

For Immediate Release:
Contact: Colleen Orme
colleen@onthemarcmedia.com
703-861-5457

Bad News? Divorce Rates Low Among Asian Americans

Asian-American Women Fear Seeking Divorce
Cultural Conditions Make it Difficult to Leave Husband

(Tysons Corner, VA)— The divorce rate among Asian Americans is nearly half that of the general population. But to divorce attorney Kyung (Kathryn) Dickerson, a partner at SmolenPlevy in Vienna, VA (www.smolenplevy.com), the low figure spotlights a serious problem. At issue: community pressure that keep Asian women from seeking divorces. “This low divorce rate may actually reflect some very negative and disturbing realities,” says Dickerson.

Even in the United States, where separation and divorce are at high levels, it is hard for an Asian woman to leave her husband. Dickerson says “many Asian women live in tightly knit neighborhoods where peers frown on a practice that many Americans find much more acceptable, even commonplace.” Studies estimate that 5 – 6% of Asian American adults were currently separated or divorced compared to 10-12% of the U.S. population.

According to National Healthy Marriage Research Centers, there are traditional cultural views that influence the ability to divorce:

- Collectivism vs. Individualism – Many Asian Americans value commitment to the needs of the group over individual needs. They tend to value obedience, self control, and family interest over typical American values of independence.
- Respect for Parents – Duty, obligation, the importance of the family name and service and sacrifice to elders are some commitments that can affect choices about whom to marry, when to marry and whether to stay married.
- Marital Roles – Many Asian American couples struggle to balance Asian and American culture norms about the appropriate roles for husbands and wives.
- Communication Style – Some Asian cultures discourage the expression of feelings, especially very strong positive or negative emotions such as anger and joy.

As an attorney, an Asian-born and divorced herself, Kathryn Dickerson helps women navigate the tricky waters of a practice still deemed taboo in her community.

These women fear seeking a divorce because of the stigma attached to it. Asian women also may face more obstacles in leaving a marriage even if there is domestic violence. Language barriers and these traditional cultural beliefs discourage women from reporting violent behavior.

For information, please contact, Colleen Orme at 703-861-5457 or at ormec686@aol.com.