

Foreign Women Living in Japan: a Survey

Part 1

Characteristics of the Japanese

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要約

日本に居住する外国人女性に関する調査

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日本に住む外国人女性を対象として、次のような調査を行なった。日本人に対する彼女たちの姿勢、差別やセクシュアル・ハラスメントなどの個人的体験、行動様式の変化や物理的環境の変化、日本語の運用能力の調査をそのねらいとした。この論文は、日本に居住する外国人女性をもつ日本人像を検討するものである。西洋人と日本人の交流の始まり以来、英語圏文化に存在してきた日本人像の根源のいくつかをたどり、異文化への適合に有効な一般化という観点から、日本人のステレオタイプを論じる。この点に関する調査結果を、1968年日本に住む日本人を対象に行なった調査と、1971年ハワイの日本人を対象に行なった調査の結果と比較検討する。更に最近の傾向をみるため、1994年日本の大学的女子学生を対象に行なった非公式の調査とも比較する。西洋人女性が一般化してとらえた日本人像は、全体として肯定的であり、否定的な形容詞が使われる比率はきわめて低い。これは、日本に居住する外国人女性がまわりの日本人をどのようにとらえているかという点に関して、従来の日本人像がもはや支配的ではないことを示している。

Part 1: Characteristics of the Japanese

Introduction

To live or work successfully in a foreign country requires skills in cultural awareness and communication. It is not easy, especially when the new culture has beliefs, values and attitudes which differ from one's own. There are likely to be points of stress where the two cultures' systems differ radically. The physical living conditions may also differ, adding possible physical stress to the mental stress. Physical differences of race may also add to stress in terms of racial discrimination, and in the case of women, sexual harassment. Not having sufficient ability in the new country's language can add to stress. Problems of all sorts may occur. People may have good experiences or bad ones and these may reduce their efficiency in the workplace or place extra stress on family and other personal relationships. People may change or resist change in a new culture. The changes may help reduce the stresses involved. One might also change one's perceptions of what constitutes discrimination and harassment depending on the cultural context.

Aims

The aims of this survey are to explore various themes: attitudes towards the Japanese, perception of and personal experiences of discrimination and sexual harassment, changes in behavior, changes in physical surroundings. How many women have had negative experiences in Japan and how might these experiences relate to their attitudes towards the Japanese and achievement in learning Japanese? How might these experiences have led them to change their behavior while living here? How have these women changed in order to survive and accommodate the differing belief and value systems? Are physical characteristics such as height, hair color, and general body build connected to sexual harassment? Has previous experience living outside their own countries led them to more tolerance of a differing cultural system and to more ease in adapting to a new culture? These are some of the questions I hope to answer.

Method

The Survey. The questionnaire was in English. It was divided into the following eight parts: Japanese language, Characteristics of the Japanese, Discrimination, Sexual harassment, Changes in behavior, Life-style differences, Other time spent overseas, and Personal information.

Population: The population chosen for the survey was subject to the availability of various registers of names. It was impossible to obtain names and addresses from the Japanese Ministry of Justice which keeps registration data of all foreign residents in Japan through local city offices. Most foreign residents have unlisted telephone numbers.

I chose what was available to me. I obtained a register of names and addresses of the teachers in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program throughout Japan. I had a register of names of the parents and teachers at a large international school in Kobe, as well as a list of members of a social club for foreign residents in Kobe. Questionnaires

were also distributed to members of FEW, Foreign Executive Women's Club of Osaka. Various personal friends who teach at universities in the Kansai area of western Japan also received the questionnaire.

A total of 1,250 questionnaires were mailed to these foreign women between April and June, 1994. Spring was chosen because the new JET teachers often arrive in late July and I wanted them to have lived in Japan for longer than six months to gain some experience. The same applies to parents and teachers at the international school in Kobe; their school year begins in late August. Many teachers and families leave Japan in early June for vacation.

By October, 1994, a total of 584 questionnaires, or 46.7%, of the questionnaires had been returned. The results of age, nationality, educational background and the place they live are given below.

Table 1
Educational background

completed 10th grade	1
high school	14
universtiy	502
Master's Degree	58
Law school	1
Doctrate	3
No response	5
	<u>584</u>

Table 2
Age

20-29	442
30-39	70
40-49	52
50-59	16
60+	3
No response	3
	<u>584</u>

Table 3
Nationality

American	278
Canadian	104
British	98
Australian	46
New Zealand	15
European	15
Asian	7
Indian	5
Dual	12
No response	4
	<u>584</u>

Table 4
Place where they live

City	323
Town	159
Country	80
City & Country	2
Not specific	17
No response	3
	<u>584</u>

As can be seen in Tables 1-4, 75% of the women are in their 20's, 55% live in cities, 94% are nationals of English-speaking countries, and 97% have completed various forms of higher education. Although I have other personal information, these four are more closely related to the part of the survey, Characteristics of the Japanese, which I will discuss in this paper.

