

# Collapse of Family System of Japanese Tomb Culture

Miho Tsukamoto

**Abstract**—This paper examines Japanese life expectancy, and the declining birth rate to investigate the Japanese people's view of death, and their consciousness of death. To support their perspectives toward death, "Eitai Kuyobo," and tombs with Japanese animation will be focused as Japanese citizens have created unique tombs designs of their own tombs. With the methodological aspects, Japan's birth and mortality rates, Japan's average life expectancy, history of tombs, creation of one's own tombs and types of marriage will be significant. By examining the Japanese history of tombs, social change and unique tombs, and the increase of mortality rate in Japanese super-aging society, this study contributes the change of people's view toward tombs, and a view toward life and death. Accordingly, focusing on the change of people's view toward tombs it is concluded that the change is caused by the increase of mortality rate in Japanese super-aging society.

**Keywords**—Tombs, History, Change, New Designed Tombs, Family Relationship.

## I. INTRODUCTION

WITH the increasing of the life expectancy, and the declining birth rate, the Japanese have changed the point of view of death. With their consciousness of death, more people have created unique tombs designs of their own tombs such as "Eitai Kuyobo, and the "New Designed Tombs." They create unique tombs with Japanese animation characters due to the Japanese love for animation characters and manga art. However, in Ohio, USA, the bereaved of Kimberly Walker, built SpongeBob tombs, but later the tombs were removed. If the tomb and its land are in Japan, it would be possible to build a character tomb.

With the Japan's declining birth rate since 1975, a married couple and their off-springs has the responsibility to inherit the tombs of the two families but face extreme difficulties to maintain the family's succession. Changes in tombs, the types and their designs reflect the changes in society. Diversity of tombs is based on people's different attitude and value of social changes. It can be observed that people have different ideas and perspectives toward views of life and death based on social, religious and cultural background and their experiences through living and observations of others dying.

## II. LIFE EXPECTANCY AND END OF LIFE ACTIVITIES

Today's Japan's average life expectancy has increased dramatically due to the continued advancement of medical technology and improved nutritional awareness after the World War II. Examining the Japanese mortality rate, average life expectancy, and perspective of life and death, will illustrate

Tsukamoto Miho is with the Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, Japan (phone: (81)-907-477-9830; fax: (81)-978-33-3264; e-mail: miho-tu@asahi.email.ne.jp).

statics and how Japanese people view life and death.

### A. Mortality Rate

According to the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare, it was estimated that mortality numbers in Japan exceeded more than 1 million in 2003 [1]. Other estimates are shown in Table I. In addition, the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare estimates that the number will peak at 1,663,000 around 2040. The world's top country for longevity, Japan drastically increases the proportion of the elderly for total fatalities, and the number of deaths over age 80 was 16.2 % in 1960, but the mortality rate increased 49.8 % in 2006 [1, p.426].

TABLE I  
NUMBER OF DEATHS AND BIRTHS [1, p.426]

Year	Number of Deaths	Number of Births
2005	1,084,000	1,063,000
2040	1,663,000	
2055	1,556,000	

### B. Japan's Average Life Expectancy

Simple Life Table of Average Life Expectancy in 2008 shows men's current life expectancy is 79.19 years, and women's life expectancy is 85.99 years [2], holding steady for the past two years. Japan is currently ranked as the world's top country for longevity which also has resulted in dramatic increases in the proportion of elderly fatalities. Death number over the age of 80 was 16.2 % in 1960, and increased 49.8 % in 2006 [1, p.426]. In other words, advance aging and subsequent deaths in Japan will continue to climb in the future which classifies them as an aging society.

