

**COMPARATIVE SURVEY OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
AND THEIR MOTHERS IN HONOLULU
ON THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD SEX ROLES***

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I Introduction

“Sex role” means, in the simplest terms, the attitudes and behaviors associated with one sex or the other. We have never been informed by the world history the existence of such a society without distinctions between men’s and women’s roles. The most basic division of labor has been assumed between men and women. And the society developed distinctive concepts on masculinity and femininity which reflect what different sexes are supposed to do and how they are supposed to behave in the society. The term, sex role, includes both cognitive and behavioral aspects concerning male-female distinctions.

Sex roles vary in one society or the other; a society may define two sex roles quite distinctively and rigidly, while another society perceives less distinctions and tolerates interchangeable role-taking. Even in one society sex roles are recognized and performed with variation according to different age groups, social classes, sub-cultural groups, etc. And like all other structural elements of a society, sex role and its significance to

* This survey was conducted during my stay at the East West Center and University of Hawaii (1975 – 1978). Culture Learning Institute which I was affiliated with provided me with the research advisors, financial support, and authorization of the survey as a part of CLI projects. The questionnaires were distributed by the cooperative teachers of three public and two private high schools in Honolulu, and self-administered by the students and their mothers in May and September of 1976. Here, I would like to express my gratitude toward all the contributions and assistance rendered to this survey by the people in Honolulu.

the society change. In contemporary world where equal rights of men and women are more or less recognized, the general direction of this change is toward less distinctions between the two sexes. This means that women participate more and more in the domains which used to be considered as strictly men's, as well as men come to show more understanding in sharing the tasks which have been conventionally assigned to women. Parallel to such a phenomenon, the meanings of femininity and masculinity must have also been changing.

This is a partial report of a survey conducted in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1976 on sex role identification of two generations. The socio-cultural uniqueness of the research site enabled us to develop the analysis based on ethnic comparisons. According to 1970 Census, the State of Hawaii consists of Caucasians (39%), Japanese (28%), Filipinos (12%), Hawaiians (9%), Chinese (7%) and Others (5%). They are largely the immigrants from Asia, Pacific areas and US Mainland, and their descendants. Because of its relatively new history of immigration, it is plausible that each ethnic group in Hawaii maintains clear identity and different attitude toward the theme of this survey.

II Outline of the survey and respondents

The questionnaires were filled out by 461 high school students (285 females and 176 males) and 342 mothers. The ethnic composition of the respondents considerably deviates from the state-wide ethnic ratio mentioned above. This is attributed to the high schools which are predominated by the students of Japanese and other Asian ancestries. (See Table 1.) For further analysis in this report, the two largest ethnic groups, the Japanese and Caucasians, are the primary objects of comparison, and all others are considered in one group for the reasons that the Chinese, Filipinos and Koreans are all too small in numbers and that none of the half-Japanese, Mixed or Other groups is possibly identified with a single ethnicity.

The ages of the students range from 14 to 19; however, 62% of them are 16 or 17 years old. Fifty-seven percent of the mothers are in their forties and the rest are almost equally distributed in the thirties and

Table 1 Sex by Ethnic Group

	1 Caucasian	2 Japanese	3 Half-Japanese	4 Chinese	5 Filipino	6 Korean	7 Mixed	8 Other	Sub-total	Total
Male	34 19.3	50 28.4	23 13.1	16 9.1	3 1.7	3 1.7	40 22.7	7 4.0	92 52.2	176 100.0
Female	57 20.0	119 41.8	18 6.3	28 9.8	4 1.4	8 2.8	41 14.4	10 3.5	109 38.1	285 100.0
Total	91 19.7	169 36.7	41 8.9	44 9.5	7 1.5	11 2.4	81 17.6	17 3.7	201 43.6	461 100.0

Definitions: 1) Ethnic groups 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 – At least 3 grandparents of a case are identified with that ethnicity (thus, each group includes a few cases of 1/4 mixture with other bloods).