In this section of the survey, respondents were given the following instructions:

Which of the following adjectives would you use to describe a typical Japanese?

Check as many as you like in each group.

diligent	unfriendly	rational
shy	calm	free
short	reserved	open
rich	humble	persevering
thin	strict	original
quiet	unsociable	proper, formal
polite	friendly	cheerful
busy	negative	idealistic
kind	harmonious	stingy
conservative	intelligent	impatient
punctual	nervous	cunning
cruel	insincere	suspicious
arrogant	imitative	matter-of-fact
earthy	intuitive	jealous
insecure	having a narrow perspective	vengeful

There was no basis for the grouping or any special order; the groups were simply made for ease in reading. Respondents often checked between 5 to 10 of the 45 adjectives; while some checked only one or two and others checked over 20.

The list of adjectives was compiled from five sources. The first source was a study done in 1983 comparing Japanese attitudes towards themselves in Japan and attitudes of Hawaiian-Americans towards Japanese in Japan published jointly by the Research Committee on the Study of Honolulu Residents and the Institute of Statistical Mathematics, Tokyo. The 18 adjectives used in that study were also used in this one; results will be compared. The second source were additional adjectives taken from comments made by foreigners in surveys done from 1975–1978 on culture shock published as *Mutual Understanding of Different Cultures* by the Educational Science Institute of Osaka Prefecture. The third source came from a language teaching textbook, *Ideas*, by Leo Jones. In chapter 19, Atlantic Crossing (74) students are shown a caricature of an American and a Briton, along with seven adjectives describing each. I chose some of the adjectives from both lists. The fourth source was from Kobe College freshmen and juniors in my classes. I showed them the section from Jones, and asked them, as a homework exercise, to write down from five to ten adjectives that would describe a typical Japanese. Adjectives which they mentioned often were also added to the list. The last source were those adjectives I had repeatedly heard in conversations with Western women in Japan.

Stereotypes, Myths, Images

“Generating and using cultural generalizations effectively while avoiding stereotyp-

ing is one of the most demanding skills of intercultural communication" (Stewart and Bennett 168).

There are various definitions of stereotypes. Stereotypes are "categories about people" (Brislin 172). Stereotypes are "perceptions or beliefs we hold about groups or individuals based on previously formed opinions and attitudes. (Samovar and Porter 281). Stereotyping is" simply another word for overgeneralization." (Scollon 155).

Human beings have a psychological need to categorize the environment and to predict outcomes with minimal cues. They need to organize, remember and retrieve information that might be useful to them. This is especially true when one is in a different culture where the normal cues may be missing or vastly different. Human beings do not like ambiguity and uncertainty, and "therefore employ existing categories as a way of deciding what they think of the group or person they are confronting." (Samovar and Porter 281). This emphasis on normal thought processes has been borrowed from studies by psychologists and educators who investigate cognition and cognitive processes (Stephan, 1985; Messick & Mackie, 1989; Hilton & Von Hippel, 1990).

This process can pose problems for cultural awareness and intercultural communication. The problems with stereotyping arise when there is a preexisting belief about a people in another culture and this myth is taken at truth value, even when experience in the new culture shows evidence to the contrary. Another problem arises when people expect all members of a group or culture to behave in the same way. A third problem arises when people from one culture use their own value and belief systems to interpret another culture. Samovar and Porter call stereotypes "a lazy method of perception." They go on to state that for many it is a defense mechanism and a way of reducing culture shock (280).

Because stereotyping can be part of culture shock, I sent the questionnaires in spring, when most people, I had hoped, would be in what Dr. Sill, a former Peace Corps trainer, called "a phase of intensive participation (8-20 months)" (in Adler, Peter 27) and after possible phases of depression and negativity, during which negative stereotyping may occur.

Twenty-four of the respondents to the questionnaire refused to fill in the section, Characteristics of the Japanese. They wrote notes on the side, often in large letters with exclamation points at the end of the sentences. They basically said that I was asking them to stereotype Japanese and that they see only individuals. Another wrote that stereotyping is evil. A third said that on any given day, she could check all of the characteristics. A fourth said she could characterize men and women separately, but not Japanese people in general. Others wrote that there is no such person as a "typical Japanese." I did not intend to ask respondents to stereotype in a negative way, but only to find generalizations about Japanese people.

Reich and Adcock, psychologists, describe stereotyping as being "basically neutral. It can refer to a mixture of positive or negative characteristics or features which have no evaluative content" (52). Brislin asks the crucial question about the difference between making reasonable generalizations about other people and stereotyping and says the area

between the two is “very grey.” One difference is that exceptions exist to the generalizations, but not to stereotypes. When thinking in terms of careful generalizations, people are “constantly willing to entertain the possibility of individual differences” (174–75).

