

SOME PATTERNS OF MATE SELECTION AMONG NAICHI AND OKINAWANS ON OAHU

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Since there are no legal barriers to interracial marriage, selection of mates in Hawaii is largely a matter of personal choice, although the process is influenced by such factors as group or parental conceptions of preferred races and the availability of preferred categories of potential mates. In the period 1940-1949, 29 per cent of the marriages in Hawaii were those that crossed the conventionally designated racial or ethnic lines, and an inspection of the statistics of earlier decades and of the first few years in this decade shows that the rate of interracial marriage has been increasing with time. There was great variation, however, in the rates of outmarriage among the diverse racial groups. During the period, the percentage of outmarriage among the brides ranged from 77 per cent for Hawaiians to 10 per cent for Caucasians; among the grooms the range was from 66 per cent for Hawaiians to 4 per cent for Japanese. While the outmarriage percentage of the Japanese has been increasing over the decades, especially among the brides, it has been consistently low compared with the other groups. The 17 per cent outmarriage rate for Japanese brides for the 1940-1949 period placed them seventh in a list of eight racial categories. The Japanese grooms ranked last, their 4 per cent outmarriage figure being more than 25 per cent lower than the seventh ranked Chinese category.¹

A number of interrelated factors have been commonly regarded as "responsible" for the low proportion of outmarriages among the Japanese, or for the greater tendency for the Japanese to inmarry compared with other groups, to put it in another way. Such influences as large numbers, a balanced sex ratio, and immigrant conceptions of the family system are regarded as having operated to maintain to a considerable degree a sense of common identity and group cohesion so that deviations from group expectations, including the choosing of spouses from outside the group, have been kept relatively infrequent.

It would seem of interest to explore Japanese outmarriage rates further by analysis of data in terms of two familiar sub-categories of Japanese in Hawaii--Okinawan and Naichi. Neither the United States Census Bureau nor the Bureau of Health Statistics of the Territory makes such distinction in their population reports, nor do other agencies in the community generally subdivide the Japanese group in this manner. The Japanese Consulate in Hawaii, however, has maintained records of Japanese citizens according to prefectural origin, one of the prefectures being Okinawa.

Furthermore, within the Japanese group, there seems to be an almost universal awareness of the distinction between the two categories of Japanese. The Okinawans either came from Okinawa or trace their origin to Okinawa while the Naichi either came from Japan proper (Naichi is literally "home territory") or trace their origin to Japan proper. Among the older Naichi there is awareness of differences in prefectural origin in Japan proper, but these different prefectures in Japan proper tend to be regarded as parts of a

¹ Andrew W. Lind, Hawaii's People (Honolulu: U. H. Press, 1955) p. 104.

homogeneous entity in contrast with Okinawa prefecture. Some physical differences between members of the two categories are frequently noted. Surnames characteristic of each of the two groups also serve as a basis for awareness of difference. Among older Japanese contemporaries, variations in certain cultural practices and in speech habits are additional criteria by which the awareness of distinction is maintained.

The differential subgroup identification among Naichi and Okinawans has a stratification aspect in Hawaii. Overt conflicts among children and covert feelings of antipathy among adults, based primarily on the "attitude of superiority assumed by Naichi and the defensive pride of the Okinawans," have been described in a previous issue of this publication.² A wartime Office of Strategic Services study speaks of segregation and cleavage among the Okinawans and Naichi in Hawaii.³

The foregoing discussion suggests that, from one point of view, the two subgroups among the Japanese in Hawaii may be regarded as two distinct ethnic groups rather than mere economic or prestige subdivisions of the same ethnic group. They may be regarded as of the same order as the ethnic or racial groups into which the population of Hawaii is divided by official agencies. If they are so treated, what patterns of behavior with respect to marriage partner choices would we find among the members of the two subgroups?

The information for this study was obtained from the vital statistics column in the English language section of the Hawaii Times, a bilingual daily newspaper, for the period 1941-1950. This column listed periodically throughout the year, all marriages on Oahu involving persons of Japanese ancestry. Since the newspaper did not provide direct information that would enable distinguishing between Naichi and Okinawan, it was necessary to rely on recognition of names in classifying the listed Japanese brides and grooms into the two categories.⁴

Since neither the number of marriages derived from the newspaper nor the classification of the persons as members of either the Naichi or Okinawan category was completely reliable, it was decided that where statistical tests of significance of percentage differences were made, the .001 level would be regarded as evidence of a significant difference.

² Henry Toyama and Kiyoshi Ikeda, "The Okinawan-Naichi Relationship," Social Process in Hawaii, XIV (1950)

³ Okinawan Studies No. 3 (1944)

⁴ The main guide for classification was Appendix III, "List of Okinawan Names and their Characters," Okinawan Studies No. 3.