2) Half-Japanese – Either of parents is Japanese, or both of them are half-Japanese.

fifties. Eighty-nine percent of the mothers are married women. The rate of divorced is highest among the Caucasian mothers (15%).

The researcher paid special attention to when the respondents' families immigrated to Hawaii. As for the Japanese students, 95% are Hawaii-born: 81% have both Hawaii-born parents and 16% have one Hawaii-born parent. However, those who have Hawaii-born grandparents are less than half. The Japanese students whose three or four grandparents are Hawaii-born are only 8% and those with only one or two Hawaii-born grandparents are 37%. On the other hand, those who have all Asia-born grandparents are 52%. These percentages imply that pure *yonsei* (fourth generation) Japanese students are quite a few (less than 8%), that approximately half of them are pure *sansei* (third generation), and that most of the rest mediate between *sansei* and *yonsei*. In contrast with the Japanese, the immigration of the Caucasian families seems to be more recent phenomenon. The Hawaii-born students are only 38% and those who have at least one Hawaii-born parent are 24%. The rest of the Caucasian student and the parents were all born in US Mainland excluding a few exceptional cases. Such characteristics reflect the facts in the population censuses that since 1950 the Caucasian population has rapidly increased and its ratio surpassed that of the Japanese, although the absolute population of the Japanese has not decreased at all. The Hawaii-

born rate of the students of other or mixed ethnicities appears lower than that of the Japanese in average (around 70%), because of the relatively new immigration of Filipinos and Koreans.

The educational standards of the mothers are very high; the number of those who did not complete high school education is negligible and the university (including graduate courses) graduates occupy 75% of the Caucasian mothers, 39% of the Japanese mothers and 47% of other mothers. The Caucasian mother group comprises mainly housewives (34%), professional, technical workers (31%), and sales, clerical & service workers (24%). The order changes with the Japanese mother group as sales, clerical & service workers (49%), housewives (26%) and professional technical workers (18%). As for other mothers, housewives are 32%, sales, clerical & service workers and professional technical workers are 29% and 21%, respectively.

To mention the verbal communication of the students with their parents, brothers, sisters and friends, they are, regardless of their ethnicity, overwhelmingly mono-lingual, English-speaking people.

Finally, the following descriptions are some stereo-types of the respondents summarizing above observations.

- 1) A sixteen or seventeen year old high school girl or boy who belongs to the second Hawaii-born generation of the Japanese immigrants (*sansei*), and her/his mother in her forties who completed high school education and is engaged in a clerical work.
- 2) A sixteen or seventeen year old high school girl or boy whose Caucasian parents moved from US Mainland to Hawaii after her/his birth, and her/his mother in her forties who graduated from a university and is currently either a professional technical worker or a housewife.

The student and mother groups of other or mixed ethnicities are hard to characterize. The reason for keeping these groups for all that is because it is the researcher's impression that they may represent today's Hawaiian cultural setting as a melting pot of races.

III Findings

The major part of the survey consists of a) to what extent the respondents are restrained by the conventional ideas of masculinity and femininity through their judgement on human character traits, b) the mothers' sex role orientation in disciplining their children, c) the respondents' judgement on various opinions about men's or women's roles in the society, d) the selection of the meanings of marriage for women by the respondents, and e) over-all evaluation of being a man/woman by the respondents.