### C. The End of Life Activities

Because of Japan's increased average life expectancy currently, more people worry about their future and consider "Shukatsu." "Shukatsu," (終活), or the end of life activities, means to do what one should do for his remaining lifetime in 2009 [3]. This includes that preparation of oneself for the dead, and the plan for the funeral and tomb, and the plan to his last will and testament to advance their own property smoothly [3, p.157]. After that, several books related "Shukatsu" such as *Shukatsu Bible* by Okuyama Akiko [4], *Shukatsu no Ruru* by Shimizu Akiko [5], *Jibun no tamenno Shukatsu Book* by Shufu no Tomo [6], *Shukatsu Handbook* by Honda Keiko [7], and *Shukatsu Sekkei* by Maruyama Kazuya [8].

## III. PERSPECTIVE OF DEATH

When people get old and death draws nearer, they think of death more frequently and seriously. When we consider the above "Shukatsu," we have a better perspective on how the Japanese see their life and death called "Shiseikan." "Shiseikan"

(死生観) or the view of life and deaths is a person's perspective of life and deaths. Here, some questions related to "Shiseikan" as follows [1, p.247].

- (1) What do people become o after death? Where do they go?
- (2) How do we see after death and the dead?
- (3) How do people think and understand about life?
- (4) What is life? What is death? [1, p.247]

Accordingly, people have different viewpoints, since their perspectives of life and death are based on their social, religious and cultural background and their experiences through living and observations of others dying, and it conducts an investigation on how people perceive death.

TABLE II  
 PERSPECTIVE OF DEATH

Questions: What do you think of death?	Agree	Partially Agree
Do you think that it is no use worrying about death?	51.8 %	31.4 %
Do you think that life and death are destined?	41.7 %	34.8 %
Do you think that you are afraid of dying in distress?	46.9 %	34.2 %

The results revealed many people were afraid of death and death was predestined. Although the view of living life and the inevitable fate of death are fearful, people generally do not want to dwell on this subject or stress over it.

Since we have extended average life expectancy, and the increase of mortality rate, they direct our attention to views toward death. To overview people's perspective of death, history of tombs will be specifically examined to see changes of people's view toward tombs.

#### IV. FUNERAL AND HISTORY AND CHANGE OF TOMBS

Types of funeral and history of tombs explain changes of customs to funeral and tombs. Here, the Japanese funeral, burial ritual, history of tombs, cremation, material and cost of tombstone and funeral, are discussed. Many Japanese rituals for the dead are cremation, which is unique to understand the Japanese way of burial, and helps us to understand the influence of funerals and tombs.

##### A. Funeral and History of Tombs

In this section, we will observe the Japanese funeral and burial ritual. Many Japanese rituals for the dead are cremation, which is unique to understand the Japanese way of burial and helps us to understand the influence of funerals and tombs. The funeral is a significant part of a ritual to mourn the death especially for the bereaved. The funeral gives the opportunity to allow people to accept the fact that dead has departed, to offer blessing to the departed for a safe and peaceful journey to their afterlife and to console remaining love ones to their loss. In that sense, it is a cultural act which has been conducted from the Old Stone Age. The disposal choice of the dead varies: burial under the earth, cremation, and ash dispersal.

According to *Kofun jidai no Kenkyu* [9] by Uwai Hisayoshi, Buddhism relates deeply in the relationships of tombs which began since the Heian period, and during the Edo period, it became the standard practice. Until then, people thought death as taboo. With the establishment of Buddhism, monks held the

memorial for the dead and started to place the dead in cemeteries in or near temples. Families of the dead erected tombs showed the ancestral and family relationships and respects to their ancestors. Thus, temples became more familiar and became an important place for the bereaved to visit their dead.

##### B. History of Tombs

Looking back on the history of tombs in Japan, people dug a hole in the ground and buried the bodies in primeval times during 100,000 years ago to 10,000 years ago. Here we will observe the history of tombs chronologically to see its change [9].

##### 1. Ancient Era

In the Jomon era from 10,000 years ago to three century B.C., bodies were buried under the ground with bend limbs [4]. Many villagers were afraid of death and the dead was buried far away from their village. Investigation of several burial sites in ancient times revealed most of the dead had limb severed because the remains did not wish the dead would not to be revived or resurrected again to prevent dead's rebirth. However, some who experienced the early death of others overcame fear of death, and actually showed affection and empathy to the dead when the youths in the family members deceased. Others would pray wish for their dead's revival or resurrection, and tried to keep the dead's body. With the change of the perspective of fear to sympathy for the dead in the Jomon era, the Japanese believed that the dead stayed with them so bodies of small children and babies were buried adjacent to their home, which changed the previous belief that death was taboo thought [9].

