PHOTO OF HEIAN JINGU SCHRINE IN KYOTO

MIDTERM REPORT

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SPECIAL FOCUS

The Current Situation of Handling Sexual Abuse in Japan and Switzerland, with an Emphasis on Gender Oppression Perceived from Japanese Language

Danting Wu

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Introduction

About Myself

Unlike many other scholarship recipients, I'm neither Swiss nor Japanese. I'm Chinese and both of my parents are from China. I was born in Germany but raised in Shanghai, China for the first 15 years of my life. My family then moved to Switzerland where I later became a permanent resident of. I went to an international school for high school, and then ETH Zurich for both bachelor's and master's studies. I am currently halfway through my master's degree in mathematics and plan to graduate by 2021, after my year in Japan.

Motivation

I'm a big language enthusiast and I speak multiple languages including Mandarin, English, German and Japanese. Out of all these languages, Japanese was the only one I learnt completely out of personal interest throughout the years. Like many people, my early interest in Japanese started by watching anime. In university, I connected with a few exchange students from Japan to do language tandem with them. It started off with being able to choose the right words, then imitating the other person's word choice and sentence structure. Finally, I managed to come up with expressions that "sounded right". Miraculously, I could start to speak Japanese without having done any seriously studies before.

Based on my experience of learning other foreign languages, I've always known that the best way to learn a language is not to sit in a rigorous class and learn grammar, but to listen to and speak with native speaker as much as possible. My first trip to Japan in 2018 has reconfirmed that. Testing my Japanese skills for the first time and talking with the locals have given me massive confidence, but at the same time shown how insufficient my skills were under social context. A language is composed of not only vocabulary and grammar, but also the postures, the wording and the nuance in which local people speak. That was when I knew I had to go and live in Japan to further improve my Japanese.

Getting started

I discovered the SJCC scholarship fund by myself while searching for post-graduation possibilities online. I first applied to the scholarship in late 2018. However, I was devastated to found out that I was rejected. At the same time, I failed to pass my last bachelor exam in ETH which means graduation had to be postponed. The former chairman of the SJCC scholarship fund, Mr. Martin Stricker, was nice enough to encourage me to reapply in 2019 under simplified procedures if I still felt motivated enough to do so. Of course, I did. 2019 was a harsh year for me as I went through retaking my last

bachelors' exam and reapplying to the scholarship program. But here I am in 2020, sitting in my flat in Kyoto. It has been a life lesson for me. It might seem like the end of the world when you fail in almost everything but staying focused and motivated will eventually get you through.

Timeline

March 2018	First trip to Japan
September 2018	First time applying for SJCC scholarship
March 2019	Second time applying for SJCC scholarship
May 2019	Accepted to Kyoto Japanese Language School
June 2019	Secured internship at Bosch Japan
September 2019	Visa application successful
October 2019	Departure to Japan, start language school
November 2019	Bosch cancelled internship program
February 2020	Started part-time internship at Nestle Japan
March 2020	Graduation from Language school
April 2020	Start full-time internship at Nestle Japan

Kyoto and Language School

There were two reasons to start my year in Kyoto even before I narrowed it down to the language school. Growing up in Shanghai, I had already known what it would be like living in a huge metropolis. Therefore, unlike many Europeans, living in Tokyo wouldn't be as mind-blowing for me. On the contrary, I like smaller but culturally rich cities. Kyoto left me with great impression when I traveled to Japan. Being full of beautiful shrines and temples, it has fewer distractions than Tokyo, which also contributed to focusing on Japanese learning. The other reason is that I had a huge love for the Kansai dialect (関西弁(かんさいべん)). Kansai people are known for their openness and more relaxed lifestyle, which makes it easier to engage in conversations. It wasn't long before I started picking up the cute local accents and vocabularies.

