Panel 3.4: Facilitating Cultural Flows and Exchanges

Japanese War Brides in the U.S.: Socio-cultural Adaptation as Immigrants

This paper presents the socio-cultural experiences of Japanese women who married American soldiers in post-war Japan. Commonly called war brides, they emigrated to their husbands’ homeland after marriage.

The presentation is based on a volume in preparation, which I am editing now. The volume is contributed by six researchers, both Japanese and American. It covers various experiences of war brides from the 1950s, when many southern states still had anti-miscegenation laws, till recent decades.

The paper explores how misconceptions and stereotypes about the war brides were formed earlier, and how they were ameliorated in later years. In addition to socio-cultural problems of war brides, it also discusses adaptation of gender roles and ethnic identity.

Overall, the immigrant experiences of Japanese war brides have not been easy due to racial and social prejudices as well as discrimination in earlier years. In later years, however, they have positive outlooks on their lives in America.