During the Yayoi era from three centuries B.D. to three centuries A.D., people buried accessories such as clay dolls, stoneware, jewelries, and mirrors with the dead who had high social status in a simple coffin. The establishment of a nation changed the way to build tombs but also to hold funerals [9, P. 27].

Gradually, people in the position of power, status or rank such as village chief in status or rank could enshrine the dead body and place it into the coffin. Then, songs and dances were played for the dead. As times passed, people evolved from the burial method to a jar coffin to contain the body remains [9, P. 27-28].

Jar coffins unearthed from the ruins have introduced such as some copper halberds, copper swords and mirrors that intentionally represent dead's social status. In this way, firstly, square tombs (支石墓), then, round groove tombs (方形周溝墓), wooden coffins (木棺墓), stone coffins (石棺墓), burial mounds (墳丘墓) were created [9, P. 27-31].

##### 2. Medieval Era

According to *Haka no Rekishi* [10] by Ishino Hironobu and Iwasaki Takuya, in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, Buddhism became very popular after introduction though Shinto, a Japanese polytheism, is indigenous religion in Japan. Later, the influence of Buddhism affected syncretization of Shinto with Buddhism which is a characteristic changed in Japanese religion.

Due to Buddhism influence in the Heian period (8C-12C), masonry techniques brought from Korea and China was utilized in Japanese burial. One of the examples are “Gorin Tou” or treasure gabled pagodas were built as a monument among the ruling class. “Gorin Tou” (五輪塔) or tomb statue, has six elements of existence such as “earth,” “water,” “fire,” “wind,” “sky,” and “recognition.” More specifically, (1) earth ring (square) represent body, (2) water circle (circular) represents blood, (3) fire circle (triangle) represents body temperature, (4) wind wheel (half round) represents breathing, and (5) air ring (jewel shape) represent states of blending. The pagoda stupa shows the view of the universe [10, P. 108].

Five elements show universe constitutes “earth,” “water,” “fire,” “wind,” and “sky”, and (6) “recognition” shows summon of soul when people make a tomb. The first above five elements which shows Earth ring, the water circle, the fire circles, the wind wheel, and the air ring, and the sixth element of the pagoda stupa represents the view of the universe. This traditional pagoda became popular during Zen Buddhism especially from the Kamakura era to the Muromachi era (12C-16C) [10, P. 57].

### 3. Early Modern Era to Modern Era

During the Edo era in the seventeenth century, Christianity was banished in Japan, and Danka system or a system of the support of Buddhist temples, was established by Buddhist followers instituting the Buddhist methodology of funeral, tombs and memorial services for the dad. Under the Danka system, people worshipped Buddhism. People belonged to temples, and crafted the Buddhist tombs. During the mid-Meiji era (19th Century), even ordinary citizens made tombstones for their families, and placed them into crests by housing unit or living area [10, P. 102]. Accordingly, tombstones started among aristocrats and priests, but gradually trickled down and became popular among commoners in the Edo era [11]. Before that, commoners would sharp pebbles and cuttings into a mound for a marker and tomb. Then, tombstones were for individuals and couples, and were built by family members or residents of that village during the mid-Meiji era. Later, tombstones such as stupa or pagoda of Buddhist statues were built, and prism type and park-type tombs were erected after the Meiji era.

From the beginning of the Meiji era in the nineteenth century, Shinto was proclaimed as the national religion. In 1938, Matsushita Konosuke, a founder of the Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd., built company tombs [12]. Matsushita considered the company as home, and employees as a family member. After the World War II, he also made “Shenbo” (志縁墓) for simple women and “Kuonbo” (久遠墓) as permanent cared tombs such as “Eitai Kuyobo” (永代供養墓).