Nancy Adler (1991) has developed a checklist of concepts that people should remember when they might make a decision based on stereotypes. She argues that stereotypes should be:

1. Consciously held... People should be conscious that they are thinking about an individual as a member of a labeled group.

2. Descriptive... Generalizations about behavior should describe behavior and contain no evaluative commentary about the behavior.

3. Accurate... People should ask if generalizations are supported by various types of evidence.

4. The first best guess... Stereotypes should be thought of as providing guidance for a first guess about the way an individual might behave. People should be willing to move beyond a first best guess and discover more information about the individual.

5. Modifiable... People should be willing to change their generalization based on additional information, adding greater complexity.

Since categorizing and generalizing are normal human activities, I believe that stereotyping is also rather normal. Creating prejudice and discriminating against a group through the use of negative stereotypes or the exaggeration of negative stereotypes is the danger. I think people should be more conscious of their generalizations and should keep Adler's checklist in mind. I also think people should be aware of pre-formed stereotypes of other cultures which exist in their own culture and should know where some of these pre-formed images come from. Only then can they be taught to do away with the kind of thinking and behavior associated with prejudice and discrimination and come to greater cultural awareness and more successful communication with other peoples.

“For the person working internationally, it is helpful to look at the source of images as a way of understanding what they are and what impact they have” (Fisher 81). Let us look then at what Americans and Europeans who have had contact with the Japanese people in Japan, with the exception of Marco Polo and Ruth Benedict, have written about them. I have arranged them in chronological order and underlined the parts of the quotations which refer to characteristics.

“Chipangu is an island towards the East in the high seas, 1,500 miles distant from the Continent; and a very great island it is. The people are white, civilised and well-favoured.”

Marco Polo, 1307 (in Wilkinson 19)

The following reports were taken from letters, reports, and books written by the Jesuits and compiled by Michael Cooper, S. J. (1965) in his book *They Came To Japan : An Anthology of European Reports on Japan, 1543–1640*. He does not give all the dates when some of the excerpts were written.

"These are the best people so far discovered, and it seems to me that among unbelievers no people can be found to excel them"

St. Francis Xavier, 1549 (in Sansom 115)

"The Japanese have a high opinion of themselves because they think that no other nation can compare with them regards weapons and valour, and so they look down on all foreigners.... Never in my life have I met people who rely so much on their arms... They are very courteous with each other, but they do not show this courtesy to foreigners, whom they despise.... They are very warlike."

St. Francis Xavier (in Cooper 41)

"They are very prudent and discreet in all their dealings with others... show courage in adversity... When they meet or go to visit somebody, they always appear cheerful and in good spirits... speak politely."

Valignano, 1583 (in Cooper 43)

"The Japanese are a very patient race... The people are incredibly resigned to their sufferings and hardships... They are also moderate in their emotions and never show them outwardly... They keep their anger and rage so tightly under control... they outwardly appear very calm... And thus they all give the impression of being very mild, patient and well disposed."

Valignano, 1583 (in Cooper 43-54)

"... yet they nevertheless contemn all other nations in comparison with themselves, and standing in their own conceit do far prefer themselves before all other sorts of people in wisdom and policy."

Frois, 1585 (in Cooper 42)

"... both, prudent... governed by reason... more inquisitive than any other people I have met..."

Torres, 1549-1570 (in Cooper 40)

"The Japanese are white... dark eyes, small noses... looks very fine... medium build and on the short side."

Rodrigues, 1604 (in Cooper 37-38)

"They are so crafty in their hearts that nobody can understand them. Whence it is said that they have three hearts; a false one in their mouths for all the world to see, another within their breasts only for their friends, and the third in the depths of their hearts, reserved for themselves alone and never manifested to anybody."

Rodrigues, 1604 (in Cooper 54)

"The Japanese are in general of a melancholy disposition and humour."

Rodrigues, 1604 (in Cooper 47)

"The Japanese are much braver and more warlike than the people..."

Velasco (in Cooper 42)

"... well-faced, handed and footed... of stature low... very courteous in behavior."

Saris (in Cooper 39)

"There is no nation in the world which fears death less."

Carletti, 1616 (in Cooper 42)

“... the Japons are not suffered to land in any Port in India with weapons; being accounted a people so desperate and daring that they are feared in all places where they come,”

John Davis, 1605 (in Corr 3)

“The people of this lland of *Japon* are good of nature, curteous aboue measure, and valient in warre... The people be verie superstitious in their religion...”