a) feminine and masculine character traits

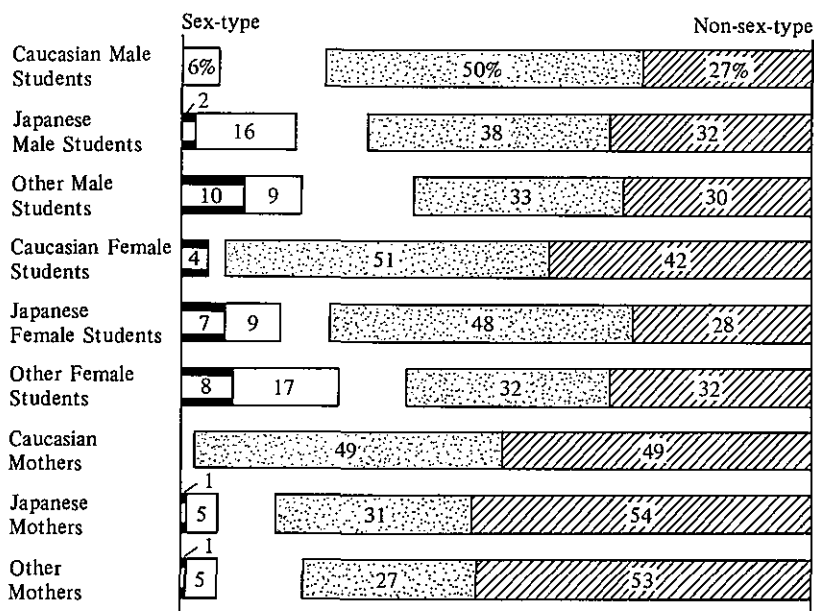
Twenty-eight character traits were listed in the questionnaire and classified into four categories by the respondents; 1) desirable for men, 2) desirable for women, 3) desirable for both men and women, and 4) unnecessary for both men and women. A striking result is that the majority of the respondents, especially Caucasian students and all mother groups, are not eager to associate most of the character traits with masculinity or femininity.


The traits attributed to masculinity by 40% – 60% of the respondents are "courageous," "tough," "having good leadership" and "aggressive," only. "Tender" and "sensitive" are selected as feminine traits by 40%. "Submissive," "modest," "affectionate" and "cheerful" are less favored for femininity. However, "modest," "humble," "aggressive," "submissive" and "self-possessed" are also considered as unnecessary for both men and women by around 40%. "Active," "well-mannered," "intelligent," "independent," "generous," "enthusiastic," "fair-minded," "responsible," "logical" and "self-confident" are classified as desirable for both men and women constantly by 90% or more of the respondents. Other six traits, "strong-minded," "cool-headed," "tolerant," "ambitious," "serious" and "calm" are also highly favored as neutral traits by about 80% of the respondents.


Next, the researcher tried to analyze the degrees of each individual's association with masculinity and femininity using the total number of the traits which are chosen for only one sex. Those who have chosen more than ten character traits for either of the two sexes are called "sex-type" and those who have chosen more than twenty character traits for


both sexes are considered as "non-sex-type." (See Figure 1.) It is clear that non-sex-type, who is less concerned with feminine-masculine figures, is the majority in all groups. Particularly, the Caucasian mothers and female students show the tendency most strongly. The groups with relatively many sex-type respondents are other female students, the Japanese male students, other male students and the Japanese female students in order.


Figure 1 Sex-type & Non-sex-type Distribution (%)



 more than 15 character traits for (1) desirable for men or (2) desirable for women

 between 10 and 14 character traits for (1) or (2)

