

Preface

This book is partially based on my Ph.D. thesis *Shame and pride behind face: Japanese returnees' negotiation of multiple identities* submitted to the University of Lancaster in 2002 and on my follow-up research conducted 10 years after the initial research.

My series of research projects began when I worked on my master's dissertation, *A cross-cultural study of embarrassment: The U.S. culture and the Japanese culture*, submitted to the Department of Speech Communication, California State University, Fullerton, in 1990. The dissertation was a contrastive and comparative study on the strategies to cope with an embarrassing situation in US and Japanese business organisations. At that time, I reencountered the concept of face. The reason I put here 'reencountered' was because my first degree in a Japanese university and my first master's degree were both in sociology and the study of Goffman was something I had to go through at both stages. In the dissertation, I looked at cultural patterns such as individualism versus collectivism, or high-context versus low-context communication styles, and compared the communicative strategies in an embarrassing situation between the US Americans and the Japanese.

However, on returning to Japan, I faced something that could not be explained by the framework of 'Western' culture and 'Eastern' culture. That happened when I started to teach Chinese students at a university in Tokyo. Then, I was shocked by the diversity within Asia or East Asia. I was surprised when I noticed not all but many Chinese students hardly apologised and would make excuses for not having done whatever they were supposed to do. Through a series of interviews, I found that their communication styles exhibited their sense of face and that Chinese and Japanese are different in the perception and experience of face. Then, I collaborated with researchers from other Asian countries such as Taiwan and Thailand and conducted a series of research projects to explore similarities and differences in the perception of face in Asian contexts. I, at that time, was opposed to putting various Asian countries or cultures into one bracket, 'Asia'. I continued this line of research when I had a chance to teach at a university in Sapporo.

Then, after I completed collaborative work with researchers from other Asian countries, I started to wonder which direction I should take. It is meaningful to

explore differences in the perception and experience of face within Asian cultures, taking an emic approach.¹ However, what is beyond them? By deepening my understanding of epistemology, methodology and methods, I found the answer. Something ‘universal’ exists in particulars, and particulars state what is ‘universal’ in individual ways. Thus, the reason why I studied historical changes in the perception of face (*lian*, *mian* and *mianzi*) is because I tried to perceive one part of face as a ‘universal’ concept through the window of China. Likewise, another part of face is exhibited clearly through the window of Japan. Culturally indigenous concepts or thoughts teach us various kinds of things, but if I stress cultural ‘uniqueness’, I would end up isolating something culturally unique from the rest of the world. It would be something like a huge elephant viewed from different angles. From China, the trunk could be seen clearly but not from Japan. However, from Japan, the elephant’s tail could be seen vividly instead. Then, all the parts constitute the picture of the whole elephant.

In April 1998, I moved back from Sapporo to Tokyo and started to teach at a private university in Tokyo. Then, I encountered many ‘returnees’, who had stayed abroad because of their parents’ jobs. There were variations among them. Some of them claimed that they are returnees, and others did not. Some of them stuck to the fact that they were returnees, but others did not seem to care much about this. Moreover, the same person behaved differently depending on the situation, sometimes being a returnee and sometimes not. The literature up to then seemed to take it for granted that returnees’ identity with their identity as a returnee and whatever differences there were in returnees’ behaviour were considered to be due to differences in personality. However, there seemed to be something more than differences in personality. I was fascinated by what I had observed and wanted to explore how they negotiated their identity/identities. Then, I started to look at the literature on social identity theory and self-categorisation theory, and I was thrilled by the idea of multiple levels of identities instead of ‘identity’ as a singular. Through a series of pilot studies, I sensed that one of the key factors for negotiating identities is face and its affective elements, shame and pride.