I. Marriages of Okinawans and Naichi Japanese
With In-groups and Out-groups, 1941-1950

	Total		Per Cent Marriage With		
	Number	Per Cent	Non-Japanese Groups	Other Sub- group *	In-group *
Naichi Brides	8,293	100.0	16.4	4.0	79.6
Grooms	7,417	100.0	4.6	6.4	89.0
Okinawan Brides	2,248	100.0	20.3	21.2	58.5
Grooms	1,712	100.00	3.7	19.5	76.8

*Either Naichi or Okinawan, depending on the category named.

Table I summarizes the information on marriages involving Japanese on Oahu as reported by the Hawaii Times for the period 1941-1950. The total number of brides was greater than the number of grooms in both Naichi and Okinawan categories. The outnumbering of brides over grooms has occurred generally in all ethnic groups that have a balanced sex ratio in the young adult age levels, while the reverse has been true generally in groups such as the Caucasians and Filipinos where men of marriageable age outnumber women. In the matter of choosing mates from non-Japanese groups, Okinawan brides were highest in percentage, Naichi brides ranked second, Naichi grooms third, and Okinawan grooms fourth. Both brides and grooms among the Okinawans were higher in percentage of marriages to Naichis than Naichi brides and grooms were in percentage of marriages to Okinawans.

The percentage of ingroup marriage was lower for both brides and grooms among Okinawans than among Naichis. Lind's data for the Territory for the period 1940-1949 indicate that 71.4 per cent of all marriages were ingroup marriages (28.6 per cent outmarriages).⁵ If that figure may be used to interpret the information obtained from the newspaper column of vital statistics for Oahu for the period 1941-1950, the Okinawan outmarriage rates (brides, 41.5 per cent; grooms, 23.2 per cent) appear to more nearly resemble the rates of some of the non-Japanese groups than the rates for the Japanese as an entity. The difference between Naichi and Okinawans does not appear to be as great, however, when only percentages of marriage to non-Japanese are compared.

Attention may finally be called to the fact that ratio of Naichi brides to Okinawan brides (8,293 to 2,248) is about 3.7 to 1; and the ratio of Naichi grooms to Okinawan grooms is about 4.3 to 1. Usual estimates⁶ of the

⁵ Hawaii's People, p. 104.

⁶ Kiyoshi Ikeda, "A Comparative Study of Mental Illness Differences Among the Okinawan and Naichi Japanese in Hawaii," (Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Hawaii), p. 25. Also, Andrew W. Lind, Hawaii's Japanese (Princeton University Press, 1946), p. 32.

number of Naichis and Okinawans in the total population of the Territory, however, place the ratio at about 6 to 1.

The rest of this paper will be devoted to a number of comparisons between the marriage choices of Okinawans and Naichi and between brides and grooms.

Marriage to Non-Japanese

The difference between the percentages of marriage of Okinawan brides to non-Japanese (20.3) and of Naichi brides to non-Japanese (16.4) was found to be statistically significant at the .001 level. This is equivalent to saying that such a difference of 3.9 per cent could have occurred by sheer chance less than once in 1,000 times if there actually was no difference in the tendency to marry non-Japanese between the brides of the two groups. The result tends to support a hypothesis suggested by Romanzo Adams in the 1930's:

Within each racial group, commonly, there is some sort of distinction of status, of dialect or of religion and these distinctions are of importance as affecting marriage. . . There is some evidence of a degree of social disorganization among (the Okinawans) in Hawaii. They do not enjoy the full benefit of membership in Japanese organizations and their behavior tends to follow the pattern by other groups too small to maintain effective organization. . . it is probable that they marry non-Japanese in higher proportion than do ordinary Japanese of Japan proper.⁷

Even though statistically significant, however, the difference of 3.9 per cent was not as great as might be expected from a consideration of the reputed status difference and of the difference in numerical size of the two groups.

Contrary to expectations, the percentage of Okinawan males who married non-Japanese women was actually lower than that of the Naichi males. This is probably associated with such factors as the ethnic coherence of Okinawan males and the preferences among the women of the non-Japanese groups. The difference between 4.6 per cent (Naichis) and 3.7 per cent (Okinawans) was not significant.

