, those problems have been solved. You need to get an A in every subject in order to have the chance to gain a scholarship. Among the students in my year, I am the only one who received the [Japanese government] scholarship. I am a very hardworking student. The first year in university is very important, and one needs to have a clear goal and work hard. It is necessary to keep on going in the second year, as well. I won the scholarship in my third year. The competition is extremely keen.

Chen regarded himself as an exceptional case among ordinary Chinese students. His perceptions, therefore, were distinctly different from the common perceptions of Chinese students in Japan.

When Chen described to what extent he had become accustomed to his life in Japan, he clarified that it was not the Japanese people who made his life difficult, but rather the Chinese people in Japan. He did not explain this point in detail, but he provided an example that he had heard from a friend. He said:

I have a [Chinese] friend who was kicked by his fellow Chinese worker when he was doing his part-time job ... It causes problems when a place has one Chinese person, and then another Chinese person comes to the same place. The latecomer is definitely not welcomed by the first.

It seems that Chen was tired of being a member of the group of Chinese students in Japan. He felt that he was not accepted by the majority of Chinese students in Japan. He explained that most of the Chinese students in Japan did not receive scholarships and needed to earn a living by themselves. Since his situation of receiving a scholarship was different from the majority of Chinese students in Japan, he felt that he was isolated. He told me that it was hard for him to enjoy the gatherings with Chinese students in Kyoto. He preferred to participate in extracurricular activities with Japanese students and students from other countries. He mocked his own situation, saying that, "At Kyoto University, some Chinese students get the government scholarship, and then they bring money back to China. The students who study hard like me are blamed for being a pro-Japan." Because Chen tried hard to accomplish things in Japanese society, his Chinese friends interpreted his efforts towards achieving success as a way of pleasing Japanese people.

According to Chen's narrative, he was marginalized by other Chinese students because he received the scholarship. The relationship between him other Chinese students and were soured by the competition as they all had a similar background and needed to compete for the same goal. He did not hold negative images of Japanese

people because he benefited from the scholarship system in Japan. At the same time, his experience indirectly reflected upon the many students who did not benefit from the scholarship system, who held feelings of disappointment and dislike for Japan.

In conclusion, according to the above data and analysis, the Chinese students' negative stereotypes of Japan and Japanese people were mainly formed during their lives in Japan. Their stereotypes were shaped by the experience of interacting with Japanese people. Doing part-time jobs and experiencing the scholarship system also served to create harsh situations for them and shaped their images of Japan and Japanese people. The students' optimistic impressions of Japan and Japanese people before going to Japan did not last long, as they found difficulties in interpersonal relationships and encountered Japanese people's dislike of China and Chinese people. The Chinese students felt culturally marginalized in Japan. In addition, the Chinese students faced great economic pressure in their daily lives and suffered from the stressful scholarship system. Under such conditions and situations, most Chinese students I met were disappointed with their lives in Japan and formed negative stereotypes of Japan and Japanese people.

The stereotypes discussed in this chapter were not all false images from my viewpoint. For example, researchers have commented that Japanese people tend to be ambiguous in their speech. Donahue points out that in comparison with the English

language, the Japanese language is highly contextual (1998: 14), and according to Japanese custom, mannerly restraint (*enryō*) is important in Japanese language expressions and interpersonal relationships (1998: 23). Thus, people from other cultures may think that Japanese people tend to indirectly express themselves, and tend to be ambiguous.

Moreover, many Chinese students I met were discontent with how Japanese people viewed Chinese people. According to my personal experiences, it reflects reality to a certain extent. During my two-year university life in Kyoto, I found out that when I introduced myself as a Chinese person, most Japanese people showed exceptional politeness and seemed to keep a distance from me. However, when I introduced myself as a Hong Kong person, most Japanese people were willing to share their personal opinions and experiences with me, and it was easy for us develop friendship. After my self introduction as coming from Hong Kong, instead of mainland China, my new Japanese friends were less hesitant in expressing themselves, and became eager to continue conversations. Therefore, I can imagine that if I was a person who came from mainland China, I might feel that the Japanese people were difficult to approach. If I compared the Japanese people's attitudes towards people from mainland China and from other nations, especially from Western countries, I might think that many Japanese people were not eager to

develop friendship with Chinese people. Such unpleasant impressions and experiences might shape Chinese students' negative stereotypes of Japanese people.

## Chapter Four

### **Improved Impressions and Reinforced Stereotypes: Japanese Students' Perceptions of China and Chinese People**

Many Japanese students who I interviewed said that their impressions of China and the Chinese people improved after a period of time spent living in China. Based on the data I collected, I would like to assert that the Japanese students' initial views of China reflected the perspectives of the media and general public of Japan. Their improved impressions of China indicated their relatively satisfactory experiences in China. However, those experiences were not all positive. In some situations, the students' negative stereotypes of China and its people were produced or reproduced.

As discussed in the literature review section of my introduction, many scholars argue that over the past two decades Japan has tended to posit itself in the Western camp and above other Asian countries (Hein and Hammond 1995, Söderberg and Reader 2000, Morris-Suzuki 1998, Iwabuchi 2002). Hein and Hammond state that in the 1990s Japan's claim to re-strengthen connections with Asian countries was an attempt to uphold its internal national identity, rather than a reflection of genuine concern for its relationships with other Asian countries (1995: 3). Evidence of this may be found in the fact that most reasianization literature portrays these Asian countries in an unattractive light (1995: 6). Morris-Suzuki also points out that there is

often mutual disdain between the people of Japan and other Asian countries when personal contact occurs in Japanese overseas companies (Morris-Suzuki 1998: 11). As observed in Chapter Two, many Japanese popular books and news reports emphasize the negative aspects of China. In this chapter, I will analyze how Japanese media narratives, as well as Japan's sense of superiority over Asian countries, are reflected in the negative stereotypes of China and Chinese people held by the Japanese students.

Because the students' backgrounds and statuses of stay helped in shaping both their lives in China and their perceptions of the country and its people, I will describe such information below. I interviewed twenty-nine Japanese university students in China, including fifteen female students and fourteen male students. Twenty-four students had been in China for eight to ten months. With the exception of two graduate students who aimed to finish a one-year master's degree program, the majority of the students planned to stay for two semesters and join intensive Chinese language courses. Among these twenty-four students, six came to China through programs arranged by their home universities, while the remainder joined the courses through individual applications. In the case of individual applications, the students suspended their studies at their home universities and applied for the language courses in China on their own. They chose this option because the tuition fee was

lower than the exchange programs offered by their universities. Five students had stayed in China for a relatively long period of two to five years. Four of these five students aimed to pursue an undergraduate or master's degree in China, while one student simply wished to enhance her Chinese language ability and had stayed in China for two years.

Among the twenty-nine students, twenty-four students were undergraduate students, while five were master's students. All were students of the arts and social sciences. Most majored in economics, laws, international relations and Chinese language, while a few others majored in politics, English language, history and sociology. Only one student had received a Chinese government scholarship to support his studies in China, and the majority of the students were financially supported by their families. Some students claimed that they used their own savings from doing part-time work in Japan.

Twenty-six students were native Japanese, while the remaining three were ethnic Chinese who had grown up in Japan and spoke Japanese more fluently than Chinese. Nineteen students who I interviewed were in the upper-intermediate level of spoken Chinese. They had learned basic Chinese language in Japan and attended intensive Chinese language classes for eight to ten months. They were able to express themselves in Chinese most of the time. Eight students were in the advanced level of

Chinese language study. They had learned Chinese language for several years and had had many opportunities to speak with Chinese people for long periods of time either in China or Japan. Two students spoke Chinese with near native fluency, as they were ethnic Chinese who spoke the language with their families.

#### **4.1 Initial Views of China and Chinese People**

Before I discuss how the Japanese students' impressions of China and Chinese people changed, it is necessary to understand the impressions which they had before their journeys to China. Their initial views provide an essential background for comparison with their later impressions. Many students imagined the negative aspects of China and Chinese people before visiting the country. They imagined that Chinese people were poor, conservative, stubborn and unsociable. The outward appearance of Chinese people was also unfashionable and unattractive in their eyes. They viewed China as an unhygienic, backward and dangerous place.

This notion of China's lack of hygiene was the most common impression held among the students before traveling to the country. The poisoned dumpling incident<sup>14</sup>, which occurred in January 2007 and continued through February of that same year, was influential in shaping the students' preconceived notions. The Japanese media reported extensively on the poisoned consumers of the Chinese-made dumplings, and

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<sup>14</sup> See Chapter Two for a detailed explanation.

questioned the safety of products made in China. This incident occurred just before most of the students left Japan for China. The students repeatedly mentioned their concerns about the hygiene problem in China prior to their arrival. One male undergraduate student who had stayed in China for eight months directly related the poisoned dumpling incident to his worries about hygiene in China. He said:

Before I came here, everyone was talking about China because of the poisoned dumpling incident. Of course, I was also worried about the hygiene problem in China, especially regarding food. You really need to be careful about the things that you put into your mouth. My friends and relatives in Tokyo expressed their concerns about my plan to come to China. Some of them joked that they really wondered if I would be able to survive and return to Japan.

From the above statement, it is clear that these negative views of China were not held only by the students, but also by the people around them before they left Japan.

Another female undergraduate student who had been in China for nine months also remembered how her friends reacted to her decision to go to China. She said: "Some of my old friends rushed out to meet me before I left for China. It seemed like I was going to a very dangerous place, and they needed to say goodbye in case I would never return." She viewed the situation as humorous. However, the worries of her friends reflected the generally unpleasant impressions of China held by many Japanese people.

The unfavorable impressions of China held by the public could even be traced

back to the students' childhoods. One female exchange student from Osaka told me of an experience in elementary school which formed her initial views of China. She noted:

I remember that when I was in elementary school, some of the new students were recent immigrants from China. Their parents were Japanese who did not immediately return to Japan after World War II ... They were different from the majority of the students. We disliked them because they were from China, and it was difficult for us to accept them. The problem of bullying was common, especially in grades five and six ... My neighborhood openly discriminated against the new immigrants from China, and they repeatedly said bad things about them, such as [describing them as] dirty and poor.

The student recalled how she had looked down on China and people from China, and emphasized that she was influenced by her neighbors to a large extent.

Additionally, the stereotypes of China and Chinese people also included negative images of a socialist society. Their views reflected Japan's social norms as a capitalist society, as they looked with suspicion on socialist societies. A female student who had stayed in China for more than nine months told me:

Before coming to China, I thought that Chinese people were very conservative. Because China is a socialist society, I thought that they were very serious and would never smile. I thought that they would never accept opinions from other people and never change their thinking. I imagined they were surrounded by a kind of dense mental fog.