The Kyoto Japanese Language School (KJLS) had the perfect location and intensity of study for me and I would recommend it to others. I attended the higher level business class (上級ビジネス) which had both cultural and business contents for Japanese learning. The reading sessions had a wide spectrum, from literature texts such as 芥川龍之介(あくたがわりゅうのすけ) to essays on various political or social issues. In media sessions we watched news reports and TV programs, whereas in business conversation lessons we learnt the appropriate

expressions and conventions under Japanese business context, which really helped me later in both searching and doing the internship. There were also writing classes and speaking classes in which we were free to express on any topic we had interests in using the various expressions appropriate for our levels.

There were two things I loved about the school. First, the classes were very small (about 8 people) and were condensed with adults from various backgrounds and age. I have had friends complaining about their language schools being focused on college application and hence composed of only high school students with similar backgrounds. It never gets boring talking to my classmates about our different views on daily and world issues, of course, in Japanese. The second was the various activities the school managed to host for students from all levels of classes together, from the ones who were just starting to remember Kanjis and the ones who were ready to work in Japanese. Two highlights of the activities include a multilingual presentation of a children's book to preschool kids in the Kyoto City Library, and the traditional speech contest that happens every semester. I was particularly proud with the latter, in which I won a trophy of by making a speech about Ms. Ito Shiori and sexual violence in Japan. (I will discuss this further in the special focus of this report). We really connected as a community in KJLS, both among the students ourselves and among the nice teachers. Some of the friends I made there I will definitely keep contact with after leaving Japan.

PHOTO OF ME ON THE SPEECH CONTEST, SPEAKING ABOUT ITO SHIORI

Visa and Early Internship Hunting

The visa application wasn't a hustle and I believed that previous applicants have stated the process in much more details. One thing that was special in my case was that I hold the C-permit (an equivalent to Swiss PR) which doesn't allow me to be out of Switzerland for more than 6 months, or otherwise I would lose this identity. This is a special piece of advice for anyone who isn't not an EU citizen. I had to visit the

immigration office and apply for an absence of leave (Aufrechtenthaltung) under educational purposes for one year before I could start with the visa application. It took a few weeks and the immigration office in Zurich asked some questions, so make sure you clarify the situation with them and start early.

After I got the Aufrechtentheltung, everything was the same as everyone else. I contacted the school and sent them the necessary documents for applying the Certificate of Eligibility (CoE) in Immigration office in Osaka. When the application succeeded, I applied for a student visa in the Japanese Embassy in Bern with my Chinese passport, using the CoE the school sent me, and it only took a few weeks till I got it. The student visa has already made me eligible for work for 28 hours per week and stay for a year, but for the full time internship later in the year the status has to be changed from student to special activity (特殊活動(とくしゅかつどう)).

I already started searching for internships while applying for the scholarship program, because I was determined that I would go either with or without the scholarship. Therefore, I've had countless interviews in over 12 months span with many international companies. Here I would really recommend the website Kopra, or simply writing to the recruitment department of the companies you are interested in. I spent a lot of time on local website such as Creerforum and Indeed, which didn't lead me anywhere as long-term internships are not a common thing for Japanese companies. Therefore, unless you have connections within a Japanese company/institute, I would highly recommend focusing on international companies, in which you still have many chances speaking Japanese. I was lucky enough to have secured my internship with Bosch Japan in Tokyo before departure, which really eased off some stress while I was supposed to be enjoying Kyoto and language school. However, things really went the unexpected way later when I arrived.

Working in Japan

Baito and Part-time Internship

I started working part time the second month after I arrived in Kyoto. The owner of a gift shop asked me if I wanted to do バイト while I was visiting her shop out with my friends, and I said yes. The バイト experience wasn't particular pleasant for me for two reasons. The first was that I had very limited chances of practicing Japanese because there were many foreign tourists who only spoke English, which was the exact reason the owner hired me for. When there were Japanese customers, the other Japanese girl in shift would always be sent. The other reason was that I really didn't get used to the working ethic of Japanese people, especially in services(接客業). As a bottom line you always have to bow

and use Keigo (敬語). You are not allowed to drink or eat or sit, and not even facing your back to the customers. The job is very monotone, mostly involves standing for more than five hours and saying the same things. It tends to be frowned upon when you try to be more efficient or creative, because strictly following the guideline is more important than efficiency. I would still recommend people to do バイト as an experience if you really want to. It's a quick way to understand the Japanese working mentality, especially for servicing jobs, but keep in mind that you might not like it, as I didn't.