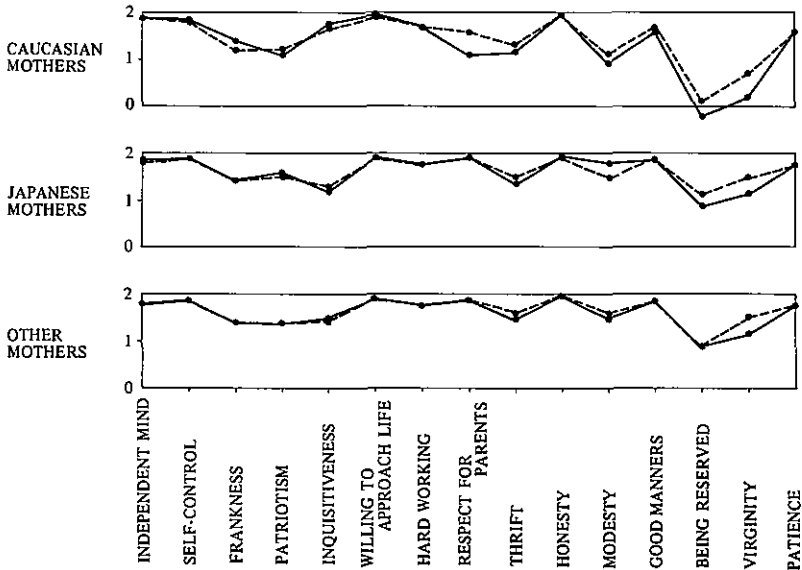
 between 20 and 24 character traits for (3) desirable for both men and women

 more than 25 character traits for (3)

b) important norms for child discipline

Fifteen norms are given scores between -1 and 2 by the mothers according to the importance in their child discipline. The purpose of this question was to compare the different emphases which affect on the discipline of boys and girls. However, as it is seen in Figure 2, in any ethnic group, we can hardly detect distinctively important norms only for boys or girls. There are slightly more emphases on "virginity" and "respect for parents" for girls, though the latter is the case only with the Caucasian mothers. All other norms are valued almost equally for boys and girls. "Being reserved" is exceptionally lowly graded by the Caucasian mothers. The difference by the ethnic groups is not clearly distinguishable, either. Are these results possibly interpreted as the mothers raise their sons and daughters without making any moralistic distinctions?

Figure 2 Importance of the Norms in Child Discipline



c) men's or women's roles in the society

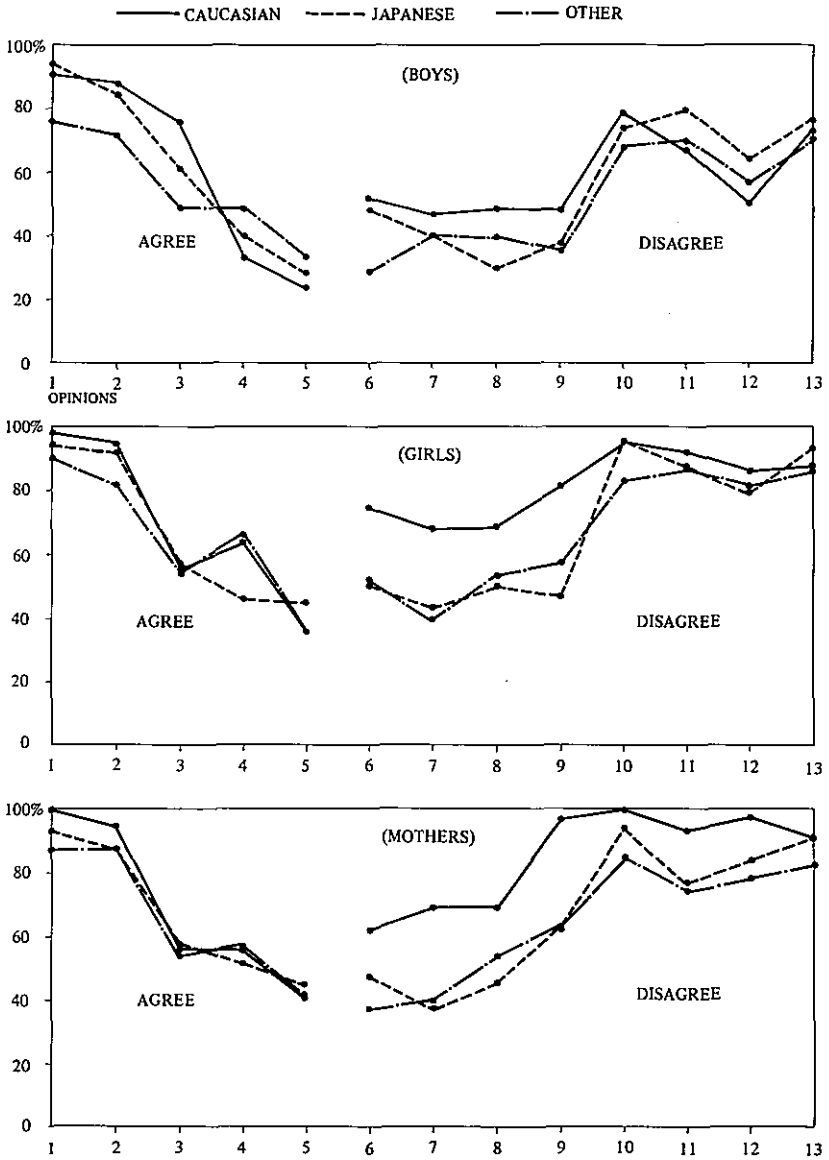
1. If she has the ability, a woman should have the opportunity to gain