Marriages of Okinawans to Naichis and to Non-Japanese

Of the 2,248 Okinawan brides, 21.2 per cent married Naichi grooms. This appears to be a rather high percentage when we consider judgments such as the following:

The general repugnance, even abhorrence on the part of the Naichijin toward marriage of one of their number with an Okinawan comes out again and again. . . The marriages

⁷ Romanzo Adams, Interracial Marriage in Hawaii (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1937), p. 170.

between the two groups are very rare. . . At the University of Hawaii. . . as, in general, in the community at large the second generation of Hawaiian-born Japanese are more tolerant than the first generation. . . Intimacies and marriage are still, however, not countenanced.⁸

Owing to status distinctions. . . naturally there is little, if any, intermarriage between (the Okinawans) and the other Japanese.⁹

On the basis of such estimates of the relationship between Naichi and Okinawans in Hawaii, we might have set up the hypothesis that the marriage of Okinawan brides to non-Japanese grooms occurs more frequently than to Naichi grooms. This hypothesis would have been rejected on the basis of the data obtained, since the percentage of marriage to non-Japanese (20.3) was actually smaller than the percentage of marriage to Naichi grooms (21.2), although the difference in favor of Naichi grooms is statistically non-significant.

The percentage of marriage to non-Japanese grooms added to the percentage of marriage to Naichi grooms gives a figure of 41.5 per cent, which represents the outmarriage rate of Okinawan brides for the period under consideration. It is considerably higher than the usual rates for

Japanese outmarriages one derives from the conventional summaries of interracial marriage statistics, and it appears to be similar to the relatively common experience of numerically smaller groups in Hawaii.

Ingroup preference is still implied, of course, to the extent that 58.5 per cent of the Okinawan brides chose Okinawan grooms.¹⁰ The proportion of ingroup marriages among Okinawan brides is expected to decrease further with continued residence of the group in Hawaii, if the group's experience parallels that of other ethnic groups.

As in the case of the brides, the 19.5 per cent among Okinawan grooms who married Naichi women represent a proportion higher than expected if the alleged "cleavage" between the two groups really exerted any great influence on the selection of marriage mates. Furthermore, contrary to common assumptions, the percentage of marriage to Naichi brides is significantly greater than the 3.7 per cent figure representing marriages to non-Japanese women.

While not as great as the outmarriage rate of the brides, Okinawan grooms selected nearly a fourth of their wives from outside the Okinawan group. The 76.8 per cent ingroup marriage figure, while lower than the usual inmarriage figures for the composite Japanese group, is still a rather high rate for a relatively small group.

Okinawan brides had a higher percentage than Okinawan grooms in both types of outmarriage, to Naichis and to non-Japanese. However, only in the case of marriage to non-Japanese (brides, 20.3 per cent; grooms,

⁸ Okinawan Studies No. 3, p. 75-82, *passim*.

⁹ Interracial Marriage in Hawaii, p. 170.

¹⁰ Either Okinawan or Naichi made up 79.7 per cent of the choices of grooms among Okinawan brides.

3.7 per cent) was the difference statistically significant. It has been noted in other parts of the world that females of the lower status group of a class or caste system marry "up" more frequently than do males of the same group, and conversely, the males of the higher status group marry "down" to a greater extent than the females of that higher status group. The hypothesis, when applied to the choices of mates among Okinawans on Oahu, is not fully borne out. Although the 21.2 per cent figure representing marriages to Naichi grooms among Okinawan brides was greater than the 19.5 per cent figure representing marriage to Naichi brides among Okinawan grooms, the difference was not statistically significant.

Marriages of Naichis to Okinawans and to Non-Japanese

The percentage of Naichi brides who selected Okinawan husbands (4.0) was much lower than the percentage of Naichi brides who married non-Japanese husbands (16.4). Status difference considerations, including the hypothesized tendency for women not to marry "down," would seem to help explain the infrequent selection of Okinawans for husbands and the relatively great difference between choosing Okinawan husbands and non-Japanese husbands. It is necessary to add, however, that in evaluating the difference of 11.6 per cent, it would be important to take account of the difference in numerical "availability" of potential husbands for Naichi brides as between the Okinawan category and the non-Japanese category. The latter far outnumbers the category of Okinawan men.

Marriages of Naichi grooms with Okinawan women constituted 6.4 per cent of the total number, whereas marriages with non-Japanese made up 4.6 per cent of their total. While both percentages are quite low, if numerical availability of potential brides from among the various ethnic groups could be taken into account, the figures would suggest a decided preference among Naichi grooms for Okinawan brides as against brides from all the non-Japanese groups combined.

The percentage of inmarriage among Naichi grooms (89.0 per cent) is very high, relatively speaking, as is the percentage of inmarriage among Naichi brides (79.6 per cent). For the period under consideration, we may say that the tendency to inmarry was definitely greater among Naichi than among Okinawans. With respect to marriage within the total Japanese group, however, the earlier discussions indicated that grooms of both sub-groups tended to inmarry more than their bride counterparts, that Naichi brides tended to inmarry more than Okinawan brides, and that Okinawan grooms tended to inmarry although non-significantly, more than Naichi grooms.