This student held negative stereotypes of people in socialist societies. She thought that they were unhappy and that it was difficult to approach them.

Some students tried to explain the reasons why they saw China and Chinese people in a negative light. They pointed out that the influence of the media in Japan was very strong. Matsuoka, a female exchange student, noted:

To be honest, at the very beginning I looked down on Chinese people. That feeling was not very strong, but I knew that I had [that kind of feeling]. I was not sure why I had [that kind of feeling], but I think that if I had not learned the Chinese language, I would have held those kinds of negative views of China forever. If I only watched how the news and media of Japan describe China, I would have gained only negative views of the country ... As you know, the economy of Japan is better than that of China, and according to my previous way of thinking China was poor, and Chinese people were rude and unfashionable.

Her narratives reflected the overwhelmingly negative reports of China made by media in Japan. According to her statement, if she had not learned the Chinese language and knew only what the Japanese media said about China, she would have held only negative images. In other words, she received other images of China after learning the Chinese language and gained new ways of seeing China. This is linked to the improved impressions of China and Chinese people which will be discussed later in this chapter.

In short, the Japanese students imagined a backward China full of impoverished Chinese people before actually visiting the country. Their impressions reflected an underlying belief based on Japan's sense of superiority over China. The students felt that they came from a wealthy capitalist country that provided them with a safe

environment, which contrasted with their mental images of a poor and dangerous socialist China. However, the students' initial negative impressions of China and Chinese people also formed the basis for the eventual improvement of such notions. Towards the end of my field research in Beijing, I asked one of my key informants why he thought that most Japanese students said that their impressions of China improved after their experiences studying in China. He answered that this was simply because the impressions of China that they had received before coming were so bad. He emphasized that their original impressions could hardly have been worse, and thus their impressions improved when they had some positive experiences in China.

Aside from the majority of students who held negative initial views of China and Chinese people, there were some students who held positive initial views of China. Several students noted that they had some Chinese friends in Japan before going to China. They remembered that their Chinese friends were very kind and generous. Additionally, two students stated that they were extremely interested in ancient China, including its history, art and traditions, and they imagined that those attractive traditions would remain in modern Chinese society to a certain extent. These positive impressions prompted the decisions of some students to study in China.

## **4.2 Reasons to Go to China**

Although most Japanese students held negative views of China before going there, they still chose to study in that country. This was mainly because they believed that China would have a bright future and their experiences in China would be valuable for their future careers. One male exchange student said:

I wanted to go to China because the country is rapidly developing. It is a socialist society, and yet at the same time its economic system has capitalist features. It is full of contradictions ... China is truly an interesting country ... I think that this experience will be good for my future [career development].

Additionally, some students had a desire to study abroad and considered that studying in China would be less expensive than in Western countries. One male student who had stayed in China for nine months said: “The most important thing for me [when I considered studying in China] was that living in China is cheap. I would not need to spend a great deal of money to study in a foreign country [if I chose China].” Moreover, some students chose to go to China because they wished to avoid studying English. One student who had been in China for ten months explained to me why he chose to study in China rather than the United States. He said: “It was simply because I dislike English. I do not want to learn English anymore.”

Students’ initial motives for studying in China shaped their impressions of China and Chinese people after living there. The students who emphasized the

potential of China's future had a high amount of motivation to explore the positive aspects of China and the Chinese people. Even though they held negative initial impressions of China, they each regarded their stay in China as an adventure through which they might gain precious experiences. In contrast, the students who disliked English, or regarded China as simply an inexpensive destination for study abroad, tended to produce and reproduce negative stereotypes of China and Chinese people. It seems that they held relatively constant negative stereotypes of the country.

#### **4.3 Improved Impressions: Friendships with Chinese People**

While living in China for a period of time, many Japanese students' views of China and Chinese people seemed to change from negative to relatively positive. They mentioned their close Chinese friends and appreciation for the Chinese style of communication.

The students who I spoke with in Beijing all had interactions with local Chinese students to a certain extent. Many students attended Chinese language courses which did not have any Chinese students. However, they had a high amount of motivation to improve their spoken Chinese, and thus they were eager to make Chinese friends outside of the classroom in order to practice their language skills. The situation of these students differed from the Japanese expatriates in Singapore described by Ben-Ari (2000b). He pointed out that the businessmen in Singapore had very limited

interactions with the local people, and even during their leisure time they usually played golf and went out for drinks with other Japanese (2000b: 169-170). Ben-Ari explained that this was because the businessmen had limited English language abilities and felt uncomfortable interacting with people from other cultures (2000b: 170-171). Additionally, Ben-Ari claimed that the social networking of the businessmen with their co-nationals during leisure time was important, as it paved the way for possible business cooperation in the future (2000b: 171-173). In contrast, the Japanese students in Beijing aimed to learn the Chinese language and seized upon opportunities to speak with the local people. Limited language ability and cultural differences did indeed serve as barriers which prevented the students from developing extensive networks within the universities. However, they were able to make Chinese friends by finding language partners and Chinese roommates and by joining student activities.

The narratives of the students reflected an appreciation for, and discomfort with, the Chinese communication style. Ge states that *ganqing* (emotion, caring) is emphasized in the interpersonal relationships of Chinese people (1996: 81-98). *Ganqing* does not simply correspond to the concept of emotion, however. It refers to “mutual good feeling, empathy, friendship and support, and love” (1996: 90). Among Chinese people, *ganqing* plays a crucial role in the various types of intimate

relationships, including friendship. It means that emotional love is emphasized and expressed by helping and caring for one another (1996: 90). The Japanese students commented that their Chinese friends were very warm (*reqing*). The Japanese students said that they were emotionally moved (*gandong*) by this expression of *ganqing*. They viewed their Chinese friends as kindhearted, helpful and enthusiastic people.

Some Japanese students admired their close Chinese friends and commented that they were helpful and nice. Suzuki, a female student who had been studying in China for more than two years to take Chinese language courses, told me about how her Chinese friends took care of her when she needed help. She said:

It was really touching. I was moved [*gandong*] by [the actions of] my best Chinese friends. One year ago, when I was depressed, my Chinese friends in the university took very good care of me. They called me frequently, and made sure I had regular meals as usual. When I told them that I did not want to eat anything, they came to my dormitory and cooked meals for me. They tried to accompany me and encouraged me to go out for walks with them. I was really moved by their actions ... My best Japanese friends would never do the same. They may call me sometimes when I feel depressed, but they would not come to my dormitory and cook meals for me.

She valued the relationships with her Chinese friends, and felt satisfied with her life in China. This may very well explain why she chose to stay in China for two years.

Suzuki commented that Japanese people know too little about China. Out of her wish to pursue a career in journalism, she attempted to make a series of documentary

videos to introduce Chinese customs and different ethnic groups in China to Japanese audiences. She had finished two videos and posted them on the Internet. She thought that she knew more than the general public in Japan, and emphasized that Japanese people were not even aware that China was a multi-ethnic nation. It seemed that she trusted what she experienced in China far more than what she had learned from media in Japan. Nevertheless, her impressions of China were not entirely positive. She mentioned that sometimes she felt uncomfortable when her Chinese friends were too enthusiastic (*requing*) in approaching her. She also thought that the environment outside of the university was not clean enough to be acceptable to her. These unpleasant impressions will be discussed later in this chapter.

Similarly, Fukuyama, a female postgraduate student who majored in history and had been living in China for nearly two years, described how her classmates helped her as follows:

They are eager to take care of me. They correct my homework which is in Chinese ... Because I did not study in China for any undergraduate courses, I do not know how to write a paper or how to make a presentation in Chinese ... They take very good care of me ... They are very nice and present themselves in a direct way (*zijie*). I can be relaxed [in front of them] ... I do not need to wear makeup or pretend [in front of them].

She expressed her gratitude to her classmates and enjoyed her friendship with them. She felt cared for and was able to relax when she spent time with them. Although Fukuyama held a warm and helpful image of Chinese people, she viewed them in a

different way when she discussed sensitive political issues with them. She felt that it was difficult for her to communicate with Chinese people regarding such issues. Her communication with Chinese classmates was restricted to certain areas, such as homework and small talk about daily life. She thought that Chinese people are nice and friendly in day-to-day life, but she also thought they are difficult to communicate with when talking about politically sensitive issues. I will discuss this reinforced negative stereotype later in this chapter.

In summary, the Japanese students were eager to make Chinese friends out of their motivation to practice spoken Chinese. Many Japanese students constructed positive images of Chinese people through their friendships with Chinese students, and when their positive impressions of Chinese people did not match the images of China presented by the Japanese media, they began to question to what extent the Japanese media were able to capture the real situation in China. However, along with these improved impressions, they continued to produce and reproduce negative stereotypes of China and Chinese people, as can be observed in the following sections.

#### **4.4 Different Communication Styles**

Many Japanese students compared communication styles between Chinese and Japanese people. They said that Chinese people were warm (*reqing*) while Japanese

people were cool (*lengdan*). In another expression of a similar concept, they pointed out that Chinese people preferred to keep close relationships with others, while Japanese people were more passive in cultivating their friendships. They felt that Japanese tended to set clear boundaries between themselves and others, and to preserve certain areas for themselves. The students' narratives of Chinese and Japanese communication styles echoed Donahue's descriptions of the characters of Chinese and Japanese people (1998: 15-34). He claimed that, when compared with more reserved Japanese people, Chinese people are seen as vocal and boisterous. He pointed out that Japanese people are less likely to act or speak unexpectedly than Chinese people. He went on to say that this could be a result of the Japanese tendency towards suppression of personal opinions in favor of society (1998: 21-23).

Many students appreciated the Chinese communication style as they found it easy to make Chinese friends. Some even criticized Japanese people as being too cool and passive. Nonetheless, some students felt uncomfortable in their friendships with Chinese people because they were not used to being so close to others.

Nakagawa, a male postgraduate student who majored in law and had stayed in China for ten months, told me that he preferred the Chinese style of communication over the Japanese one. He explained that Japanese people set clear boundaries between themselves and others, and said that he could not freely express himself

when he spoke with his Japanese friends. He said:

Japanese people have different styles of expression. It is very important to have interactions [between friends]. But I cannot be relaxed when I am with them [his Japanese friends] ... *Tatemae*<sup>15</sup> is different from *honne*<sup>16</sup>. When [a Japanese person] says: “Let’s have a meal together next time,” you never know if he or she really means it.

Nakagawa did not enjoy the Japanese style of communication, as he felt it was too constraining. He said that in his ranking of intimate friends, his American friends were more open than his Chinese friends, while his Japanese friends were the most reserved.