William Adams, 1611 (in Corr 31)

“The Japanese have a sharply contrasted character; on the one hand they are modest, patient, courteous, hard-working and clean as well as artistic and ingenuous, while on the other hand they are proud, ambitious, cruel and uncharitable as well as passionate and revengeful.”

Kaempfer, 1726–28 (in Wilkinson 33)

“... a nervous, vigorous, people, assimilated by their bodily and mental powers much nearer to Europeans than to Asiatics. The traits of a vigorous intellect are displayed in the greater progress they have made in the sciences and in the arts, which are carried to a much higher degree of perfection among them than among the Chinese, with whom they are frequently confounded but to whom they consider it a great disgrace to be compared:.... eager of novelty, and warm in their attachments, open to strangers, and, bating the restrictions of their political institutions, a people who seemed inclined to throw themselves into the hands of any nation of superior intelligence. They have at the same time a great contempt and disregard of everything below their own standard of morals and habits, as instanced in the case of the Chinese.”

Raffles Report, 1812 (in Wilkinson 34)

“... is characteristic alike of the vindictive temper, resolution, high sense of humour, ferocity in punishment and long-enduring gratitude of the Japanese.”

von Siebold, 1841 (171)

“... an instance of the quick talent and shrewdness evinced by the least educated portion of the community...”

von Siebold, 1841 (183)

“... it exhibits, also, the good-humour and love of drollery which mingle so oddly with the national ferocity and passion for ceremony.”

von Siebold, 1841 (181)

“Perry described the Japanese as ‘the most polite people on earth,’ and yet he also found them evasive and hypocritical”

Finkelstein, et. al., (6)

Isabella Bird, a Scottish travel writer journeyed from Tokyo to Hokkaido on horse-back in 1878. She wrote the following:

the “small, ugly, kindly-looking, shrivelled, bandy-legged, round-shouldered, concave-chested poor-looking beings in the streets” around the port (4)

“The people are so kind and courteous.” (87)

“... kindness shown to travellers...” (129)

As perhaps the first foreign woman the people in the northern towns and villages had ever seen, Bird attracted crowds everywhere she went. She writes of these crowds:

"When I left Komatsu there were fully sixty people inside the house and 1500 outside—walls, verandahs, and even roofs being packed." (132)

"Those are such queer crowds, so silent and gaping..." (146)

"The crowd was filthy and squalid beyond description... gentle, naked, old-fashioned children, born to a heritage of hard toil, to be, like their parents, devoured by vermin..." (92)

"Wealthy we do not at all think [Japan] will ever become: the advantage conferred by nature, with the exception of climate, and the love of indolence and pleasure of the people themselves, forbid it. The Japanese are a happy race, and being content with little, are not likely to achieve much."

Japan Herald, April 9, 1881 (in Wilkinson 51)

"The Jap has no business savvy. God knows I hate the Chinaman...but you can do business with him. The Jap's a little huckster who can't see beyond his nose."

Kipling, 1889, quoting a business traveller (in Wilkinson 50)

Delight Sweetser, in her travel book *One Way Round the World* (1898), wrote the following:

"... but they have to walk with a peculiar sliding gait which is ungainly and ungraceful" (33)

"... and strange little people clumping along on their clogs or standing in groups smilingly chattering a queer unknown tongue until they catch sight of yourself, and then they all stop what they are doing, even the babies, and stare at the wonderful spectacle that you yourself present." (52)

"We rode all afternoon through the villages. The people were the dirtiest and most repulsive that I have seen, though the district is prosperous and it is in their little huts that much of the fine Japanese silk is spun and woven. The Japanese use a great deal of hot water for bathing, but none of it by any accident ever seems to get on the children's faces." (65-66)

"I have all admiration for their pluck and progressiveness—a courteous, cheery, industrious race." (67)

"... among a kindly, smiling people, never too hurried to be polite or to render a service and always alive to the beautiful in nature and art."(101)

Ella Maillart, a Frenchwoman, saw Japanese during her stay in Manchukuo, China, in October, 1932. In her book *Forbidden Journey* (1936), she writes the following:

"... little Japanese men, tireless pioneers of the Nippon Far West... Everywhere I came on those stubborn workers, devoted whole-heartedly to their native land..." (xiv)

[Chinese] "who are full of hatred of their brutal masters. But above all, I was struck at every step by the hatred of the Japanese for us. They detest us all, us whites, whether we be *emigre* Russians or Red Russians, Americans or Europeans, Catholic missionaries or

Protestant missionaries, and they miss no opportunity of maltreating us. This racial hatred is a primordial fact." (xv)

"... the strange character of the Chinese, with its underlying sense of humor—a quality lacking in the Japanese." (xv)