Another thing that stroke me is how difficult it has become for me to say No to the Japanese owner as the way she speaks is very passive aggressive, and it became more obvious when you get better at Japanese. Later, after talking to my colleagues in Nestle who are also foreigners, I realized that it was not an isolated case. I quit バイト shortly after new year because it really started to stress me out.

Meanwhile, I attended the Swiss Young Professionals Gathering in Kansai organized by the sister chamber SCCIJ, where I was lucky enough to have connected with Mr. Guenter Spiess, who is the Vice-President in Kansai of SCCIJ and at the same time the head of E-commerce in Nestle Japan. He expressed interest in finding an intern to do quantitative analysis for his team, which was exactly my profession. It was quickly fixed that I was going to work part-time as an intern from February, everyday after language school commuting from Kyoto to Kobe.

PHOTO OF ME AND MY PARENTS MEETING IN OKINAWA FOR CHRISTMAS

6-month Internship and Coronavirus

Before Christmas in 2019, I got an email from Bosch Japan saying that due to the economic situation of the firm they decided to cancel the internship program. The stress of searching an internship was suddenly back and became more urgent than before.

Luckily, after a few weeks of intensive searching I landed in another position with Volkswagen in Japan for which I would move to Yokohoma in April instead of Tokyo.

While I was busy with the part time internship and language school, the coronavirus outbreak was starting to affect Japan. It was tough for me to decide if I still wanted to risk moving to Yokohama, which has bigger population and is closer to Tokyo. After confronting my worries, Mr. Guenter was nice enough to offer me a full-time internship position for the second half of the year. Hence, I cancelled my plans with Volkswagen Japan and reapplied for internship visa with Nestle Japan.

I've started working from home in early March until now, mid-April 2020. I really hope that everyone stays safe and the situation gets resolved.

Special Focus of The Report: The Current Situation of Handling Sexual Abuse in Japan and Switzerland, with an Emphasis on Gender Oppression Perceived from Japanese Language

Introduction

Language is not merely a tool of communication, but a way we channel values, beliefs and even agenda to the world around us. Aa a feminist, I would always pay attention to incidences of gender inequality whenever I immerse myself into a new culture, and especially in the words people use. Japanese is a very specific case where if we look closely, gender oppression can be seen, or heard, in many aspects of the language, both from daily use and adaption to pop culture. Since this discussion is inspired by Ito Shiori and her book Black Box, I will lay emphasis on Japanese language for the interest of foreign readers, and then compare rape statistics and gender ratio in law enforcement in Japan and Switzerland to see how her case would be handled differently.

Inspiration: Ito Shiori

My inspiration of conducting this research is Ms. Ito Shiori, the first Japanese woman to openly confront a rape case and later became the face of the #MeToo movement in Japan. After business drinking with the famous journalist Noriyuki Yamaguchi, a prominent TV journalist and acquaintance of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, she was taken to a hotel and sexually abused. She was brave enough to take the case to the court and m (Rape Statistics, n.d.)ake a public appearance, even though most Japanese women were expected to be more conservative on such issues.

BBC made a documentary named Japan's Secret Shame on her case, which inevitably stimulated nationwide anger in Japan. She also wrote a book named Black Box in which she documented the case. In both works she mention that as she woke up from the pain while Yamaguchi was committing sexual violence, she repetitively said "やめてください" which is the most common way of saying "please stop" in Japanese. She used the term multiple times, but Yamaguchi showed no sign of stopping because the use of language wasn't strong enough, until she had to switch to English and said "what the fuck are you doing" to stop him. She also mentioned that she felt powerless when she was writing emails confronting Yamaguchi. The nature of the Japanese language almost forced her to sound polite and took away her ability to make a harsh stand. In fact, it is almost impossible to express "No" in Japanese under sexual context, without sounding polite or being perceived provocative.