Some Japanese students used “distance” to explain the different communication styles of their Chinese and Japanese friends. Kudō, a female student who majored in Chinese language and had been in China for nine months, said:

The communication styles [of Chinese and Japanese people] are different ... There are barriers between people of different ages among the Japanese people. It is like a wall between them. [The Japanese people] tend to keep a distance [from others] ... Chinese people are different ... When you meet Chinese people for the first time you may keep a distance from them, but when you have more interactions with them they will tell you all about themselves ... They really tell me everything [they know]. I feel that they give me all that they have. They trust me so much that it almost seems like we are sworn to live and die together. There is no distance between us.

Kudō thought that her close Chinese friends talked a great deal about their own

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<sup>15</sup> *Tatemae* refers to one’s behavior and opinions displayed in public, which are usually a form of politeness.

<sup>16</sup> *Honne* refers to one’s real intentions or feelings, which are different from what is displayed in public.

personal matters. As they were able to share personal information, she felt intimate and close to them. In contrast, she thought that her Japanese friends tended to protect their personal space. They were more reserved and less eager to discuss personal matters.

However, some students felt uncomfortable because of their close relationships with Chinese friends. Minowa, a female student who had attended a Chinese language course for more than ten months, described her experience of visiting a Chinese friend's hometown as follows:

I was astonished. I didn't have any personal time during my stay [in the friend's hometown]. [We] did everything together. [We] even went to the toilet together. At night, my friend did not want to go to the toilet by herself, so I had to accompany her. I felt a bit uncomfortable [with this] ... [During dinner,] they encouraged me to keep eating more and more ... I really could not eat that much ... They were too enthusiastic [in approaching me].

It seemed that Minowa preferred to keep a certain distance from others in order to secure her personal space. She emphasized the words "doing everything together" with a seemingly incredulous expression on her face. She felt uncomfortable because she had to share time and space with her friend to such a large extent during her stay. She also felt uneasy when her Chinese friend shared many personal matters with her. She complained that her Chinese friend talked too much and was too enthusiastic in approaching her. It seemed that she did not wish for others to interrupt her personal life. She said that keeping a certain distance made her feel safe. From my personal

point of view, her Chinese friend's actions seemed to be a bit strange, and I might also feel discomfort if I were in a similar situation. However, there is a large cultural gap between villages and cities in China. Minowa might not have been aware of such differences, and might have incorrectly assumed that her friend's behavior in a rural village was representative of Chinese people's behavior in general.

In short, many students thought that the Chinese students around them were easy to approach, but they evaluated the Chinese communication style in different ways. The students who appreciated the Chinese communication style tended to have critical opinions of the Japanese style even before going to China. For instance, Nakagawa claimed that he originally preferred the straightforward American style of communication to the reserved and indirect Japanese one. When he found that the Chinese way of interaction was similar to the American style, he felt comfortable speaking with his Chinese friends as well. Kudō also said that she felt bored having friends who held viewpoints similar to her own in Japan. Therefore, she was happy to meet Chinese friends who were totally different. On the other hand, the students who felt uncomfortable when communicating with their Chinese friends did not complain about the Japanese communication style. They were content with their original mode of expression and felt uncomfortable with the new communication style.

## **4.5 Reinforced Stereotypes**

Although many Japanese students claimed that their impressions of China and Chinese people improved after a period of living in China, some of their initial negative stereotypes were reinforced through their experiences in China. These reinforced stereotypes were related to the Chinese government and the ways in which Chinese people viewed their own government as well. The students thought that the Chinese government did not respect basic human rights and that the Chinese people were ignorant and deceived by the government. To a certain extent, the students' narratives of the Chinese government reflected the true situation in China. However, their comments about Chinese people were mostly based upon stereotyping. Moreover, the students thought that the Chinese general public outside of the universities was rude and impolite, as will be explained later.

### **4.5.1 The Chinese government and people**

Some students displayed their discontent with the Chinese government and felt unable to discuss political and social issues with Chinese students. Fukuyama, the postgraduate student mentioned above, noted the autocratic nature of the Chinese government. She questioned why the Olympic torch relay took place in the Himalayas, saying that the Himalayas are like a palace for the Tibetan people, and as such it was very disrespectful to hold the relay there. She said, "What would you

think if the torch relay were held in the Japanese palace where the Japanese Emperor lives?” When I asked if she had discussed this issue with her Chinese friends, she replied by saying that it was useless. She noted:

They claimed that it was their own country’s matter, and so it was none of my business. They said that outsiders did not know the real situation ... Of course we do not know the truth, since the Chinese government will not allow foreign journalists to go to Tibet.

Fukuyama said the last sentence in a seemingly ironic tone, and she hardly agreed with her Chinese friend’s viewpoint. It seemed to Fukuyama that her friend was simply making an excuse, and refused to discuss political issues with her. From her point of view, what Chinese people said simply reiterated and defended the opinions of the Chinese government.

Kitajima, a male undergraduate student who had stayed in China for nine months, also made the same point as Fukuyama. He felt that it was difficult to discuss sensitive political and social issues with Chinese students. He said:

He [his Chinese friend] had his own viewpoint, while I had mine. I disagreed with him, but he definitely would not change [his viewpoint]. He said that his viewpoint was correct. [He held that viewpoint,] because he was a Chinese person ... Sometimes, I dislike him [because of what he said] ... I questioned why the Chinese government destroyed *hutongs*<sup>17</sup> [narrow streets] ... I thought that this was a pity. *Hutongs* are valuable to China. He said that it was the government’s decision and so we should not talk about it. I feel that [the viewpoints of] most Chinese people are the same as his ... He said, “What can we do? We can do nothing. That’s that.” He did not have any

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<sup>17</sup> See page 10 for a detail explanation.

intention to oppose [the government's policy].

It seemed that the dialogue between Kitajima and his Chinese friend could be likened to two parallel lines without any intersections. His Chinese friend did not see the reasons why Kitajima criticized the Chinese government, while Kitajima was still confused about why his friend supported the government without a second thought. Kitajima thought that Chinese people were fooled by the government.

From my point of view, the Japanese students' impressions of the Chinese government were true to some extent. The Chinese government may not be making enough effort to truly understand the Tibetan culture and religion or protect cultural heritages. However, it is also probable that the Japanese students overlooked the other side of the story. For instance, as the Olympic torch relay also had positive symbolic meaning for the world at large, it can be supposed that not all Tibetans were in opposition to the relay's location in the Himalayas, and the Chinese government likely had no intention of showing disrespect to the Tibetan religion. Moreover, development of the city may be considered as important as the preservation of cultural heritages. It is difficult to argue that the demolition of *hutongs* was absolutely wrong.

Additionally, the Japanese students mainly reinforced their previous stereotypes of the Chinese people's ignorance. It reflected the students' sense of superiority to the

Chinese people, since they regarded their own culture as a more civilized one. They regarded themselves as knowing better than the Chinese people. They thought that the Chinese people should feel angry about the government's policy in Tibet, and should oppose its action of destroying *hutongs*. They felt it was a pity that the Chinese people did not know the truth and that their thinking was controlled by the government. As the Japanese students posited themselves as having a higher status and made attempts to persuade their Chinese friends, it was difficult for them to communicate effectively with those friends.

#### **4.5.2 Uncivilized Chinese general public**

Aside from the stereotypes of the Chinese government and how the Chinese people viewed their government, many Japanese students who I interviewed also held negative images of the general public in China. They tended to distinguish the people they met in the university from the general public in Chinese society, and they viewed the general public in a negative way.

One female undergraduate student who had stayed in China for more than nine months said:

I am a bit afraid of the Chinese people outside of the university. People working in customer service are really rude. They can just throw the money to you when they give you your change. This is unthinkable in Japan. Chinese people speak very loudly even in public places. I am afraid of that, but the people in the university and my Chinese friends are very good to me.

Although her impressions of China and Chinese people improved after a period of living in China, she still felt uncomfortable interacting with people outside of the university, particularly with people of a lower educational level. Another female undergraduate student, who had been in China for ten months, also had a negative impression of the people outside of the university. She did not even want to leave the university campus because she thought that the people were too rude. She said:

In daily life, as I learn more about Chinese language I feel annoyed because of their [the people outside of the university] tone, words and attitudes. Sometimes I do not want to go out. When I was on a bus one time, someone pushed me forward. I did not like this. Also, I was once on a bus which was crowded with people, and I could not step forward. When I said that I wanted to get off, the ticket seller shouted that I should have moved forward earlier ... I prefer staying at the university. Here [at the university] everything is fine.

It seemed that the behavior, attitudes and even speaking tones of the strangers outside of the university made her nervous. She thought that they were rude and irrational.

From the above narratives, it seems that the students' negative impressions of the Chinese general public matched the images of Chinese people portrayed in Japanese popular books, such as the descriptions of unhygienic Chinese people in *Chūgokujin to ha ai wo katarenai: Monomane to nisemono no haikinshugimonotachi* (We Can't Talk About Love with Chinese People: Money Worshippers with Imitations and Fake Goods) (Kawasoe 2007: 49-54). In such books, the Chinese people are described as uncivilized, rude and strange. Similarly, among the students'

narratives poor customer service was heavily emphasized, and they criticized the unpredictable behavior of Chinese people. Their stereotypes were reinforced through their experiences in China.

#### 4.5.3 A good Chinese person

Negative stereotypes even emerged in descriptions of positive experiences among the Japanese students. Katō, a male undergraduate student who majored in law and had stayed in Beijing for nine months, told me a story about a good person that he met in China:

I was moved emotionally [*wo gandong le*]. I want to tell you about this. Two days ago, I forgot to lock up my bicycle, and then lost the bicycle somewhere near my home. I asked the house manager if he had seen my bicycle. He said he knew [where the bicycle was] and brought me to another place. But we could not find the bicycle. The house manager said that maybe other workers had put the bicycle in yet another place. He said that he needed [some time] to find the bicycle. Then, he asked for two packs of cigarettes as a reward for looking for the bicycle ... I bought two packs of cigarettes and gave them to the manager and then got my bicycle back ... After a while, the manager knocked on my door. He wanted to return one pack of cigarettes to me. He said that he had asked for the cigarettes because his boss wanted him to do so. He could not refuse the request from his boss. One of the two packs of cigarettes was supposed to be for his boss and the other one was for him. But in fact, he did not want to get any cigarettes from me ... He was such a good person ... He insisted on returning one pack of cigarettes to me. He told me that I might return the cigarettes [to the shop] and get my money back ... I was moved emotionally. We can find such good people in China. This experience changed my impression of China.