Between August 2001 and August 2002, I was granted a sabbatical year at the University of Lancaster, and based on the accumulated data, I wrote a Ph.D. thesis. I once thought of trying to publish the essential part of my Ph.D. thesis right after I came back to Japan. However, I desired to make sure of its ‘transferability’. That is, I felt that I had to check that what I found in the research can be found in other contexts. I was lucky that many of my research participants kept in contact with me even after they graduated from university and entered Japanese industry and commerce, so that I was able to keep up to date on what they were doing and feeling. As there is little research on former returnees, I decided to conduct the second-phase study 10 years after my first-phase study, and some of the participants kindly repeated the process of research. Other than that, I was curious to see if what I discovered in my first-phase research could be found in a completely different kind

¹I will explain an emic approach in detail in Chap. 5.

of research participants and a different context. Then, with a government grant, I conducted some research on domestic violence survivors² and their supporters with my research partners from 2006 to 2009. The survivors of domestic violence were most of the time stuck with one kind of identity, victim or survivor. However, in the process of their reintegration in the society, the survivors often faced their own shame, restored pride and realised other kinds of identity: woman, mother, sister, friend, person, etc. It took me more than 10 years to achieve transferability in this way.

This book consists of eight chapters. In Chap. 1, I try to show how identities as plural differ from identity as singular and review the literature on identities from the perspectives of symbolic interactionism, social identity theory and self-categorisation theory. It is suggested that affective elements in negotiating multiple identities need to be explored. In Chap. 2, I review the literature on face in sociology, communication studies and other related areas. Through the literature review, I found the emotions behind face, such as shame and pride, need to be further researched. In Chap. 3, I try to identify the common ‘missing link’ between the literature of identities and that of face and suggest research questions: (1) What is the relationship between face and identities? and (2) How do shame and pride affect people’s negotiation of their multiple identities? In Chap. 4, I review the literature on returnees and try to show how the general public have a unified image of the returnees as having a high command of English and as forerunners of globalisation. More than 40 years have passed since the lack of sufficient educational support for the returnees was pointed out in the 1970s. Forty years is long enough for the stereotypical image of returnees as good speakers of English to have been maintained, and it is worth noting that the largest number of returnees resides in Asia nowadays, and many of them even go to a full-time Japanese school. Yet, the general public in Japan still retain the stereotypical image. Moreover, the existing research on returnees has not shed light on returnees at university level, nor have researchers done any work on former returnees in Japanese industry. In Chap. 5, my epistemological and methodological approach is explained, and three research methods, which go along with my methodological position, are described. I emphasise that I apply the approach of triangulation and explain how I analyse the data from the three methods holistically. In Chap. 6, I share part of the first-phase research done between February 2000 and July 2001 and, in Chap. 7, part of the second-phase research done between March 2010 and October 2011. Some of the first-phase participants participated in the second phase, and it was interesting to see how they negotiate their identities in the workplace. In Chap. 8, I try to answer my research questions and discuss the relationship between face and identities and the function of the affective aspects of face, shame and pride, in identity negotiation.

To come to this stage, I have been fortunate to encounter wonderful supervisors and friends. On top of them is Emeritus Professor David Smith at Lancaster

²The participants of our study were mostly women, but that does not mean that all the survivors in Japan are women all the time.

University. He was the most generous and insightful supervisor I have ever had. I enjoyed every discussion I had with him on my Ph.D. thesis, and after more than 10 years he was still generous to go through my manuscript and give valuable suggestions. I cannot thank him enough. The late Dr. Naoharu Shimoda at Rikkyo University and Dr. Richard Wiseman at California State University, Fullerton, were among the first professors who had faith in me as a researcher. Dr. Tetsuo Naito not only taught me how to conduct the PAC research but also gave me various insights in conducting research. I would like to thank Dr. Adair Nagata for being a wonderful friend and my role model to be a theoretically and practically 'good communicator'. I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to Mr Yoshitaka Shishikura and Ms Akane Yamamoto at Nakanishiya Shuppan Co. Ltd. for allowing me to modify some of the tables and figures that appeared in the Japanese book I published in 2012. Moreover, I cannot express my deep appreciation enough to Ms Jayanthie Krishnan, Mr Vishal Daryanomel and Ms Shanthi Gounasegarane at Springer, Asia, for having answered my emails promptly, collaborating with me and being always supportive since I contacted with them initially.

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