- as high a position in employment as a man.
2. If a man and a woman have the same job and perform them equally well, it is unreasonable for them to get different pay.
 3. If it appears that men are generally more capable than women, the difference can be attributed to American society.
 4. A woman should have a career to which she can devote herself throughout her life.
 5. It is undesirable for a wife to be economically dependent upon her husband.
 6. A wife should give priority to her husband's wishes in the home.
 7. It is desirable for women to be reserved in their behavior to men.
 8. There is a lack of femininity among women in America today.
 9. Women inherently are somewhat inferior to men.
 10. For women, taking a job should be regarded only as a way of keeping occupied until getting married.
 11. To make tea or coffee in the office should be a task for women.
 12. House-keeping should be the duty of a wife and she should not let her husband do it.
 13. Higher education is not necessary for women.

One, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are considered as relatively liberal opinions and the rest are the opposite. (Here, being liberal means to be positive in admitting women's capability and giving more social opportunities to women. In the questionnaire, the order of these opinions is randomly arranged.) The respondents answered with a choice among "agree," "disagree" or "uncertain" to each opinion. In Figure 3, only the percentages of those who agree to the first five opinions and those who disagree to the rest in order to compare the degrees of "liberal" attitude by the groups. The higher a percentage to one opinion is, the more liberal the total response of the group to the opinion is. Also, the higher the lines are located in a graph, the more liberal the group is. For examples, liberal response rates are higher toward 1, 2, 10 and 11; and if we compare the responses of other male students and the Caucasian mothers to the opinions 6 to 13, the latter group as a whole has more liberal attitude.

It can be concluded from this figure that the mothers and female students have more liberal attitude than the male students do. However, another point that we should not ignore, though it does not appear in the figure, is the percentages of "uncertain" given to each opinion. It is on this point that another notable result is detected. The Caucasian male

Figure 3 Men's and Women's Roles in the Society



students showed the highest uncertainty rate in average (25%), and the lowest was that of the Caucasian mothers (6.5%). Twenty-three percent of the Japanese and other male students, 16% of the Japanese and other female students, 12% of the Caucasian female students, and 10% of the Japanese and other mothers are other uncertainty rates in average to the thirteen opinions. In short, the rates of uncertainty decrease along the following order; the male students, the female students and the mothers. Therefore, it is not necessarily anti-liberal attitude that caused the lower liberal response rates among the male students. Taking this observation into consideration, the conclusion should be revised as "the mothers are least hesitant to show liberal responses."