When I heard this story, I thought that it exposed the dark side of Chinese

society. It seemed to me that the manager and his boss had deliberately hidden Katō's bicycle in order to gain cigarettes. However, according to Katō, the kind and honest manager partially changed his views of Chinese people. His impression of the manager did not match with his images of rude and deceitful Chinese people. He felt excited, and repeatedly said that he was moved emotionally (*wo gandong le*). It seemed as if he had discovered something very unique and unusual. In other words, he had made the assumption that most Chinese people would try to cheat him, and was surprised to find one who did not. His "positive story" ironically reflected and reproduced his negative stereotypes of the Chinese people.

In summary, this section describes how the Japanese students reinforced negative stereotypes of China and Chinese people through their experiences in China. In previous sections, we have seen that the students sought a positive meaning from their experiences overseas in China and emphasized that their impressions of Chinese people improved. Nonetheless, it became clear in this section that these positive impressions were not the only dominant element in the students' comprehension of China and Chinese people. Their initial stereotypes of China and Chinese people were in fact reproduced, especially when they discussed government policies with their Chinese friends and when they evaluated the general public. Even their "positive experiences" in China sometimes reproduced such stereotypes.

To conclude, in this chapter it was discussed how the Japanese students' initial impressions of China and Chinese people changed in both positive and negative ways. In addition to their friendships with Chinese people, the Japanese students' financial backgrounds also enabled them to have satisfactory lives in China and shaped their positive impressions of China and Chinese people. The cost of living in China is much lower than that in Japan, and so the Japanese students felt that everything in China was inexpensive. Some students told me that they enjoyed their lives in China more than in Japan, because they were able to purchase a greater variety of products and services there. My informants did not feel any financial pressure during their stay in Beijing, or at the very least they felt less financial pressure in China than in Japan, as it costs less to live there. When the students enjoyed friendships with Chinese people and found satisfaction in their daily lives, they began to question why the Japanese media focus on reporting negative aspects of China.

Many students' impressions of China and Chinese people were partially altered in positive way by their experiences in China. The experience of Suzuki provides an excellent example of such changes. She found that what the Japanese media said about China was not reliable, and thus decided to make documentary videos of China by herself. She abandoned some stereotypes of China and Chinese people, but not all

of them. She sometimes felt uncomfortable because she suspected that most places in China were unclean.

The students' negative stereotypes of China and Chinese people remained as powerful images which were then reproduced during their overseas experiences. The reproductions of these images reflected some facts in China, such as the negative aspects of the Chinese government, but also suggested that the students posited themselves as having a higher cultural status. Moreover, the reproduced stereotypes of those students reflected the Japanese media narratives of China and the Chinese people, as I will discuss in the following chapter.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Perceptions of Media and “the Other” among Chinese and Japanese Students**

Having been influenced by mass media in their daily lives, both Chinese students in Kyoto and Japanese students in Beijing were eager to discuss the role of such media in society. In my interviews, the students talked about how they view the media in the other country and compared them with the media in their own country. Both Chinese and Japanese students displayed a tendency to condemn the media in the other society and hold a relatively positive opinion of the media in their own country. However, Chinese and Japanese students hold different views of the relation between media and the general public, which led to disparate conclusions and differing perceptions of the people in the other society. Some Chinese students expressed the assumption that the Japanese media represent the voice of the Japanese general public. They showed discontent with what they described as a large amount of negative reports concerning China in the Japanese media, and claimed to feel hurt because of such reports. In contrast, Japanese students tended to separate the Chinese media from the Chinese general public. They expressed their dislike for the Chinese media, but indicated feelings of sympathy for the Chinese people. The following sections will explore the varying perceptions of media among Chinese and Japanese

students.

### **5.1 Exaggerations and Unreliability: The Japanese Media in the Eyes of Chinese Students**

When asked about their perceptions of Japan and Japanese people, the Chinese students frequently mentioned their thoughts concerning the Japanese media. They criticized the Japanese media for exaggerating the negative aspects of China, and for their unreliable reports. They expressed the assumption that the Japanese media represent the opinions of the general public, and therefore felt hurt because of the perceived discrimination against China which they observed. They also compared the media in Japan and China, and were more satisfied with the performance of the media in China.

When Schiller discussed the relation between media and the formation of perception, he addressed the concept of the “active audience” (1999: 31). This concept suggests that audiences develop their own meanings and interpretations when they view or listen to information. The theory emphasizes the capability of audiences, and reduces the importance of the nature of the content being received (1999: 31). My data suggests that the Chinese students were active audiences who gave meaning to information, and their interpretations consistently reflected their values and logic (Maletzke 2001: 109; Ting-Toomey 1999: 176-7). Some previous studies have made a similar point, saying that Chinese students’ perceptions of Japan

and the Japanese people are influenced by mass media (Li 2004: 211, Wu 1989: 107). Based on this previous research, I collected further detailed data about how Chinese students interpret media, as well as the relation between media and the general public.

The majority of the Chinese students gave similar comments, saying that they did not admire the media in Japan for always being critical of China. Even the informant who described himself as “probably pro-Japan”<sup>18</sup> disliked the criticism of China by media in Japan. No obvious structural differences could be found among the comments of the informants. Regardless of the length or status of their stay in Japan, the students shared similar viewpoints concerning media in Japan.

### **5.1.1 Exaggerations by the Japanese media: “They only report negative things!”**

According to the comments of the Chinese students, the Japanese media hold a fundamentally critical view of China. Many students mentioned that Japan’s media focus solely on the negative aspects of China and neglect its positive aspects. From the standpoint of the students, the Japanese media are biased by their negative views of China.

Some scholars in China have offered various reasons to explain why the Japanese media report such a large amount of negative news concerning China. Liu

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<sup>18</sup> This informant claimed that other Chinese students in Japan regarded him as a pro-Japanese foreign student because of his frequent participation in Japanese student activities.

mentions that the Japanese media are influenced by the style of media in the USA, and thus tend to report mainly negative news. He provides evidence that media in Japan report not only negative things about China, but also many negative aspects of Japan itself (2007a: 263-264). From my point of view, Liu has a balanced perspective regarding this issue. However, the majority of students did not view the situation in this way, and they believed that negative attitudes towards China have led to unfavorable reports by media in Japan. It seems that the Chinese students were biased by their discontent with Japan and Japanese people.

The students criticized how the Japanese media only reported negative things in the following ways. Zeng, the female Nikkensei mentioned in the previous chapter, said that, “I think that they [the Japanese media] are telling the truth. However, they only report negative things about China, and never report positive things.” Tong, a male postgraduate student who had been in Japan for a year and a half, also commented as follows:

During my one and a half year stay in Japan, I watched Japanese television. I feel that media in Japan are very capable [of searching for information]. They could use a very small video recorder and go to a backward village in China to record people’s daily lives. In fact, you could also find the same type of backward village in the United States or Britain. You might go to a village near London and get the same kind of images ... It is all about perspective. They [the Japanese media] can only see the dark aspects of China. They focus only on these dark aspects.

According to Tong, media in Japan did not show a complete picture of China, but

instead selectively chose to describe its negative aspects. He felt this to be very unfair, especially when he compared China with Western countries. He thought that all societies had dark aspects, but the Japanese media chose only the dark aspects of China, and not those of western countries. In this way, he concluded that it was not a matter of facts, but rather a matter of attitudes towards a particular country which shaped the views of the media.

### 5.1.2 Unreliability of the Japanese media

Aside from the exaggerated criticism of China made by media in Japan, Chinese students also pointed out that there was a great deal of false information related to China in Japanese media reports, and they expressed doubt as to the validity of such reports. Huang, the male Nikkensei mentioned in the previous chapter, said:

Media in Japan can really go extremes ... I really dislike them ... They always twist the facts. For example, they wrongly reported on a demonstration in China. From the news video, we could hear that the people were shouting in Chinese: '*Zhongguo, jiyao (Go China)! Zhongguo, jiyao!*' However, the Japanese subtitle of the video explained the video as Chinese people demonstrating against the Chinese government. It was totally the other way around! How could they say something totally opposite like that?

He condemned the information from the television news as incorrect. He was especially discontented with the Yomiuri media group. He noted:

My Japanese friend told me that Yomiuri is a radical media group. It is basically anti-China. I think this is ridiculous. How can a huge media group like Yomiuri report news in this way? They never report that the Chinese

military is helping the people in Sichuan rebuild their homes. They only report that the people in Sichuan have no place to live and no food to eat. They only report negative things. It is too radical. It makes me feel sad. How can media behave in this way?

He thought that media like Yomiuri would disrupt Sino-Japanese relations, as they encourage Japanese people to view China in a negative way. However, from my point of view, not all of the media groups in Japan express anti-Chinese sentiments. For example, the *Asahi Shimbun* tends to report objectively on China (Liu 2007a: 6).

A male undergraduate student, Ru, who had been living in Japan for more than four years, and served as a foreign student society committee member, also made a similar comment:

Sometimes they are objective, but at other times they are subjective. Some Japanese companies produce their products in China. If there were some problem with those products, the media would only report that the products were made in China. If the products were made in Japan, however, the media would only name the company which produced the products [but not the place where the products were actually made]. For example, the media might report that there is a problem with the cars of a certain company. If the cars were made in Japan, the head of that company would apologise to the public, and the incident would end. However, if the cars were made in China, they [the media in Japan] would say that there is a problem with the cars made in China, and then all criticism would be directed towards China. Things always happen in this way. Last time, the media reported that a Chinese-made car caught on fire. The car was designed in Japan, made in China, and then sold in Japan. The design of the car might have had a problem, but no one investigated that fact. According to the media report, being “made in China” was the source of the problem. This was exaggerated ... It happened in the same way when they talked about the poisoned dumplings<sup>19</sup> which were made in China. They always talk about the Chinese-made products. They

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<sup>19</sup> See Chapter Two for a detail explanation.

simply think that made-in-China products are not good.

Ru thought that media in Japan provide unjustifiable information and criticize China unfairly. According to his description, Chinese-made products are equated with poor quality and lack of safety by the Japanese media. I think it is reasonable for Ru to say that the Japanese media is objective at times and subjective at others; and his complaints about the media's exaggeration of the poor quality of Chinese-made products is valid to certain extent.

### **5.1.3 Comparing the Japanese and Chinese media: Different styles of reporting news**

When the Chinese students discussed media in Japan, some of them pointed out the varying news reporting styles of media in Japan and China. The students admired the Chinese media more than the Japanese media, commenting that the styles of reporting used by the Chinese media were more reasonable, and that audiences in China had more choices.