After the World War II, private cemeteries were opened and western-type tombs were more prevalent. Commoners began to erect their tombstones with their unique inscriptions and carvings sparking originality, which is called “a new designed tomb” or a “unique tomb” as seen in Chapter III.

Japanese tradition required the eldest son was responsible for the care and maintenance of the deceased parents’ tomb, and be buried alongside upon his death. If a woman married the eldest son and acquired his surname, she was expected to buried alongside with her husband. After “Kodo Seicho” (高度成長) or high-growth period in 1970s, people began to make their own tombs. The current declining birth rate since 1975 created family succession dilemma in married couples and their off-springs who had the responsibility to inherit the tombs of the two families. Thus, the new types of tombs such as scattering ashes of “Eitai Kuyobo” began to prevail. Especially, “Eitai Kuyobo,” a pioneering tomb which will be examined in the next chapter gets a lot of attention, and triggers a social focus on contemporary grave problems [10, P. 102].

### C. Penetration of Cremation

Considering the type of rituals of funeral, cremation has been prevailed with the influence of Buddhism. In the sixth century, however, with the Confucian influence in the past, the rate of cremation in Japan was about 20% during the 1900 which increased to 45% during the 1930, 54% in 1950, 86% in 1975, 97% in 1990, and reaching 99.9% in 2000, which is the highest cremation rate in the world [13]. One of the reasons of high cremation rate in Japan is religious ritual rites, because other religions such as Christianity, Confucianism, and Hinduism negate cremation. In Europe, the dead are conventionally buried. Looking at the USA, the dead are traditionally buried, but due to public health concerns, the cremation rate has risen to about 20 percent [13].

### D. Material and Cost of Tombstones and Funeral

Tombs are generally made from marble and limestone marble which are easy to craft and manipulate. However, granite is more difficult due to the material hardness. The following funeral costs explain drastic differences among countries [14].

TABLE III  
 FUNERAL COST BY COUNTRIES [11, p.22]

Japan	2,310,000 yen
England	123,000 yen
Germany	198,000 yen
Korea	373,000 yen
The USA	444,000 yen

Japan’s funeral cost is the highest compared with the England is one twentieth of Japan, and even the second highest USA is still one fifth of Japan. Moreover, looking at the cost of building tombs, the capital, Tokyo, is the most expensive while the average cost elsewhere is much lower. The cost of constructing tombs requires perpetual royalty, tombstones, and management fees. These fees include perpetual royalty fee which is the administrative and management cost of land use rights and the maintenance of the cemetery. Comparing domestically, the current cost of perpetual royalty and tombstones in Tokyo is from 2 million to 5 million yen (\$20,000-\$50,000 USD), and the average national cost is 1,763,000 yen (\$17,663 USD) [15]. It shows that price of

permanent royalty and tombstones in Tokyo where is extremely expensive than in other parts of Japan. As seen in the above, the Japanese funeral cost is expensive as compared with the England which is one twentieth the cost of Japan, and the US funeral cost ranks the 2<sup>nd</sup> priciest which is still only one fifth of Japan.

TABLE IV  
 COST OF PERPETUAL ROYALTY AND TOMBSTONE IN 2008 [15, p.31]

More than 1 million less than 2 million yen	45.6 %
More than half a million less than 1 million yen	21.5 %
More than 2 million less than 3 million yen	20.9 %

Even the high cost of tombs, a burial land was in short supply and land prices skyrocketed. Thus, tombs building type with a small space became more popular. These results show costs of constructing tombstone and funeral are extremely expensive in Japan, and they need to find an affordable place after death.

#### V. SOCIAL CHANGE AND UNIQUE TOMB

Changes of tombs represent the change of role in society. Here we see the different types of tombs such as “Eitai Kuyobo” and unique tombs such as designs of one’s own tombs.