Grace James, the daughter of a Scotswoman and an officer of the British Navy who was an instructor and member of the Naval Mission, was born in Japan and lived in Tokyo until she was ten. Her family then left Tokyo in 1895. She returned in 1934, eleven years after the Great Kanto Earthquake. In 1936 her book, *Japan: Recollections and Impressions*, was published. She has written the following:

"... mistakes foreigners make...but the people of this country are too polite and well-bred to let us know it, or to make us feel uncomfortable by laughing at us." (16)

"... my parents learnt of the simple kindliess, courtesy and goodwill which formed the basis of the national character." (24)

"for crowds [at a festival] in Japan were good-tempered and everybody was kind to children." (74)

"A Japanese crowd is usually orderly and odourless." (225)

"The new Tokyo is a monument to the courage and determination of its builders." (81)

"These people, probably the most progressive that the world has ever seen, are subject to extraordinary streaks of conservatism... (219)

"The people of Japan have proved again and again that they are the most patriotic and the bravest in the world." (253)

"This much discussed attitude of reserve is, after all, very easily explained, and deserves more sympathy than it receives from English people who are themselves reserved and proud of it, but it has won for the Japanese a reputation of secrecy, speciousness, and even deceit, which is largely unjust." (254–55)

"To this day Japan has remained a country of mysteries and anomalies to the western mind..." (260)

"... for contrary to accepted opinion the Japanese are a highly emotional people." (264)

"The Japanese are probably the most consummate adaptors the world has ever known." (278)

"... and her people are so ingenious, energetic, frugal, hard-working and single-minded, as well as brave and dashing in war, and indomitable under stress of great natural catastrophes..." (281)

Harry Emerson Wildes, in *Aliens in the East* (1937), wrote:

"Japan's best friends have long been aware of the narrow provincialsim of the native outlook... The latent conservatism of the people, their inordinate vanity... the consciousness of national strength have turned the heads of the Japanese." (333)

"The curiosity which is so marked a trait of Japanese..." (335)

"For excitable people such as the Japanese, such propaganda is exceedingly dangerous. Naturally the Japanese tend toward extremism in their views and in their deeds." (337)

"Japan is filled with an intense, an overwhelming, pride of nationality inconceivable to Westerners." (338)

"The special qualities which slaves and oppressed classes always evolve to outwit their masters still survive among the descendants of the underprivileged peoples. A servile eagerness to please, a tendency to mold the facts into more pleasant form, a sullen resentment, a flight into the mystic, all these are found in contemporary Japan and all are products of the Tokugawa times when martial law prevailed." (334)

Ruth Benedict, although she had not been to Japan, wrote in her famous study of the Japanese, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946):

"All these contradictions, however, are the warp and woof of books on Japan. They are true. Both the sword and the chrysanthemum are a part of the picture. The Japanese, are, to the highest degree, both aggressive and unaggressive, both militaristic and aesthetic, both insolent and polite, rigid and adaptable, submissive and resentful of being pushed around, loyal and treacherous, brave and timid, conservative and hospitable to new ways. They are terribly concerned about what other people will think of their behaviour, and they are also overcome with guilt when other people know nothing of their misstep. Their soldiers are disciplined to the hilt but are also insubordinate." (2-3)

William Forbis, journalist, wrote *Japan Today* (1975) in which he attempts to describe modern Japan. He describes the Japanese as follows:

"scrutable enough... but nonetheless quite sufficiently complex and distinct... The characteristic of the Japanese that lies under all the other national traits is the submission of the individual to the society." (14)

"workaholics" (15)

"... make the Japanese a serious people... There's lots of gaiety and laughter ...in bars and restaurants." (16)

"The depths of Japanese emotion certainly include an extraordinary measure of sensitivity—toward art, toward nature, in communicating, and in other ways." (22)

"The Japanese are imitators—no question about that." (24)

George Fields, advertising consultant for marketing products to the Japanese, had been in Japan for twenty years and gone to Japanese schools. His *From Bonsai to Levi's* (1985) attempts to enlighten foreigners on why Japanese buy and reject various goods from overseas. He writes the following:

"... the Japanese had a similar arrogance in the feeling that they were unfathomable to any foreigner. There is a streak of narcissism and self-indulgence in the Japanese." (19)

"... this is simply a manifestation of provincialism that is certainly not restricted to the Japanese. In any event, among foreigners in Japan, this is known as the 'ware ware

nihonjin' [We the Japanese] syndrome." (20)

"There is an inherent sense of isolation from the world among the Japanese." (19)

"... the Japanese are essentially conservative and dislike revolutions." (25)

"There is an underlying faith that the Japanese race will always adapt to adversity yet eventually prevail. The moment of adversity is accepted with stoicism, but like a swinging pendulum, the sense of national feeling returns." (42)