Some previous studies also describe the media in the two countries in different ways. Liu mentions that the Japanese media regard freedom of speech as one of the most important principles in news reporting, and they hold an essentially critical attitude towards their own government (2007a: 261-266). Li then describes the Chinese media as a major channel for the government to promote its policies and positive social values and thinking (2006: 191-192). These two different principles of

media reporting are very apparent. The Japanese media value freedom of speech and are independent from the government, while the Chinese media place emphasis on correct social values and thinking and are dependent on the government. The narratives of the students reflected these differing principles. At the same time, the students gave their own appraisal of media practices. Although they did not criticize the principle of freedom of speech directly, they said that subjective news coverage was the inevitable result of its practice.

Some Chinese students criticized the subjectivity of media in Japan in the following way. Zeng, the aforementioned female Nikkensei, said, “It is good that they [the Japanese media] have freedom. But the result is exactly the same [as the Chinese media]. The tones [of the Japanese media] are all the same!” Zeng thought that if the Chinese media were criticized as being subjective, then the freedom enjoyed by the Japanese media also led to the same result. She did not find any advantages in freedom of speech.

Ru pointed out one of the main differences between the Japanese and Chinese media as follows:

Media in China are getting better and better. They are more objective now than before ... They [the Japanese media] only report the facts without any judgments. This is different from the reports in China. For example, they [the Japanese media] might report an incident of corruption involving a government officer. They would not judge the incident. If it was in China,

after reporting the facts, a judgmental comment would lead the audiences [to certain conclusions]. They [the Chinese media] might say that corruption has become a serious political problem, and that actions are needed to solve the problem. In other words, discussions and comments are given [by the Chinese media], but this is not the case in Japan. There are no discussions or comments [from the media] in Japan. News [in Japan] is solely about facts.

Ru commented that the judgmental approach of the Chinese media is not necessarily a bad thing, and that in some ways it is an improvement on the Japanese media's non-judgmental approach. He explained that this is a result of the Chinese media's ability to release a positive message and lead the public to think in a positive way. From my point of view, it is perfectly acceptable for the Chinese media to take a judgmental approach; however, this obviously creates problems as the Chinese media constantly support the government without any criticism, and judge the news in such a way that is only favorable to the government's standpoint.

Yan, the female postgraduate student mentioned in the previous chapter, explained to me another difference between the media in Japan and China:

The Japanese media are used to focusing on a single issue at any given time, such as the poisoned dumpling issue. In the end, they stopped reporting on the issue because they discovered that the source of the problem was on the Japanese side ... In China, we have many television channels and more choices. The Chinese media seldom focus on a single issue.

According to Yan, audiences in China have more choices and are able to gain access to a variety of information and perspectives. It was apparent that she preferred to be a part of the audience of the Chinese media. I think it is possible for the Chinese media

to provide diverse information, but they may not be able to report various opinions, especially opinions which oppose the official viewpoints of the government.

#### **5.1.4 Comparing the Japanese and Chinese media: Different attitudes in reporting “the other”**

When the Chinese students compared the Japanese and Chinese media, many of them mentioned the differing attitudes in media reporting by China concerning Japan, and by Japan concerning China. They pointed out that the Chinese media reported on Japan in a relatively positive manner, while the media in Japan reported on China in a negative way. Based on this point of view, they concluded that the Chinese media are more objective.

Huang commented that the media in Japan are worse than in China. He said:

Regarding reports of each other in the respective media of China and Japan, the reports by China are relatively objective. For example, CCTV [China Central Television] reports news in an objective way. The media in China may selectively report news, and probably hide something negative about their own country, but this is a common phenomenon among media around the world. Media need to report the truth, and at the same time, they need to protect the prestige of their own countries. This can be applied to all countries throughout the world.

He said that the Japanese sometimes go to extremes and exaggerate the negative aspects of China, but the Chinese media are comparatively objective in reporting Japan. He admired the Chinese media, and justified the shortcomings of the Chinese media as a worldwide phenomenon. He explained that the Chinese media tended to

hide the negative aspects of China, just as media in the other countries also tended to neglect the less positive aspects of their own countries.

Liang, another aforementioned male Nikkensei, commented in a similar way, and provided a detailed example to support his point of view:

[Before coming to Japan,] I had never had the chance to meet Japanese people. My main impressions about Japan came from media [in China]. Although some of the media in China are basically anti-Japan, the mainstream media, like China Central Television, report today's Japan with a positive and friendly attitude. For example, they [the media of China] positively report how Japan has aided China following the recent Sichuan earthquake. They highly esteem such efforts, and are friendly to the modern Japan. Once, when a Japanese soccer team went to China to have a match with a Chinese team, many Chinese soccer fans were rude to the Japanese team. They threw things and acted impolitely. At that time, the mainstream media basically criticized the behavior of Chinese soccer fans, and condemned such rude behavior. Mainstream media in China and their official attitude are friendly to the modern Japan. In this regard, the media in China can be seen as objective.

Liang provided a clear distinction between the reports of the two countries in the Japanese and Chinese media. The selective reports of media in Japan reflected their subjectivity, and the condemnation of angry Chinese soccer fans reflected the justice of China's media. From his point of view, the reports by media in China were far more reliable and objective.

### **5.1.5 Relation between the Japanese media and the general public**

When the Chinese students described how the Japanese media accused China, they

expressed how they felt about such criticism. They tended to confuse the opinions of the Japanese media with those of the general public in Japan. Chen, the undergraduate student mentioned in the previous chapter, said that, “When the Consulate [of Japan in China] was attacked by Chinese people; the Japanese media gave this a great deal of coverage, and strongly censured China. They claimed that China was not well-developed and had no democracy.” He wondered if the criticism towards China were reasonable. Although he did not express strong disagreement with the criticism, the reports made him feel uncomfortable. He explained his feelings after watching the related news coverage on television as follows, “I feel that I am not respected [as a Chinese person] in Japan. I hope that China will become strong.” He felt that he was being attacked by media in Japan.

Similarly, Guo, a female Nikkensei student, tended to link opinions of the Japanese media with those of the general public. She told me how she was upset by the negative attitude of the Japanese media towards China when she found many Japanese books which were full of criticism of China in a bookstore. She was astonished at the amount of such publications. She said, “I knew that this kind of book was popular in Japan, but I never expected that bookstores would place them in the same category and arrange them on the same bookshelf. There is a large amount of the same kinds of books in the same area. I really feel angry, and I once again

realize just how much Japanese people hate China and Chinese people.” From the above comments, Guo associated the viewpoints of the media with those of the general public. Therefore, she accused the Japanese people of exaggerated criticism of China.

In short, the Chinese students were discontented with the Japanese media. They criticized the ways in which such media reported on China. According to their narratives, the Japanese media exaggerated the negative aspects of China by reporting large amounts of negative news and information related to China. The media provided incorrect information and deliberately addressed unfavorable points about China. These students claimed that the weaknesses of the Japanese media stood out even more starkly when compared with the Chinese media. They admired the Chinese media in that they hold what the students regard as fair and justified views of Japan. They mentioned that the Chinese media reported positive news about Japan and also condemned the radical anti-Japanese soccer fans. They admired the approach taken by the Chinese media, which tends to promote friendly Sino-Japanese relations. At the same time, they condemned the actions of the Japanese media, believing that they have a tendency to provoke anti-Chinese sentiments among Japanese people and create obstacles to Sino-Japanese relations. I believe that they may be correct in the sense that the Chinese media are able to

provide diverse information. However, they seem to overlook the fact that the Chinese media do not report most unfavorable information related to the government. Moreover, the Chinese students tended to link the opinions expressed in the Japanese media with those of the general public, and felt hurt by discrimination from the Japanese people. This seems to demonstrate a case of reverse prejudice, whereby the Chinese students assumed that the Japanese media were able to accurately represent voices of the general public.

### **5.2 Lack of Freedom and Lack of Reality: Chinese Media in the Eyes of Japanese Students**

Many Japanese students who I interviewed in Beijing criticized the Chinese media. Although most of them were satisfied with their lives in Beijing, they were discontent with the performance of the Chinese media. They repeatedly mentioned that, because the Chinese media are under the control of the government, they are unreliable and biased. They believed that the Chinese media represent the voice of the government rather than the general public. As such, their negative interpretations of media in China confirmed their negative stereotypes of China's government, but not of the Chinese people. They thought that the general public is simply a passive recipient of the media and controlled by their ideology. As such, they showed sympathy for the Chinese people and claimed that they had gained a better understanding of them after experiencing life under the influence of the Chinese

media.

Some scholars point out that the recent Chinese media are characterized by the dichotomy of government control and market-driven power (Ma 2000: 21; Li 2006: 218-222; Zhao 2008: 19-25). On the one hand, the Chinese government owns all national media institutions and industries. Media represent the voice of the Communist Party of China, and their major function is to guide public opinion. Media are regarded as tools to promote party ideology and socialist culture (Chen and Xing 2003: 257-270). On the other hand, according to Ma, under the recent trend towards state-endorsed marketization of various industries in China, the Chinese media have become commercialized to a certain extent. The media industry has been reoriented towards profit-making, and as such it must produce products with mass appeal and secure profits from advertising (Ma 2000: 21-28). In this way, market demand has become another power which shapes both the content and ideology of the media. Moreover, the degree of government control exerted over the various media institutions in China is often quite different. Central media institutions such as nationwide television channels are heavily restricted by the government, while local media institutions are controlled more leniently (Ma 2000: 23-24).

Ignoring the situation of the Chinese media described above, the popular view in the West is that the Chinese media are under the strict control of the “unchanging

evil authoritarian state of 1989” (Ma 2000: 27). Ming also comments that, in the West, there is a prevailing image of the Chinese media operating under the shadow of a dictatorial and evil communist government (2008: 116). The image of the Chinese media as seen through the eyes of the Japanese students also echoes Western notions. They were often very critical, stating that the Chinese media are controlled by the authoritarian government.

The experiences of Japanese students in China and their interpretations of the Chinese media support the theory of encoding and decoding. Hall claims that audiences have three different ways of responding to media content: dominant, negotiated or oppositional. This means that they may accept, adapt or reject media content. Audiences encode and decode media content according to their own core values and conceptions, which are in turn influenced by their particular social background and status (1992: 117-127). The Japanese students rejected most of the information that they received from the Chinese media. Their interpretations reflected their core beliefs that freedom of speech enables mass media to report on reality. From their point of view, the Chinese media are not trustworthy because they do not enjoy freedom of speech.