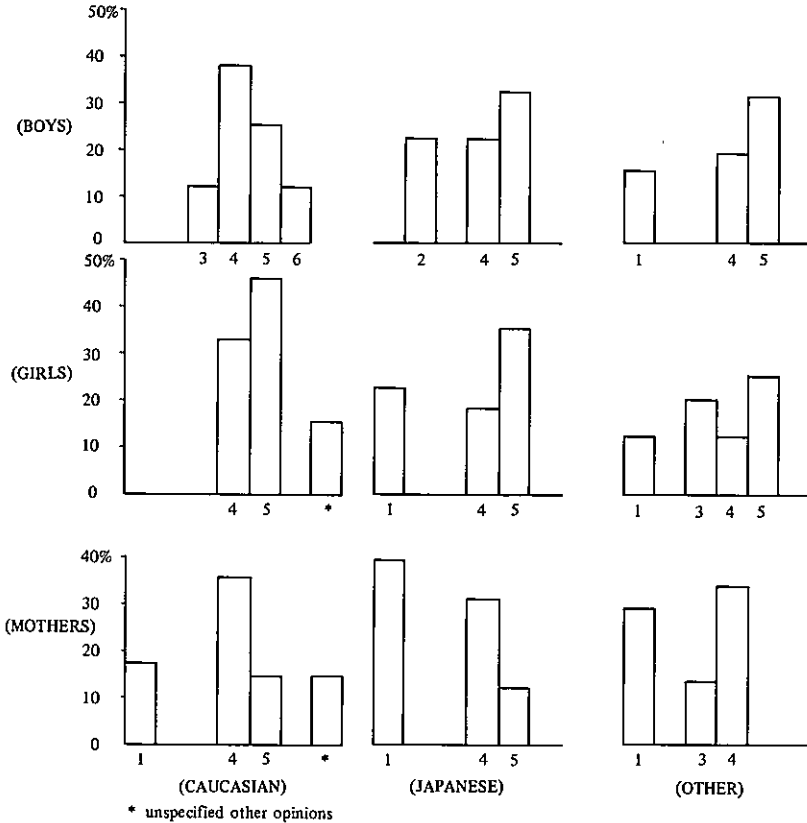
d) marriage and women

The six alternatives on marriage and women listed in the questionnaires are;

1. It is better for a woman to get married because a woman's happiness lies in marriage.
2. It is better for a woman to get married because marriage brings her economic security.
3. It is better for a woman to get married because marriage brings her psychological security.
4. It is better for a woman to get married because marriage is quite natural for human beings.
5. A woman might not necessarily marry if she can support herself.
6. It is better for a woman not to marry because marriage limits freedom.

The respondents were asked to choose one most agreeable opinion from the above. Three most popular opinions in each group are shown with the percentages in Figure 4. The responses are diversified. No opinion is supported by the majority of a group. However, except with the Caucasian female students, those who are favorable for marriage (1 to 4) exceed those who are not in any group. The supporters of opinion 6 (who are clearly against marriage) appears only in the Caucasian male student group in the third. Opinion 5 is supported by considerable percentage of all the students, but, it is unpopular among the mothers who seem to be overwhelmingly pro-marriage. As a conclusion, unexperienced young people tend to support alternative ways of living for women beside marriage more than the mothers who are actually married do.

Figure 4 Marriage and Women



e) evaluation of being a man/woman

“If you could be born again, would you rather be a man, or a women?”
 – The question is primitive and old-fashioned, and yet, most people are likely to give serious consideration to it. One’s response is usually based on individual reflection over his/her life as a male/female. It is sometimes an inferiority complex to one’s own sex that makes him/her prefer the other sex, and a superiority complex will make a person proud of his/her own sex. The respondents of this survey were also highly responsive to this open-ended question, giving their own preference and reasoning.

First, it is clear that the majority of them responded positively toward their own sex. The Japanese and other male students and the Caucasian female students are most confident of their own sex. The lowest is other female student group. (See Table 2) The 30% disparity between the Caucasian female students and other female students is remarkable. There is a report of a similar survey conducted among Japan-Japanese about ten years ago. (Hayashi: 1973) According to this report, about 90% of the men wanted to be a man again. But, as for women, 48% of them wanted to be the same sex and 43% preferred to be a man.