There are two reasons. First, Japanese has almost no swearing words, which in many languages can be inserted to an expression to intensify the meaning. It is incredibly difficult to sound harsh in Japanese. In fact, it is not encouraged in Japanese culture to directly express your feelings. Therefore, for many foreigners who learnt Japanese, Japanese people can often sound passive aggressive, and on the contrary foreigners can sometimes sound overly expressive or even aggressive and offensive to Japanese people. The other factor is use of language in the world famous Japanese porn industry, with the phrase "やめて" (stop) being the signature line in almost every porn. Japanese men growing up reading and watching porn presuming when women said "やめて" it is simply sexual arousing. It is hard to imagine anything that contributes more to rape culture than disabling the meaning of rejection from the female narrative and giving it the exact opposite meaning.

PHOTO OF ITO SHIORI AFTER SHE WON HER CIVIL CASE AGAINST YAMAGUCHI, DEC 2019

The Disempowering Persona Pronouns

As arguably the first thing we learn when we start to learn a language, use of first-person pronoun is not only linguistically important, but also plays a huge part in building one's character. Japanese is one of the very few languages in which there are strict rules for gender specific first-person pronoun. In general, females can only use 私 because it sounds softer and modest, whereas males tend to use 俺 or 僕. In fact, it would be extremely rude for females to refer themselves as 俺. Using 僕 is not prohibited, but almost only exists in fictions. In fact, there is a specific term that refers to the cooler female characters who use 僕 as first person, called ボク少女, which has the equivalent meaning as tomboy in English. It is evident that in Japanese culture, the use of different

first-person pronouns would reflect one's character, as well as the way they are perceived by others. When speaking Japanese, I realized that using 私 would make me sound softer, so I slowly switch to うち which is acceptable especially in Kansai.

It is difficult for women to sound strong and powerful when they are forced to refer to themselves as the weaker side in everyday conversations. What's more, it creates a gap between the male and female narratives and makes it harder for men to stand on women's point of view. An interesting fact is that Japanese female singers would often use 僕 in their songs just to make it easier for audience of the other gender to relate and empathize with the lyrics.

A younger Japanese girl would sometimes even refer herself by her own name instead of using any first-person pronoun at all. For example, if her name was Hanako, in attempt to sound feminine, she might say something like "Hanako read a book" instead of "I read a book". This stroke me as something that almost doesn't exist in any other language I know. In English, only children would talk in such ways. In Japanese culture, girls are not expected to have strong opinions or take on actions. It can be argued that she avoids using the proper first-person pronoun to lessen the influence of her initiatives. In such cases, a woman must sound almost childish to appear as harmless, which however inevitably result in detachment from her own identity and power.

The Overarching Idea of Kwaii

Anyone encountering Japanese pop culture should be familiar with the term かわいい (cute/adorable). For Japanese girls, かわいい is always considered as the best compliment, both for appearance and personality. From early ages, the unrealistic expectation of staying cute and adorable has been imposed on Japanese girls. 可愛(かわい)い in Kanji means lovable. Although implicitly, it can be argued that unlike smart, or strong, lovable is not an intrinsic property. The definition of lovability is only to be defined by the extraneous environment. It is easy for young girls to lose some of their more important qualities, when they are busy maintaining "lovable" under the judgment from the outside world.

In Japanese, one of the notions closely related to かわいい is the use of the suffix ~ちゃん, meaning little, as for instance the use of *~chen* in German. Some examples include 子猫(こねこ)ちゃん(kitten) or 赤(あか)ちゃん(baby). It is not a coincidence that ~ちゃん is also used as the suffix for female names only, as opposed to ~君 for referring males, another example of gender specific use of pronoun in Japanese. When the word little is tightly connected with one's name, it is inevitable that we consider them also weak or

even child-like. A cute little someone would be loved and protected, but also vulnerable and harmless, or even incompetent. She should be no threat to anybody.