### **5.2.1 Limited information and choices from the Chinese media**

Some Japanese students who I interviewed in Beijing complained that their access to

information was very limited in China. The narratives of the students reflect the circumstances of media in Beijing to a certain extent. As mentioned above, the government control of media is most apparent and strict with regard to central media. Media in Beijing, the capital of China, are under the close watch of the government. Even Internet access is under their control, and the government issues laws and sanctions for establishing Internet connections (Chen and Xing 2003: 267). Information on the Internet is carefully censored, and content which violates the country's official ideology is blocked.

Takahashi was discontent with the Chinese media and complained about the inaccessibility of information in China. He had graduated from the law department in a prestigious Japanese university, studied the Chinese language in Beijing for eight months, and planned to join a business master program in Hong Kong after finishing the language course. He said that the most inconvenient aspect of his life in Beijing was the inability to gain access to information. He explained:

The flow of information in China is controlled. The information is limited. It is really inconvenient when I want to search [for information] ... When I search for the *Nikkei Shimbun* on the Internet, only the headlines are readable. You cannot click on the pages to view the content. It was a bit of a shock [to me] ... You cannot find Wikipedia [on the Internet] in China. It is common for Japanese students to search for various kinds of information using Wikipedia. When you hear of a new term that you are not familiar with, you can use Wikipedia. It is very convenient. You can learn the backgrounds of many different things very quickly [through Wikipedia] ... My friend tells me that there has been a sudden change these days, and we may now find

Wikipedia on the Internet. But even so, it is still only partially available. Some information is blocked.

Takahashi thought that in China he could not enjoy satisfactory access to the information which he needed. He complained that the information search tools on the Internet were either unavailable or only partially available. This hindered his understanding of new things and the new environment in which he was living. He explained that because it was his first time coming to China, he was curious about the country's culture and people. However, the limitations on information discouraged his exploration.

Additionally, Takahashi was used to reading news from various different media sources everyday in Japan, and he felt odd about the situation in China. He said:

Although I can watch English news on CCTV [China Central Television], all of the news is reported in the same tone. They [the Chinese media] represent the government, and always agree with the government. In Japan, regarding the same issue, the media always report both the negative and positive aspects. Different media groups hold different opinions, so I can hear different voices [in Japan] and make judgments for myself ... I really feel odd in China. I doubt whether the information is true.

According to Takahashi's narrative, since the Chinese media are controlled by the government and only reports pro-government information, he was not able to have any choices. He also criticized the validity of the information due to the limitation of choices.

A female undergraduate student, Tanaka, who had stayed in Beijing for more

than eight months, also made a similar comment. She said:

The Chinese media do not report on sensitive issues about Tibet. You also cannot find any related reports on the Internet or on television programs. I tried to find [the related reports], but I couldn't ... When my Taiwanese friend asked me about the recent riots in Tibet, I knew nothing about them. Before talking with my Taiwanese friend, I did not even know that something had happened in Tibet. I stay up to date by regularly searching for news on Japanese homepages. But I could only get the information about Tibet from my Taiwanese friend. Then, I finally realize that the Internet is controlled by the government. News in particular is under their control.

Tanaka discovered that the Chinese media are controlled by the government through her experience of searching for reports about Tibet. Another student told me a similar story, and said that living in China could be terrible as people knew nothing about the outside world. This comment was certainly an exaggeration, but reflects how the students evaluated the Chinese media and what they felt after experiencing their influence.

### **5.2.2 Misleading of audiences by the Chinese media**

Many Japanese students who I interviewed criticized the validity of the information presented by the Chinese media. The Chinese government claimed that media should report on reality and have the function of monitoring the government's performance (Wang 2005: 192). However, the Japanese students viewed the Chinese media differently. One male undergraduate student who had been studying in Beijing for more than three years said:

Some of the concepts presented by the Chinese media are different from the real situation. They [the Chinese media] say that most of the Japanese people support [Prime Minister] Koizumi. In fact, this is not the whole truth. You can probably say that many [Japanese] people support Koizumi, but they certainly do not support his actions in visiting the Yasukuni Shrine.

Similarly, Nakayama who joined a one-year language course in Beijing, commented that the Chinese media did not always tell the truth. She said:

Most of the news in China is controlled [by the government] ... I cannot understand the reports of the Sichuan earthquake. At the very beginning, they [the media] said that the earthquake had a magnitude of 7.8. Then, they said that it had a magnitude of 8. [I think] they knew it was a magnitude 8 earthquake at the very beginning. They [the media] changed the magnitude from 8 to 7.8, because if it was a magnitude 8 earthquake then overseas rescue groups might come in without going through the application procedure. The Japanese media also say that China cares about saving face [its positive image] too much to tell the truth. The lives of people should be the most important thing.

It seemed to Nakayama that the Chinese media spoke only for the government, and reported what the government preferred that they say rather than the real situation. She condemned the Chinese government for placing priority on the nation's positive image over the lives of people, and viewed the Chinese media simply as tools of the government.

### **5.2.3 Comparing the Chinese and Japanese media**

Most Japanese students who I interviewed thought that the Japanese media performed much better than the Chinese media. They commented that the Japanese media are more reliable and able to provide various kinds of information because

they enjoy freedom of speech. They presented the Chinese and Japanese media as two extremes. From their point of view, the Chinese media represented authoritarianism and were unreliable, while the Japanese media represented liberalism and were reliable. One male exchange student said:

I think they [the Chinese media] do not have freedom. They do not criticize the government. In Japan, the media frequently criticize the [Japanese] government. This is because the Japanese media have non-governmental financial support.

The student thought that the Japanese media were free from governmental control and able to express opinions against the government. In his view, the Japanese media enjoyed freedom and were far more reliable than the Chinese media.

Some Japanese students recognized that both the Chinese and Japanese media had their negative aspects, although they still condemned the media of China more than Japan's media. One exchange student gave her comment about the Japanese media as follows:

Reports by the Japanese media are problematic. Although they report both positive and negative news, they report negative news in an exaggerated way ... What I experience in China is different from what I saw [about China] in the Japanese media. If you watch similar negative reports for a long time, you will develop a preconception [of something]. In reality, the Japanese media do not have a very good understanding of China. They simply copy news from Internet or overseas media sources. They report news according to their own preconceptions. You cannot find anyone who is eager to discover the truth.

This student's experience of living in China inspired her to rethink news reports in

Japan. She discovered that the Japanese media were not fair in reporting news related to China, and began to doubt the validity of news reported in Japan. However, she still thought that the Chinese media were even worse, as government intervention and control were very obvious.

Some Japanese students thought that the media were full of bias both in China and in Japan. One male undergraduate student, who had been in China for more than ten months, compared the Chinese and Japanese media in the following way:

Both the Chinese and Japanese media have bias (*pianjian*) [in their news reports], but they have different backgrounds. The Japanese media are biased in this way because they want more people to watch their news. For example, they are very keen on reporting negative things about China, such as the poisoned dumpling incident ... Because many people are curious about negative news, the media provide that kind of news to fulfill the audience's desires. Positive news is less appealing. This is the result of freedom of speech. You can say whatever you want ... the Chinese media are controlled by the government. The main purpose of the media is not to attract audiences, but to control the thinking of the Chinese people.

For this student, neither the Chinese nor Japanese media were reliable. He criticized the Japanese media for their exaggeration of negative news and pointed out the undesirable results of freedom of speech, while he also censured the Chinese media for being controlled by the government. I agree with this student's comment to a large extent. In my opinion, he held a relatively balanced view and pointed out the main differences between the Japanese and Chinese media.

#### **5.2.4 Relation between the Chinese media and the general public**

The Japanese students tended to separate the opinions and performance of the Chinese media from those of the Chinese general public. Most students commented that the media were controlled by the government, and therefore they did not represent the opinions of the Chinese people. Additionally, while some students thought that the unsatisfactory performance of the Chinese media caused an inconvenience to their lives in China, their exploration of the media there led them to a better understanding of daily life in that country. They expressed their understanding of Chinese people who held viewpoints which are different from their own. The aforementioned postgraduate student, Fukuyama said, "Of course we have different opinions about Tibet when the media in our two countries [Japan and China] say different things. Chinese people believe what the Chinese media say, while Japanese people believe what the Japanese media say." One male undergraduate student who had been studying in China for nine months, also said, "I can understand Chinese people. If you call a red apple a yellow apple from the very beginning, then it will be called a yellow apple forever." The students believed that they knew the truth better than Chinese people, and that they had gained a better understanding of why Chinese people thought in ways different from themselves after their experiences living in China.

In short, the Japanese students were discontent with the performance of the Chinese media. They thought that the Chinese media are controlled by the government and unable to provide sufficient information, and they felt inconvenienced and behind the times because of such media. Their experiences with the Chinese media confirmed their stereotypes of the Chinese government, but not of the Chinese people. This is because they tended to separate the opinions of the media from those of the general public. Moreover, some students were able to make objective comments on the Japanese and Chinese media, and describe differences in the ways in which they operate.

### **5.3 Discussion**

The Chinese students' perceptions of the Japanese media reflected the shortcomings of media in Japan, as well as the positive aspects of the Chinese media. Referring to previous studies, it is said that the Chinese media are criticized by the Western world as being controlled by a dictatorship (Ming 2008: 45-48), while the Japanese media are respected as they enjoy freedom of speech (Liu 2007a: 39-42). However, the experiences of the Chinese students did not support these popular views from the West, and they claimed that reports from the Chinese media could sometimes be more accurate than those from the Japanese media. Although I was not completely convinced by their comments, I believe that in some cases it is possible for the

Chinese media to perform more effectively than the Japanese media.

Reports related to the poisoned dumpling incident by the Chinese and Japanese media could support the viewpoint of the Chinese students. In reports from the Japanese media, the danger of Chinese-made products was overemphasized and exaggerated. In contrast, the Chinese media reported on the incident in a much more objective way. It is obvious that the Chinese media are not better than the Japanese media in every aspect. However, the positive aspects of the Chinese media are overlooked, while the weaknesses of the Japanese media are underemphasized by the Western world. A Japanese informant pointed out the underlying weakness of the Japanese media. He explained that the Japanese media were run on a commercial system, and as such they must attract the attention of audiences. Therefore, the ultimate purpose of the media in Japan is not to report the truth, but rather to attract audiences and make a profit. In contrast, the Chinese media have fewer worries about the profit making. Although the Chinese media regard promotion of the government's ideology as their first priority, they enjoy considerable freedom in reporting issues which are not directly related to that ideology.

Moreover, the Chinese and Japanese students held different perspectives concerning the relation between the media and the general public in the other society. The Chinese students assumed that the Japanese media represent the general public,

while the Japanese students separated the opinions of the Chinese media from those of the people. The different interpretations of the relation between media and the general public may arise from differing expectations of media in the other society among the students of both countries.