Table 2 To be a Man or a Woman? (%)

	Man	Woman	Either	Total
(Boys)				
Caucasian	83.8	9.7	6.5	100.0
Japanese	95.7	4.3	—	100.0
Other	96.3	3.7	—	100.0
(Girls)				
Caucasian	4.0	96.0	—	100.0
Japanese	19.4	78.0	2.8	100.0
Other	30.8	67.3	1.9	100.0
(Mothers)				
Caucasian	7.3	90.9	1.8	100.0
Japanese	11.9	86.5	1.6	100.0
Other	15.4	84.6	—	100.0

The most interesting part of this question is, however, the statements written by the respondents concerning why they have chosen one sex from the other. Many of those who prefer their own sex stated simply that they "like it," "enjoy it," or "are satisfied" so far being his/her own sex. Among the female students this type of response exceeds all other positive references to female sex. Among the male students, the perception that men have an easier life surpasses all the rest. On the other hand, not a small number of the female students recognize that women have an easier life than men. Their reasoning is based on different views

and aspects of the nature and social life of men and women, which are interesting to compare. For the male students, men have an easier life because they have greater freedom in doing all sorts of things, less restrictions socially and physically, do not have to worry about trifling matters such as make-up and dresses, and have no such physical sufferings as pregnancy and child bearing. The female students refute that it is women who have an easier life than men because women have less responsibility and less social pressures, do not have to worry about keeping up with a masculine image as men always have to, can be dependent on men and will not be drafted. However, male students' perception for the easiness of men's life is also perceived by some females as the reasons for their choice to be a man, while no male student recognizes women's life as easier and enviable than his own. As a source of men's superiority complex, some male students perceived that this is a men's world and that men are the dominant sex, more independent and stronger. The female students' observations over the merits for being a woman are more diversified; against masculine aggressiveness, the female students claim that women are allowed to express their emotions freely, also they are more sensitive and perceptive. Some others enjoy womanly pleasures as dating, dressing up, make-up, etc., which are turned down by the male students as mere 'trifles.' Child bearing and motherhood are also identified both as negative and positive elements of womanhood; for some female students they are the physical burdens of women, and yet some others expect them as one of the most wonderful and meaningful part of womanhood. A group of female students, though not many, regard that being a woman is still problematic in many ways, but, challenging, full of potentials, and want to contribute to acquiring equal rights for women. Those responses as "I'm used to it," or "don't know how it's like being the other sex" are rather negative acceptance of their own sex. Among those who want to be born the opposite sex, some are based on curiosity for the other sex. As a whole, a tendency to emphasize positive aspects of one's own sex is primarily observed. Yet, some female students (mostly of Japanese or Other groups) are negative toward female sex, being aware of social and physical disadvantages of being a woman.

Table 3 Sex Preferences and Reasons

	Caucasian	Japanese	Other	Total
(Male)				
A. Want to be born a man again.				
1. I like it, enjoy it, am satisfied.	9	13	16	38
2. Men have an easier life (less problems, greater freedom, more opportunity in doing things, more fun, no worry for trifles like make-up and dressing, no physical suffering from pregnancy and child bearing).	12	18	24	54
3. Men are stronger; more dominant sex; more independent. It's a men's world.	3	6	16	25
4. Other (don't want to be a woman, more emphasis on education).		1	3	4
5. Don't know how it's like being the other sex. I'm used to being a male.	1	3	6	10
B. Want to born a woman.				
1. Just to see how it's like being a woman.	3	2	2	7
2. Women are stronger.	1	0	0	1
Total	29	43	67	139
(Female)				
A. Want to be born a woman again.				
1. I like it, enjoy it, am satisfied. Am happy being a woman.	18	22	25	65
2. Women have easier life (less responsibility, more freedom, can be dependent on men, less social pressures, need not be drafted, no need to worry about keeping up with masculine image).	6	18	11	35
3. Freedom for emotional expression, more sensitive, more perceptive.	3	1	2	6
4. Womanly pleasure (dating, dressing up, make-up, being treated as a lady, more fun.)	4	8	3	15
5. Child bearing and motherhood	1	3	0	4
6. Belief in women's potential, problematic but challenging; want to fight for equal rights.	2	10	2	14
7. I'm used to it.	3	4	2	9
8. Other	2	0	4	6
B. Want to be born a man.				
1. Just to see how it's like being a man.	1	7	9	17
2. Men have easier life, less problems (child bearing, rape, etc.), more freedom, more opportunity; can do more things.	2	12	17	31
Total	42	85	75	202