In talking about the world of Japanese baseball in *You Gotta Have Wa* (1990), Robert Whiting says that "The Japanese were perfectionists and it was their belief that with constant work and an indefatigable will, one could accomplish anything." (19)

Karen Ma, another twenty-year resident in Japan, published *The Modern Madame Butterfly* in 1996. She writes, "Twenty years ago, Japan was still a poor nation.... The highly publicized Japanese purchase of Rockefeller Center in the late 1980s during the boom years clearly projected an image of wealth." (206)

To summarize these images, the West has often thought of the Orient as a mysterious, exotic place and its people were also mysterious and exotic. As East is the opposite of West, people were also thought of as the opposite of us, and contrasting with us. Japan was a topsy-turvy land, full of small exotically dressed people living in paper houses and eating with chopsticks.

Because of differing value systems and religions, Japanese were also thought to be contradictory, complex, and enigmatic. The Japanese were judged by Western standards and were often not taken seriously by Westerners, until there was a war and then the Japanese became part of the Yellow Peril, brutal and cruel and warlike and to be feared. The Japanese have been thought of as arrogant and intolerant of people less than themselves.

The Japanese were thought to be imitators in business and cultural matters and not admired for it, sometimes made fun of for it. The Victorians mocked many of the Meiji Japanese for trying to wear western clothes. Japanese businessmen were not to be trusted and often not taken seriously, then later feared due to their success.

Their sensitivity to art and nature were appreciated and noted. The Japanese were also respected for their hard work, courtesy, kindness, and stoicism in adversity.

These themes recur again and again throughout the past four hundred years and forty years. There are ups and downs, reflecting history and economics. Or do they accurately reflect Japanese character?

What are the images of the Japanese in the eyes of the mostly young foreign women now living and often working here in Japan? Foreigners are no longer forced to live in Dejima, or the treaty ports, but now live all over Japan, in all prefectures, in the city and deep in the country. The Jesuits and Dutch were not allowed to bring in foreign women; in the late 1800's women were someone's wife or daughter, the rare traveller, or missionaries. Today western women are still wives, travellers, missionaries, and also teachers

and work at various other jobs; some even run their own companies. There is much more contact with the Japanese people among whom they live. I would suppose that there would be also more knowledge about the Japanese people. There are still foreign ghettos and a foreign woman may still have many foreign women as friends, but there is more opportunity to also have Japanese friends, if negative stereotypes do not get in the way.

Results

Table 5

Characteristics chosen by foreign women in Japan

reserved	78%	thin	36%	idealistic	8%
proper, formal	74	nervous	36	intuitive	6
conservative	66	humble	33	unfriendly	5
polite	66	imitative	33	impatient	5
punctual	65	short	32	jealous	5
narrow	62	insecure	32	rich	5
perspective		cheerful	29	unsociable	5
shy	58	intelligent	21	cunning	4
kind	53	calm	21	negative	3
diligent	52	strict	20	cruel	3
friendly	49	arrogant	17	original	3
harmonious	48	insincere	12	open	3
busy	45	rational	12	earthy	3
persevering	44	matter-of-fact	12	free	1
quiet	40	suspicious	10	stingy	1
				vengeful	1

The percentages in Table 5 were based on the 560 who actually answered this section of the survey.

Over fifty percent of the foreign women characterized the Japanese as reserved, formal, conservative, polite, punctual, having a narrow perspective, shy, kind and diligent. Over forty percent of the women checked harmonious, busy, persevering and quiet. Over thirty percent thought the Japanese were thin, nervous, humble, imitative, short, and insecure. Over twenty percent agreed that the Japanese cheerful, intelligent, calm and strict. Over ten percent thought the Japanese were arrogant, insincere, rational, matter-of-fact and suspicious. Less than ten percent thought the Japanese were idealistic, intuitive, unfriendly, impatient, jealous, rich, unsociable, cunning, negative, cruel, original, open, earthy, free, stingy, or vengeful.

Of the negative characteristics, 62% responded with having a narrow perspective; 36% nervous; 33% imitative; 32% insecure; 17% arrogant; 12% insincere; 10% suspicious; 5% and less for unfriendly, impatient, jealous, unsociable, cunning, negative, cruel, stingy and vengeful. The overall image is very positive.

I have added my results to the results from a similar survey taken in 1968 of Japanese in Japan by the Institute of Statistical Mathematics in Tokyo and in 1971 of 436 Japanese-Americans in Honolulu, Hawaii by the Research Committee on the Study of Honolulu Residents in Hawaii (1984: 237).