The Chinese students expected that the media of a developed country such as Japan should perform better than the media of China, which is a developing country. They assumed that the Japanese media represent the voices of the general public. Therefore, they felt that they were being accused by the Japanese general public when the media of Japan criticized China and Chinese people. As they did not separate the viewpoints of the media and the public at large, their negative impressions of the Japanese people were reinforced when they saw the unfavorable reports about China presented by the Japanese media. In contrast, the Japanese students tended to posit themselves as having a higher cultural status, and thought that they knew better than the Chinese people. They viewed Chinese people as passive recipients of the government controlled media and showed sympathy for them. Although the poor performance of the Chinese media reinforced the Japanese students' negative views of the Chinese state, it did not encourage any negative opinions of the Chinese people. Rather, they claimed to have gained a better understanding of the Chinese people after the experience of living under the

influence of the Chinese media.

The above interpretations of the relation between the media and the general public reflect the cultural hierarchy of China and Japan. The assumption of the Chinese students that people from a developed country should know better than themselves seems to demonstrate a sense of inverse prejudice. They also assumed the Japanese media should perform well enough to represent the opinions of the general public. They did not realize that the Japanese general public may also be misled by the media. Similarly, the Japanese students assumed that they knew better than the Chinese people. They thought that their opinions were influenced by the media, and felt sorry for their situation. This seems to reflect the conclusion that the Japanese students tended to posit themselves as having a higher cultural status.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Conclusion**

#### **6.1 Chapter Summaries**

In previous chapters, it was discussed how the overseas experiences of the Japanese and Chinese students shaped their perceptions of the other society and its people, and explored how the Japanese and Chinese media viewed the society and people of the other country, which in turn played an important role in forming the students' perceptions. Before presenting my conclusion, I will briefly summarize the chapters as follows.

In Chapter Two, I analyzed perceptions of “the other” in the Japanese and Chinese media. The narratives of “the other” in Japanese and Chinese popular books were consistent with the viewpoints presented in the Japanese and Chinese newspapers. The Japanese popular books and newspapers emphasized the negative images of China, while the Chinese popular books and newspapers described both the negative and positive aspects of Japan. Giddens claims that media form a part of life experiences and are influential in the narrative of oneself which shapes self-identity (1991: 80-84). Similarly, discourses of “the other” in the Japanese and Chinese media, which I discussed in this chapter, formed a part of the students'

perceptions of “the other” and their personal narratives as we saw in later chapters.

The Chinese students’ experiences in Japan and their perceptions of Japanese society and its people were explained in Chapter Three. The narratives of the Chinese students reflected their disappointments with Japan, as well as their negative stereotypes of Japanese people which were shaped primarily by their experiences in Japan. The students encountered difficulties in interpersonal relationships and encountered the Japanese people’s dislike of China and Chinese people, and they experienced feelings of cultural marginalization in Japan. Doing part-time jobs and experiencing the scholarship system also served to create harsh situations for them, and shaped their images of Japan and Japanese people.

In Chapter Four, I discussed the Japanese students’ experiences in China and their perceptions of Chinese society and its people. I asserted that the Japanese students’ initial negative views of China reflected the views of China held by the media and general public of Japan. Their improved impressions of China indicated their relatively satisfactory experiences in China. However, the negative stereotypes of China and Chinese people remained as powerful images among the Japanese students, which were then reproduced during their overseas experiences. The reproduction of these images suggests that the students posited themselves as having a higher cultural status.

In Chapter Five, I explored how the Japanese and Chinese students viewed the media in the other country and compared them with the media in their own country as part of their overseas experiences. Both the Chinese and Japanese students displayed a tendency to condemn the media in the other society and held a relatively positive opinion of the media in their own country. However, the Chinese and Japanese students interpreted the relationship between the media and the general public in different ways. Some Chinese students assumed that the Japanese media represent the voice of the Japanese general public. This assumption demonstrated a sense of inverse prejudice that people from a developed country should know better than themselves. In contrast, Japanese students tended to separate the Chinese media from the Chinese general public. They assumed that they knew better than the Chinese people and posited themselves as having a higher cultural status.

Through the discussion of previous chapters, it can be seen how the Japanese and Chinese students constructed perceptions of “the other” through their overseas experiences, and that both the Japanese and Chinese media discourses of “the other” are reflected in narratives of “the other” among the Japanese and Chinese students. Aside from the media discourses, the students’ perceptions of “the other” are shaped by their national identities, cultural power relations between Japan and China, their reasons for studying abroad and their financial situations as well.

## **6.2 National Identity among the Japanese and Chinese Students**

National identity was described as a multi-dimensional concept in Chapter One, since it can be defined in ethnic and civil terms (Smith 1991: 8-15), cultural and political terms (Yoshino 1992: 1), as well as state-based and market-based terms (Mathews, Ma and Lui 2008: 147-8). Referring to these concepts, the nature of national identity reflected in the students' narratives may be identified. It seemed that the Japanese students stressed their Japanese cultural uniqueness, while the Chinese students confirmed their state-based national identity.

It was also explained that self-identity is fluid, and is continually produced and reproduced through individuals' reflexive activities (Giddens 1990: 52). The students' perceptions of "the other" changed in response to their overseas experiences, and they also rethought their own national identities as a part of self-identity. It was observed that when the Chinese students produced the negative stereotypes of Japanese views of China and Chinese people, they felt the need to defend the image of China and secure their national identity. For instance, in Chapter Three, Zeng talked about her Chinese friend who felt angry when she heard political statements from a truck saying, "all Chinese foreign students are spies from China" in Japan. Similarly, one male Nikkensei told me that he felt very angry when his Japanese teacher mentioned Taiwan as a country. He commented that the Japanese

teacher was ignorant. Although Taiwan's sovereignty was arguable from my viewpoint, the student thought that Taiwan being a part of China was a matter of fact, and felt hurt when someone made a different claim. The Chinese students judged the Japanese people's statements as wrong, and felt that their pride and knowledge as Chinese were challenged. Their affectionate feelings towards their own country were reflected through such notions.

The narratives of the Chinese students concerning the Japanese media further identified the nature of their national identity as state-based. Mathews, Ma and Lui claim that the discourse of state refers to the idea that one must cherish and defend one's own particular culture, society, and nation (2008: 147-8). They also explain that loving one's country may or may not involve loving one's current government (2008: 156). The Chinese students' narratives suggested that their love for their country also involved love for their current government. Many Chinese students agreed that the Chinese media represented the viewpoint of the Chinese government. They argued the justice and advantages of the Chinese media, which reflected their defensive position towards the Chinese government. For example, in Chapter Five, Yan questioned the advantages of freedom of speech. She commented that if media in China were criticized as being subjective, then the freedom enjoyed by media in Japan also led to the same results. Although she talked about the media, it seemed

that she was defending the stance of the Chinese government, which has been condemned as restricting freedom of speech. Additionally, some Chinese students reconfirmed their sense of Chinese cultural superiority through their experiences in Japan. For instance, Wang complained that his Japanese friends who failed to act according to Chinese Confucian rules of conduct were troublemakers. In short, being consistent with the previous studies related to the Chinese national identity (Guo 2004; Wei and Liu eds. 2001), state nationalism was frequently reflected in the Chinese students' narratives and sometimes, the students expressed their belief in the Chinese cultural superiority. The majority of the Chinese students reinforced their national identity in Japan.

While national identity among the Chinese students can be defined in both political and cultural terms, the Japanese students' national identity can be described as a cultural one which mainly involves "the distinctiveness of the cultural community as the essence of a nation" (Yoshino 1992: 1). Some Japanese students explained their experiences in China by stressing the superiority of Japanese culture which echoed the studies on *nihonjinron* (Befu 1993; 2001; Yoshino 1992; Oguma 1995). One Japanese undergraduate student described Chinese people as rude and irrational. She complained that customer service was poor and that people spoke too loudly in China. She explained that "this is unthinkable in Japan." In other words,

she imagined Japanese people as polite and rational. Similarly, Takahashi was proud of the performance of the Japanese media which reflected the cultural values of Japanese society. He explained that the Japanese media presented a balanced viewpoint and provided sufficient information. It seems that he pictured the Japanese people who took part in and were influenced by such media as fair and knowledgeable. The above two examples suggested how the Japanese students reinforced their national identity in cultural terms through their perceptions of “the other.” Yet, some Japanese students expressed their doubts of the Japanese cultural superiority. They questioned the negative images of China among Japanese people and constructed relatively positive impressions of China and Chinese people through experiences in China.

When we compare the Chinese and Japanese students’ national identity, the narratives of the Japanese students reflect a more flexible identity, as they did not constantly defend their own culture and their beliefs. The Japanese students sometimes questioned their original negative views of China, while the Chinese students mainly created and recreated their negative images of Japan and Japanese people. The Chinese students were more eager to defend positive images of their own government and presented a less flexible national identity than that among the Japanese students.

### **6.3 Perceptions of “the Other,” Media Discourses and Cultural Power Relations between Japan and China**

The media discourses of “the other” that were discussed in Chapter Two expressed the cultural power relations between Japan and China. In published works, including popular books and news reports on modern Japan and Japanese people by Chinese authors, both positive and negative comments can be found. However, with the exception of travel writing, in the published works written by Japanese authors about modern China and Chinese people the negative images of China were emphasized. These media discourses reflect a situation wherein an important cultural theme of Japan is that it views itself as superior to China, while China holds complex views of Japan which include both admiration of its excellent development and disdain for its past invasions. Furthermore, the recent success of China as a new economic power in Asia has also been reflected in the *chūgoku kyōi ron* (China threat) discourse among Japanese published works, which suggests Japan’s defensive position regarding its status as the number one power in Asia (Zhuo 2000: 308-310; Liu 2007a: 93-94).

These media discourses and cultural power relations were reflected in both the Chinese and Japanese students’ narratives of “the other”. Giddens writes that the media reorganize time and space, and distant events intrude into our everyday consciousness through such media (1991: 26-27). Thus, the media profoundly influenced the students’ perceptions, and also formed part of their narratives about

their overseas experiences. The negative views of China in the Japanese media were reflected in the unpleasant initial views of China among the Japanese students, as well as in the Chinese students' impressions of unreliable and biased media in Japan. The relatively diverse views of Japan in the Chinese media were reflected in the positive initial views of Japan among the Chinese students. Although the Japanese students criticized the Chinese media as being controlled by the government and unreliable, they did not complain about how the Chinese media portrayed images of Japan.