IV Conclusion

The most impressive result of this survey is that we can hardly trace any significant gap between the mothers' generation and daughters' generation. In other words, the mothers in this survey are seemingly no more old-fashioned sexists than their daughters. On the contrary, the mothers seem to have stronger feministic attitude than their daughters and sons. Probably, in American society the positive attitude for equal rights has acquired a citizenship as the ideal direction of the social change. It does not necessarily mean that every one of the members of the society has been converted to a feminist. However, we should not ignore the facts that the mothers in this survey have received relatively high education and that the majority of them are engaged in some work outside home. They can be idealistic and sensitive in giving answers to such a survey. It is also the case with the female students to be sensitive about their equal rights. However, they do not seem to find serious conflicts between their social participation and a social institution like marriage.

Concerning the difference by the ethnic groups, the Caucasians take the lead of liberal responses in many questions, while Other groups tend to show least liberal attitude. The Caucasians in this survey seem to represent the Mainland culture due to their birthplaces. The respondents of other ethnicities may have inherited some values of the native cultures of their grandparents. The society of Hawaii is built on such an ethnic-cultural mixture.

(Jan. 20, 1979)

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ホノルル在住の高校生とその母親達の 性役割に関する意識調査 〈要 約〉

田 口 槇 子

「性役割」とは、一方または他方の性に結びついた行動や態度を指す。すなわち、男性または女性に独特の行動様式や役割を意味している。男女の果す役割あるいは期待される役割に全く差のない社会は存在しないし、それどころか、社会的分業の最も基本的なものは、男女間の分業である。だが、この性役割に関する考え方は社会によって、また同じ社会の中でも時代によって違っている。現代社会においてはこの変化は、できるだけ男女間の差を少なくする方向にもって行こうというのが普遍的になりつつある。男女が社会生活において果す役割分担に、このような変化が起きるにつれて、男らしさ、女らしさという考え方にも当然変化が現われてくることが期待される。

これは、1976年に米国ハワイ州ホノルル市において行なわれた性役割に関する意識調査を部分的にまとめたものである。

461人の高校生(女子285人、男子176人)と342人の母親から調査票を回収することができた。これらの回答者を白人女子高校生、日系人女子高校生、その他の女子高校生、白人男子高校生、日系人男子高校生、その他の男子高校生、白人の母親、日系人の母親、その他の母親のグループに分けて分析した。

性役割に関する質問項目は、

1. 28項目にわたる人間の性格を男性的、女性的又は中性的性格にふりわけると。
2. 母親達が重視する子供のしつけの基準の男女間の違い。

3. 社会における男女関係に関する13の意見に対する判断。
4. 女性にとっての結婚の意義。
5. 男性であること、女性であることに対する総合的な評価。

の5種類である。

結論として、まず、母親達が次の世代よりも保守的考えをもっているわけではないこと、時には、かえってより進歩的態度を示したこと、全体として、男女間にあまり差をおかない考え方が圧倒的であること、女性の結婚に対しては否定的な考えはほとんどみられないこと、特に母親達には自分達の生き方に自信をもっている様子がみられること、ほとんどが自分の性に対して肯定的であること、グループ別では白人、日系人、その他の順で進歩的考えが支配的であることなどが認められた。