##### A. “Eitai Kuyobo”

The nation’s birthrate declined leading to fewer people becoming tomb keepers as a profession and people began to build “Eitai Kuyobo” (永代供養墓) or a tombs of memorial for the dead instead [16]. “Eitai Kuyobo” or a tomb of permanent memorial service for the dead, has different types of tombs. So “Eitai Kuyobo” is especially important for those who do not have a family. If you do not have anyone to succeed your tomb, a tomb company will take care of you in “Eitai Kuyobo” after death. Here, there are roughly three types of “Eitai Kuyobo” such as the 1. individual burial type, 2. the collection type, and 3. the assembly burial type, and people choose the types of tombs which they want to get in.

According to Yoshikawa Mitsuko, “Individual Burial Type” (個別埋葬型) is separate burial type whose tombstone is separated by a one meter square crypt space, and ashes are stored in a tomb plate. It is most spacious compared with other types of tombs, and only one person is enshrined in a tomb [13].

“Assembly Burial Type” (集合・合葬型) has a different shape from separate burial type. The crypt was used to store ashes to build a tomb. In this tomb, ashes of the dead are placed in a pot, and placed with other dead. In recent years, bereaved families and their relatives pay visit to a charnel chapel type. Diversity of tombs is brought from people’s different attitude and value of social change [13].

“Collective Burial Type” (納骨型) is mostly a tomb building. These three storied tomb buildings are popular. Due to the shortage of land, “assembly burial tomb,” “tomb building,” “joint tombs,” and urban public cemetery also became popular.

Assembly burial tombs can be a single individual tomb, couple tombs, and multi-generation tombs. With these memorial tombs, they tend to be reasonably priced. When

buying a tomb, perpetual royalty fees, tombstones, and construction costs must be factored in. In the Tokyo metropolitan area, tombs cost three to four million yen. Because of urbanization, a burial land was in short supply and land prices skyrocketed. Thus, tomb building type became more popular. In addition, the nation’s birthrate declined leading to fewer people becoming tomb keepers as a profession and people began to build “Eitai Kuyo” or a tomb of memorial for the dead instead [13].

##### B. Design of One’s Own Tombs

Nowadays, more unique tombs have been created, which were quite different from the tombs in the history of tombs in the previous section. In 2012, traditional Japanese tombs occupy 41% while Western tombs and engraved designed tombs called “New Design Tomb” are about 53%, whose number exceeds Japanese style tombs for the first time [17].

The reason of popularity is because the designed tombs can have personalized objects and favorite words or sayings. In some cases, they add their favorite words and letters instead of family names with the tombs.

##### 1. In the Case of Character and Japanese Animation Tombs

Although “New Designed Tomb” such as characterized objects in animation or comics, or favorite objects are easily made as in Japan, but in the case of Cincinnati, Ohio, USA, it became controversial. Bereaved of Kimberly Walker, a U.S. Army sergeant, built SpongeBob tombs of Kimberly’s favorite animated character, but these tombs were later removed by the Spring Grove cemetery president Gary Freytag, though bereaved of were allowed to build the tombs [18]. If the tomb and its land is a personal property, even if this is a public cemetery in Japan, would it be possible to build a character tomb? The answer is yes.

It would be possible to create “New Designed Tomb” in Japan as long as you own a property and a tomb. Moreover, many cemetery and tombstone companies encourage the creation of unique tombs and the individual Japanese taste and originality such as the erection of animation characters’ tombs.

##### 2. In the Case of Hobby

Another case was Billy Standly’s case which was permitted to place his unique tomb. Billy Standley, an Ohio biker, wished to be buried astride his beloved Harley-Davidson. Billy and his sons spent years preparing for his funeral and bought three large burial plots next to his wife, Lorna. The hole of his tomb would be big enough to accommodate his casket, which is plexiglas and reinforced the bottom with metal and wood. When Billy died of lung cancer at the age of 82, he was visible through the transparent plexiglas coffin. He dressed in his leathers and sunglasses, and sitting on top of his Harley Davidson [19]. This shows when we observe joining in the tombs, reactions vary much person to person. As in the case of Billy Standley, in Japan, cemetery and tombstone companies encourage people to create unique tombs with their taste and originality such as the erection of animation characters’ tombs due to the Japanese love for animation characters and manga art.