Furthermore, the students' experiences with media in the other society altered their perceptions of "the other" and shaped their self-identities. The Chinese students assumed that the Japanese media represent the voices of the general public. Thus, their negative impressions of the Japanese people were reinforced when they saw the Japanese media criticizing China and Chinese people. Additionally, their observations of the Japanese media's disadvantages enhanced their confidence in the Chinese media and confirmed their sense of pride in their society. In contrast, the Japanese students viewed Chinese people as passive recipients of the government controlled media. Even though the poor performance of the Chinese media reinforced the Japanese students' negative views of the Chinese state, it did not encourage any negative opinions of the Chinese people. Moreover, since the

Japanese students evaluated the performance of the Chinese media as poor, they reconfirmed their feelings that they knew better than the Chinese people and reinforced their identities as being superior to the Chinese people.

In addition to the discourses on media, the students' narratives of "the other" and their overseas experiences reflected the cultural relations between China and Japan. The cultural theme of Japan's sense of superiority over China was reflected in the Chinese students' narratives of experiencing discrimination in Japan, as well as the Japanese students' negative stereotyping of China and Chinese people. Many Chinese students said that they encountered unreasonable suspicions harbored by Japanese people, such as being thought of as potential thieves simply because they were Chinese. Some Japanese students also reproduced negative stereotypes of Chinese people in China and commented that Chinese people were rude and irrational. These narratives of the students reflected the sense of cultural superiority over China held by some Japanese people.

Moreover, Liu (2007a: 43), Söderberg and Reader (2000: 12) claim that Japan tends to identify itself as a member of "the Western camp," and looks down upon other Asian countries. Similarly, the students' narratives suggested that Japan's sense of cultural superiority to China is linked to Japan's identification with Western culture. For example, Fukuyama criticized the Chinese government for not

respecting basic human rights and neglecting the opinions of the people. Her criticism echoed the tones of many Western media which condemn the autocratic Chinese government. The narrative of Wang, a Chinese student, also made a similar point. He noted that, “When one says *amerika* [America], one feels happy. When one says *chūgoku* [China], one feels unhappy as the intonation declines.” He thought that the Japanese people put Western culture up on a pedestal, and looked down upon the Chinese culture. In short, the students’ narratives of their overseas experiences expressed the view that Japan admires Western culture and looks down upon Chinese culture.

#### **6.4 Value of the Study**

Value of this study lies in a better understanding of Sino-Japanese cultural relations, the experiences Chinese and Japanese students overseas, and the national identities held among such students as well. The study suggests that overseas experiences among students can enhance mutual understandings, but also have the potential to create misunderstandings. Such overseas experiences changed the students’ perceptions of the other society and its people, and thereby altered their self-identities. The study also explores the role of media as a part of the students’ experiences before and after going abroad. It argues that media discourses had a profound impact on the students’ perceptions of “the other” and their constructions of

self-identity.

The study suggests that, while the Japanese and Chinese students' overseas experiences sometimes led to a greater understanding between the young people of those countries, many negative stereotypes generated by both sides were manifested and reinforced. The Chinese students who held firmly to their state national identity and felt that they had been assigned an inferior status in Japan mainly produced negative stereotypes of Japan and Japanese people. In addition to the nature of their national identity and the influence of the media, their economic conditions and the scholarship system also shaped their perceptions of "the other." Many Chinese students who I met were under great economic pressure to earn their own living. Some students complained of the harshness of their part-time jobs, and felt that they had assumed an inferior position in Japanese society. It was difficult for them to find satisfactory part-time jobs as many employers refused to hire foreigners, and thus some students were forced to take on more undesirable part-time jobs, such as washing dishes. Since the Chinese students spent most of their spare time doing part-time jobs, they had less time to communicate with local students in Japan when compared with the Japanese students in China, and this served to hinder their understanding of Japanese people. Moreover, intense competition in the scholarship system contributed to the Chinese students' unpleasant experiences in Japan. The

students' disappointments and struggles in the scholarship system partially shaped their negative perceptions of Japanese society.

The Japanese students I met created new images and reinforced their negative stereotypes of China and Chinese people. Nevertheless, they also began to question their previous stereotypes of China and Chinese people, and demonstrated a greater understanding of them. In addition to the Japanese students' relatively flexible national identity and the influences of the media, their reasons for studying abroad and economic conditions also shaped their perceptions of "the other." The Japanese students who went to China simply because it was cheap to study there, or because they disliked learning English, tended to create and reinforce the negative stereotypes of China and Chinese people. The Japanese students who went to China because they believed in the country's bright future, or because they thought that acquiring Chinese language skills would be helpful in their future careers, tended to deconstruct some of their previous negative stereotypes of China and Chinese people and created new images of them. Moreover, the Japanese students' economic conditions also shaped their relatively positive images of China. As the Japanese students came from a relatively affluent country, they did not feel any significant financial pressures in China. Some Japanese students claimed that they enjoyed their lives in China because they had a greater purchasing ability there than they did in

Japan.

In summary, this study portrays the Japanese and Chinese students' perceptions of "the other," which echo the perceptions of "the other" in the Japanese and Chinese media, and reflect national identities among the students and the cultural power relationship between Japan and China. The students' perceptions of "the other" were shaped simultaneously by their reasons for going abroad, their economic conditions and the scholarship system in the other society. The study suggests the current trends of national identity among Japanese and Chinese university students through the narratives of their overseas experiences. It also reviews the cultural relationship between Japan and China, which is reflected in the Japanese and Chinese people's perceptions of "the other" and their identities of self.

## Appendices

### 1. Profile of Chinese Informants

Student	Gender	Major	Degree/ Program	Scholarship	Length of residence in Japan
1	M	Engineering	Master's	None	Over 6 years
2	M	Engineering	Master's	None	Over 6 years
3	M	Economics	Doctoral	Government Scholarship	Over 6 years
4	M	Economics	Master's	None	Over 6 years
5	F	Literature	<i>kenkyūsei</i>	None	1 year and 3 months
6	M	Japanese Language	Nikkensei	Government Scholarship	8 months
7	M	Japanese Language	Nikkensei	Government Scholarship	8 months
8	F	Japanese Language	Nikkensei	Government Scholarship	8 months
9	F	Japanese Language	Nikkensei	Government Scholarship	8 months
10	F	Japanese Language	Nikkensei	Government Scholarship	8 months
11	F	Japanese Language	Nikkensei	Government Scholarship	8 months
12	M	Chinese Literature	Doctoral	Government Scholarship	1 year and 3 months
13	M	Economics	Undergraduate	None	Over 3 years
14	F	Economics	Undergraduate	None	Over 6 years
15	F	Sociology	Master's	None	10 months
16	M	Engineering	Master's	None	Over 6 years
17	F	Economics	Master's	Government Scholarship	1 year and 3 months
18	M	Engineering	Undergraduate	Government Scholarship	Over 4 years
19	F	Psychology	Master's	None	1 year and 3 months
20	F	Sociology	Master's	None	2 years

<b>Student</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>Degree/ Program</b>	<b>Scholarship</b>	<b>Length of residence in Japan</b>
21	F	Economics	Undergraduate	None	Over 6 years
22	F	Japanese Language Education	Master's	None	Over 7 years
23	M	Psychology	Master's	None	Over 7 years
24	M	Engineering	Undergraduate	None	Over 4 years
25	M	Engineering	Master's	None	Over 5 years
26	M	Sociology	Master's	None	Over 3 years
27	F	Japanese Language Education	Master's	None	8 months

Note: *Kenkyūsei* are research students who are enrolled in programs which do not lead to the awarding of a degree. *Nikkensei* are students of a Japanese studies program which is organized by the Japanese government for undergraduate foreign students.

## 2. Profile of Japanese Informants

<b>Student</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>Degree/ Program</b>	<b>Scholarship</b>	<b>Length of residence in China</b>
1	F	Economics	Language Course	None	8 months
2	F	Chinese Language	Language Course	None	10 months
3	F	Chinese Language	University Exchange	None	9 months
4	F	Chinese Language	Language Course	None	8 months
5	M	International Relations	Undergraduate	Government Scholarship	Over 3 years
6	F	History	Master's	None	Over 2 years
7	F	English Language	Language Course	None	Over 2 years
8	M	Sociology	Language Course	None	8 months

<b>Student</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>Degree/ Program</b>	<b>Scholarship</b>	<b>Length of residence in China</b>
9	M	Economics	Language Course	None	9 months
10	M	Laws	Master's	None	9 months
11	F	Chinese Language	Language Course	None	9 months
12	M	International Relations	Undergraduate	None	Over 4 years
13	M	International Relations	Undergraduate	None	Over 3 years
14	F	Fine Arts	Language Course	None	8 months
15	M	Laws	Univeristy Exchange	None	9 months
16	M	Laws	University Exchange	None	9 months
17	F	Laws	University Exchange	None	9 months
18	F	International Relations	University Exchange	None	9 months
19	F	Politics	University Exchange	None	9 months
20	M	International Relations	University Exchange	None	9 months
21	M	Laws	Language Course	None	8 months
22	M	Economics	Language Course	None	8 months
23	F	Chinese Language	Language Course	None	8 months
24	F	Economics	Language Course	None	8 months
25	F	Economics	Language Course	None	8 months
26	F	Economics	Language Course	None	10 months

<b>Student</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>Degree/ Program</b>	<b>Scholarship</b>	<b>Length of residence in China</b>
27	M	Politics	Language Course	None	8 months
28	M	International Relations	Language Course	None	8 months
29	M	Laws	Master's	None	9 months

### 3. Interview Question List

1. Why did you choose to study in China/Japan?
2. Did you consider other countries when you decided to study abroad?
3. What were your impressions of China/Japan and Chinese/Japanese people before coming to China/Japan?
4. How did you get such impressions?
5. Did you face any difficulties or cultural shocks at the beginning of your study in China/Japan?
6. How did you overcome those difficulties?
7. Do you enjoy your studies in China/Japan? Why?
8. What do you usually do in your daily life in China/Japan?
9. Can you tell me about your friends in China/Japan? Are they Chinese or Japanese?
10. After a period of living in China/Japan, what are your impressions of China/Japan and Chinese/Japanese people?
11. Have your impressions of China/Japan and Chinese/Japanese people changed since coming to China/Japan?
12. How do you get such impressions?
13. Did you encounter any discrimination in China/Japan?
14. How do you feel as a Japanese/Chinese person living in China/Japan? Any inconveniences or discomforts?
15. From your viewpoint, are Chinese/Japanese people's patriotic expressions different from yours?
16. Did you change after studying abroad?

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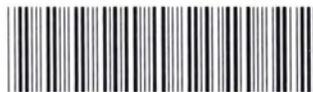
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