Comparing these results of then and now, let us look at those with under 10%

Table 6
International Images

Adjectives	Japan (1968)	Hawaii (1971)	Women (1994)
Rational	13%	25%	12%
Diligent	66	58	52
Free	9	16	1
Open, resilient, matter-of-fact	14	15	12
Persevering	52	51	44
Kind	31	50	53
Original	7	26	3
Proper, formal	37	66	74
Cheerful	9	38	29
Idealistic	21	42	8
Stingy	20	13	1
Quick-tempered, impatient	41	21	5
Cruel	8	5	3
Insincere, shallow	10	10	12
Suspicious and vengeful	23	15	11
Narrow perspective	44	19	62
Try to act superior and stuck up	9	19	17 (arrogant)
Imitative	29	44	33

difference, which I consider agreement. First, Japanese-Americans in 1971 and foreign women residents in Japan in 1994 agreed that the Japanese are diligent, persevering, kind, proper, and cheerful and that Japanese are not (less than 20% of respondents) matter-of-fact, stuck up/arrogant, vengeful, insincere, and cruel.

However, there are three glaring discrepancies: there were differences of 23 percentage points (26–3% of Japanese-Americans— foreign women respondents respectively) for original, 36 percentage points (42–8%) for idealistic, and 43 percentage points (19–62%) for having a narrow perspective. Perhaps non-Japanese women living in Japan, a culture not their own, know firsthand the need to be more broadminded; most were young and perhaps younger people are more broadminded; most were from multicultural societies where they were probably exposed to broader perspectives.

Discrepancies between Japanese in Japan in 1968 and foreign women in Japan in 1994 were differences of 20 percentage points (9–29% of Japanese —foreign women respondents respectively) for cheerful, 22 percentage points (31–53%) for kind, 36 percentage points (41–5%) for impatient, and 37 percentage points (37–74%) for proper, formal. Foreign women found the Japanese today more cheerful. I wonder if the smile is considered part of cheerfulness. Japanese smile at different times than in other cultures, sometimes to cover up embarrassment. The women also rated the Japanese rather high for kindness and very low for impatience. Japanese are often very kind to foreign strangers and probably more patient with them and more forgiving of mistakes, especially to women. A large majority of the foreign women found Japanese to be proper and formal. Japanese society is much more formal than American and Canadian society. Also younger people are often more casual and informal in their relations with others.

While looking for additional adjectives to add to my list in January, 1994, I had asked Japanese college women to write adjectives they thought would describe a typical Japanese, based on an exercise from Leo Jones about differences between Americans and Britons, as mentioned earlier.

I repeated the same class and homework exercise with three classes of young women from the English Department of Kobe College, between the ages of 19 and 22. Although more than half of them had spent some time overseas, I did not think their level of English was high enough to fill in the English survey. I did not have time to have the survey translated into Japanese and cross-checked and given to them. I gave them the exercise from Jones and we talked about images people have of typical Americans and Britons and then I asked them to write between five to ten adjectives describing a typical Japanese, filling in the blank, Japanese people are _____. They had one week to think about it and to use their dictionaries. They returned the papers in the next class. This was done with the three classes in late June, 1996. There were 100 responses. Those adjectives with a total above 10% are arranged in the following table.

Table 7
Characteristics chosen by Kobe College women

diligent	82%	kind	17
shy	48	conservative	17
rich	46	busy	15
short	39	serious	14
quiet	29	intelligent	13
stingy, etc.	27	unfriendly	12
polite	24	nervous	12
thin	19	modest	12
vague	18	punctual	11
		negative	11

Those responses which differ by less than ten percentage points are shy (48–58% of Kobe College women—foreign women in Japan respectively), short (39–32%), intelligent (13–21%) unfriendly (12–5%) and negative (11–3%).

There were nine characteristics with more than 20 percentage points difference: polite, 22 percentage points (24–64% of Kobe College women—foreign women respectively); stingy, 26 percentage points (27–1%); busy, 30 percentage points (15–45%); nervous, 34 percentage points (12–36%); kind, 36 percentage points (17–53%); diligent, 40 percentage points (82–42%); rich, 41 percentage points (46–5%); conservative, 49 percentage points (17–66%); punctual, 54 percentage points (11–65%).

The foreign women thought the Japanese were far more polite, kinder, busier, more conservative, much more punctual and more nervous.

Japanese politeness is more outwardly visible in terms of bowing and manner of dress; very formalized in terms of morphological and grammatical complexity as well as in address forms in language; the English used by many Japanese is formal, rather than informal, and also sounds more polite.

In terms of kindness, Japanese are kind to foreigners, often helping them find their way by accompanying them to their destination, bringing a gift when visiting, thanking people for a small service with a gift rather than simple words.

I was surprised that the students rated busy with a rather low percentage because university students are often incredibly busy with part-time jobs, myriads of class hours and extracurricular activities. I am not surprised that nearly half of the foreign women described Japanese as busy; adults often have long commutes to work, long hours at the workplace, yet still want to take short day trips, take day or evening classes at culture centers or community centers, may practice a sport, and may have part-time jobs as well as families to be with.