Japanese love for animation characters is strongly due to the influence of manga art and animation in their media. Some animation creators decorate their tombs with their animation characters: Tezuka Osamu (Saibogu 009), Fujiko Fuiio (Doraemon), and Mizuki Shigeru (Gegege no Kitarou). People like to create their tombs with their favorite objects such as animation characters: Doraemon and Pokemon.

Considering how the Japanese create "New Designed Tomb," the Japanese people can be individualistic at the end of life and create their unique and imaginative tombstones although the Japanese have been educated to be homogeneous and conforming.

### 3. Creation of Favorite Objects

Highlighting the case of a Takakura couple, they have unique and creative tombstone. Historically, their tombs deviated from their ancestors. However, they said, "We love our cars. We have used it for seventeen years. Because we join tombs we like, we want to create our favorite car. It actually took for five months for completion." [20]. Thus, they decorated their tombs with a design of their car, which shows the change of tombs. Many people think that unique tombs have their favorite life memory and life history of each family. Creation of the new designed tombs is accepted, and each year, the national tombstone associations give a prize of "New Designed Tomb", so it becomes more popular among people.

Seeing various types of tombs, here are the types of Eitai Kuyo (unnecessary successor of tombs) such as "Wall Type" (壁型), "Collective Type" (集合型), and "A Charnel Chapel Type" (納骨型). Viewing the lack of burial space in expanding big cities, the nation as a whole had a declining birthrate, with a shift from traditional burial to cremation. Different choices have become the trend self-determination for funerals.

The younger generation are viewing that a tomb is an artistic repository to storing ashes, and the ideas of "Eitai Kuyobo," a tomb for permanent memorial service for the dead meaningful. Even some people think of unnecessary of tombstones. Others want to create their designed tombs. Each individual family will determine the actual type of funerals to meet their needs.

## VI. CHANGES OF PEOPLES' VIEW TOWARD TOMBS

In this section, due to the increased mortality of the more advance Japan aged, we see the changes of people's perspective toward tombs. Especially, the perspectives of ancestors' tombs, descendants' obligations to the dead and their own tombs can be focused. By pointing out husband and wife relationships, and change of marriage, people's different attitudes and value in life can be considered.

### A. Duty to Protect Their Ancestors' Tombs

Traditionally, an ancestral descent, a male head in the family, and his wife, keep the ancestral graves. In the following questionnaire, respondents are descents who succeed ancestral tombs.

TABLE V

OBLIGATION TO PROTECT ANCESTRAL GRAVES [1, p. 426]

(1) It is descents' obligation to protect ancestral graves and hold a memorial service.	
Yes. 75.7 %	
Female 29.9 %	Male 49.6 %

Many people think that they should protect their ancestors' tombs. However, more wives do not want to join the same tomb as their husbands as follows:

TABLE VI

HUSBAND AND WIFE SHOULD JOIN THE SAME TOMB [1, p.426]

(2) Do you think that husband and wife should join the same tomb?	
Yes. 67.4%	No Opinion 19.5 %
Female 17.5 %	Male 6.4 %

Mostly, husband and wife think that they should be joined in the same tomb. More female successors are aware of the tradition of joining with their husbands, who is the main head of succession of tombs. However, the following results show wife's refusal to join the same tomb with their husbands.

### B. Reasons of Wives' Refusal to Join the Same Tomb with Their Husbands

Interestingly, the following answers [19] show the reason why they do not want to join the same tomb as their husbands' tombs.