Rape statistics in Japan and Switzerland

In recent years, voice of survivors from sexual abuse has been thriving more than ever with the on-going #Metoo movement. Ito Shiori was viewed as a representative of Metoo movement in Japan, which has had a milder reception compared to in the western world. According to the world's rape statistics, Japan ranked 58th with only 1 reported case per 100,000 population, whereas Switzerland ranked 28th with 7.1 reported case per 100,000 population. People might be surprised to find many developed countries towards the top of this list. Oddly enough, the statistic doesn't truly reflect the occurrence of rape crimes; on the contrary, it can be interpreted as an indicator of how open a society is to reporting and openly discussing such incidents, and how developed the legal system is while handling such cases. Sweden ranked the 3rd for police recorded rape cases with 63.5 per 100,000 population, whereas India, known for its rape culture, ranked 50th on the list with only 1.8 reported cases per 100,000 population. We can hardly agree that a woman is 35 times more likely to be raped in Sweden than in India.

A large part of Shiori's effort in raising open discussion is devoted to the Japanese legal system in terms of how incredibly difficult it is to accuse someone for sexual abuse and how unwelcome women felt when they try to search for legal help. The laws are setting impossible standards to the victims: a woman is expected to conduct a list of correct actions in an exact order within the first 48 hours of being assaulted, in order to preserve evidences that can be admitted in court in the future.

According to a survey conducted by Amnesty International in 2019, women in Switzerland are also being failed by dangerous and outdated laws. The research involving interviews with 4,495 women and girls found out that "one in five women surveyed has been subjected to sexual violence, and more than 10 percent of women surveyed had been raped. Only 8 percent of women surveyed reported the assault to the police." In 2014, the government also reported that Swiss victims often do not decide to report about occurrences of sexual and domestic violence to the police (CEDAW, 2014).

Shiori mentioned in her book that the most difficult part about suing Yamaguchi is proof for 合意(consent). Since she was raped in a hotel room while she was unconscious, she could not find a way to prove that she was not consensual to the sex because hardly any physical violence was involved. The judge described the room as a "black box" in which no one knows what happened that night. This later became the

title of her book. Until Shiori raised the discussion, the Japanese laws regarding rape has not changed for over 100 years, since they were first established in 1907. It is equally surprising to me when I found out that the Swiss law also does not define rape on the basis of lack of consent. Instead, it uses a definition based on whether physical violence, threat or coercion is involved, just like the Japanese law. It gives no consideration when the victim freezes or paralyzes during the assault, which are actually very common cases according to studies.

Female in Law Enforcement

When Shiori had her first encounter with Tokyo police it was not pleasant. She found it extremely difficult to hold herself together while facing a male police officer, whereas the only female officer they could find was responsible for traffic. She also found the male officers sometimes lacking consideration due to their inability to empathize with her situation, and hence not taking her seriously. In fact, this is a large factor stopping women to report rape cases. In Japan, only 8% of the police force is composed of females.

Gender ratio in law enforcement is much better in Switzerland. Across Kantons, over 30% of police force is composed of female offices, and this ratio is even hitting 44% in Kanton Zurich. The rise mostly took place in the last 10 years. In St.Gallen, for example, the ratio of females in education of law enforcement was only 8% in 2012/2013, and has risen to 31% in 2018. The same tendency can be also observed in the rest of Switzerland. In Kanton Genf und Neuenburg, local police bureaus are welcoming more female voices into their teams, as they consider it as a reflection of showing more “respect for the people”. We can only expect a positive influence of such a change. When women’s needs are taken into consideration by female officers, they are assured of always being able to find someone of their own gender when they have a hard time telling their stories.

Conclusion

There are many aspects in which the Japanese language and its channeling overtly or covertly disempower females. As women are used to using these terms in daily life, there might be negative influences on their character building and self-esteem, and even result in unrealistic expectations and gender stereotypes for Japanese women.

As we look at the two factors that caused Shiori troubles when she fought for legal justice: the outdated Japanese laws regarding rape and missing female voice in police force. The situation seems better when compared to Switzerland, but reflection could be needed for our law makers, in order to build a society in which women feel safer and the pursuit of justice is more accessible when it comes to sexual abuse.

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