Japanese are probably more conservative than the young foreign women: society in Japan has been said to suppress the individual, clothes worn in public are more conservative and more uniform than one would see in North America, Europe, Australia or New Zealand. The concept of a work uniform may apply to bankers overseas, but not necessarily to many other people. The ideal image of the mother in Japan is also more conservative than countries where these women come from. The roles of men and women in Japan seem more conservative.

To foreigners, Japanese are punctual. The trains run on time. People arrive equally for business appointments and parties on time. This does not necessarily happen in their own countries.

Little more than a third of the foreign women said Japanese were nervous. Many of these westerners are teachers of English; Japanese do not usually feel comfortable when required to speak English so students of all ages in various types of classes are nervous, speaking haltingly, sometimes shaking or displaying nervous tics due to the stress of speaking a foreign language or fear of making a mistake in front of their peers.

The Japanese students made a far higher percentage in the characteristics diligent, rich, and stingy.

With regards to diligence, I wonder how much quiet propaganda there is in Japanese society that Japanese are diligent. I also wonder if this is in terms of work and what it means. Westerners are often more concerned with quality rather than length of time spent at a task. Americans now work very long hours at their jobs. Japanese, too. Germans work less but are more productive. So what does diligent mean and on what basis have the two groups formulated their opinions?

Stingy, etc. The original Japanese study and the Hawaiian study both listed stingy, in English. I wonder what word was used in Japanese in the Japanese study. I do not know. Stingy, in English, has negative connotations. There are other possibilities such as frugal, economical, thrifty, and money-conscious. Thrifty and economical do not carry negative connotations, sometimes even positive ones. I grouped together the students' responses of stingy, thrifty, and economical under the term stingy. One reason for this discrepancy may be the negative connotation in English for the word stingy. Also, food, goods and living spaces are expensive in Japan. Sometimes Japanese invite foreigners to their homes or to restaurants for somewhat lavish feasts and foreigners might not think them

stingy when they are served expensive foods. The same applies to clothes and accessories of which women will be especially aware. Many foreign women do not or can not (due to different sizing or having larger sized feet) or will not (because they think the prices outrageous) buy clothes, shoes, jewelry, even make-up in Japan because these goods are often much more expensive than in their own countries. The reasoning may be that since Japanese do buy these expensive goods, they can not possibly be thought of as stingy.

The last characteristic, rich, was added to the questionnaire because it rated high with previous students. 46% of the young Japanese women in 1996 thought Japanese were rich. One reason may be the exercise I gave them from Jones. Jones listed various words as stereotypes of Americans; one of the seven was rich. With the current exchange rate of around 100 yen to the American dollar, Japanese are rich in terms of what their money can buy when they go overseas. Overseas travel itself is no longer thought of as such a luxury. If they do go to the United States where goods are much cheaper than in Japan, the Japanese can feel doubly rich. Japanese may also feel rich due to the variety of well-made goods and high quality food available to them. They have many electrical appliances in their homes such as televisions, computers, video cameras, and microwave ovens. As Karen Ma wrote, "Twenty years ago, Japan was still a poor nation." (1996. 206). These Japanese students are just around twenty and have no memory or feeling of those days. Many of the students also live at home with their parents who pay for food, utilities, tuition and some clothing. Whereas the Americans, Canadians, Britons, Australians and New Zealanders who answered the survey come from large, less crowded countries than Japan. They are probably thinking of rich in terms of space (living space, less crowded public transportation, wider roads, free and less crowded highways with many lanes) and prices (cheaper prices for tickets to concerts, cheaper prices paid for living spaces, food, gasoline, other daily necessities such as telephone rates, a cup of coffee and kitchen appliances). So only 5% of the foreign women thought of the Japanese as rich.

To conclude this part of the survey, Characteristics of the Japanese, I have tried to trace some of the sources of the images that foreign female residents may have in their own cultures and which may have influenced them in their choices of adjectives describing a typical Japanese. I have also compared the results with similar surveys done before with Japanese and Japanese-Americans in the past. I have tried to compare and contrast the results of my survey with an informal one done with my Japanese women university students to check more contemporary and Japanese views. Western women's generalizations that Japanese are reserved, formal, conservative, polite, punctual, shy, kind, diligent, friendly and harmonious are positive. Having a narrow perspective in our global community may be viewed as negative. The fact that the women gave very low ratings to the truly negative adjectives such as unfriendly, jealous, unsociable, cunning, negative, cruel, stingy, and vengeful is a sign that some of the images from the past are no longer dominant in their perception of the people among whom they live.

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