TABLE VII

WIVES' REASONS FOR NOT JOINING THE SAME TOMB WITH THEIR HUSBANDS [19]

(3) Specify the main reason why you don't want to be join in your husband's tomb.	
1. I don't want to be with unknown ancestors.	39.9 %
2. Tombs are in an unknown place.	32.3 %
3. I don't like my husband's family.	30.7 %
4. There's no one else to succeed the tomb and I don't want to make a trouble with my child	25.1%
5. I don't want to join the tomb with my husband.	22.2 %
6. I want to join the tomb with my parents.	20.0%
7. There's no tomb.	15.3 %
8. I don't like my husband.	13.9 %
9. There's no one to succeed my family's tomb.	11.4 %
10.I want to join the tomb with my pets.	3.0 %

It is true that if a woman married the eldest son and acquired his surname, she was expected to be buried alongside with her husband. However, the statistic says that many wives do not like to join the same tomb with their husbands.

Is it lack of love or just hatred the different bold on why Japanese women do not want to join the same tomb with their husbands? One reason is that they do not have the same bloodline with their husbands' families, which means otherness between husbands and wives (39.9 %). Another reason is that, after marriage, wives move away from their hometown and they don't feel at home (32.5 %), and dislike husbands' families (30.7%). Thus, many wives feel that they do not belong to their husbands' tombs and they do not like their husbands. However, wives want to join the same tomb as their parents' tomb (20.0 %) or they rather prefer to be with their deceased pets

(3.0 %).

### C. Types of Marriage

Because of wives who do not want to join the same tomb as their husbands, the question still arises why Japanese women do not want to join the same tomb with their husbands. Here are statistics of Japanese women's marriage rate and its pattern such as love marriage and arranged marriage [1, p.112].

TABLE VIII

PERCENTAGE OF LOVE MARRIAGE AND ARRANGED MARRIAGE [1, p.112]

year	Love Marriage	Arranged Marriage
1935	13.6 %	69.0 %
1970	48.7 %	44.9 %
2005	87.2 %	6.2 %

Seeing that change of marriage, love marriage dramatically increases from 13.6% in 1935 to 87.2% in 2005. On the contrary, arranged marriage drastically decreases from 69.0% in 1935 to 6.2 % in 2005. In the 1970s, the percentage of love marriage and arranged marriage reversed. More love marriage and less arranged marriage were represented. Moreover, unmarried rate has been increased in Japan.

TABLE IX

PERCENTAGE OF UNMARRIED PEOPLE [1, p.112]

Year	Male from 25 to 29	Male from 30 to 34	Female from 25 to 29	Female from 30 to 34
1980	55.1%	21.5%	24.0%	9.1%
1990	65.1%	32.8%	40.4%	13.9%
2000	69.4%	42.9%	54.0%	26.6%
2005	71.4%	47.1%	59.0%	32.0%
2010	71.8%	47.3%	60.3%	34.5%

The above statistic shows unmarried people in 2010 than in 1980. Seeing these changes of less marriage, high mortality rate, low birthrate, and less inheritance of family tombs, definitely affect family changes in Japanese society. Seeing the low rate of arrange marriage, it is thought to be family marriage between two families, and the low rate of marriage shows the collapse of the family system.

## VII. CONCLUSION: COLLAPSE OF FAMILY SYSTEM

The current declining birth rate since 1975 has created family succession dilemma in many married couples and their off-springs, which has induced corruption of the family system. Japanese tradition required the eldest son to be responsible for the care and maintenance of the deceased parents' tomb and be buried alongside upon his death, but the tradition has collapsed because of no succession of the households. The change of the traditional Japanese family system and increasing elderly mortality rate has changed people's view of death. They are more cognizant of death, its process and the implications to themselves and their family members. Regardless of cultures, it is necessary in the preparation of death as it was inevitable. Through time, funeral and burial choices evolved from just simply placing a body underneath a collection of pebbles and cutting shaped into a mound. Careful consideration in the burial

process selection is needed to meet the needs of the dead and closure to the family.

There is no easy decision as the funeral and burial process for their loved one will based on the bereaved needs to bring complete and satisfactory closure for coping with their loss. A further study will be focused on how historical and social changes effect on people's conscious of death.

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