The proportion of Naichi brides who married non-Japanese (16.4 per cent) was three times as great as the proportion of Naichi grooms who married non-Japanese (4.6 per cent). Even if allowance were to be made for the greater availability of potential non-Japanese mates for the brides than for the grooms, it appears that the difference would still be significant. "Marrying up" on the part of Naichi brides suggests itself as a possibly relevant factor.

In the matter of marriage to Okinawan spouses, however, the Naichi grooms' percentage was greater than the brides' percentage. While both percentages (6.4 and 4.0) are relatively low, the difference was found to be statistically significant. The idea that status differences in a "closed system" of two groups should be manifested to a greater degree among

the males of the "higher" group marrying into the "lower" group appears to be upheld in this instance.

Okinawans and Naichi Inclinations Toward Each Other

The percentages of Okinawans, both brides and grooms, who married Naichi were greater than the percentages of their Naichi counterparts who selected Okinawan spouses. For the brides the percentages were 21.2 for Okinawans and 4.0 for Naichis. For the grooms, the percentages were 19.5 and 6.4. Do these differences between Okinawans and Naichi point to a greater degree of tolerance or of preference, for status reasons, for Naichi spouses on the part of Okinawans than the tolerance of Naichi for Okinawan spouses?

The matter of difference in numbers in the two groups seems to be of direct relevance in interpreting these differences in percentages. It was earlier mentioned that for the brides, the ratio was about 3.7 Naichis to one Okinawan. For the grooms the ratio was about 4.3 Naichis to one Okinawan. If it is reasonable to utilize these ratios in this instance, it would mean that the differences in percentages of inter-subgroup marriages are not as great as they appear to be. If the two groups were equal in reluctance or in preference or in indifference about choosing mates from the other sub-group, the observed differences in percentage would seem to be quite close to the expected differences. Assuming the sex ratio to be approximately equal in both groups, Okinawan women would have about 3.7 times as much opportunity to marry Naichi men as Naichi women would have to marry Okinawan men; and Okinawan men would have about 4.3 times as much opportunity to marry Naichi women as Naichi men would have to marry Okinawan women. The observed percentage differences were in the ratio of about 5 to 1 for the brides and about 3 to 1 for the grooms. This would suggest that there is no great difference between the two groups with respect to degree of inclination or disinclination about choosing mates from the other group.

Summary and conclusions

There is little in the way of consistent differences in the rate of marriage to non-Japanese between Okinawans and Naichi. The outmarriage rate of Okinawan brides' to non-Japanese is significantly greater than the corresponding rate of Naichi brides, but the amount of difference (approximately 4 per cent) is not as great as considerations of numerical size, assumed social disorganization, and status difference might lead one to expect. Among the grooms, there is no significant difference in the rate of marriage to non-Japanese between Okinawans and Naichis. In fact, the outmarriage rate of Naichi grooms is slightly greater than that of Okinawan grooms.

As between selecting mates from either the non-Japanese category or the other Japanese subgroup, there does not appear to be any marked difference between Naichis and Okinawans when the difference in size of the two subgroups, and hence the difference in the "pool" of potential mates from the other subgroup, is taken into account. Aside from preference for mates from their own subgroup over all others, no difference in antipathy or preference between Naichis and Okinawans can reasonably be inferred from the data.

Some important differences in marriage rates seem to exist between the two sexes within each of the two groups. In both the Naichi and Okinawan groups, the women appear to marry non-Japanese more readily than the males, the difference not being wholly attributable to the difference in the number of potential mates available in the non-Japanese population. In the matter of marrying into the other subgroup, however, there is little difference between the sexes within the Okinawan group, and the difference in the Naichi group between brides and grooms, while statistically significant, is less than 3 per cent.

Even when considered as a separate ethnic group, Okinawans choose the majority of their mates from within their own group. When compared with the Naichi group, however, Okinawans choose spouses from outside the subgroup at a much higher rate. Their rate, especially that of the brides, is beginning to approach the rates of other ethnic groups in the community of comparable size. The relatively high rate of marrying out of the Okinawan group, however, is due largely to the rate of marriage to Naichi. This is especially true of the grooms, but even among the brides, at least half of the marriages out of the Okinawan group have been with Naichi.

Identification of Okinawans with their ethnic group as a distinct category appears to exist. It is the same with Naichi. The Okinawan group, however, seems to show greater signs of probable decrease in ethnic cohesion. This does not necessarily mean that the group is likely to "disappear" soon as a self-conscious entity by being merged with the wider community of mixed bloods, as appears to be the trend among some other small ethnic groups in the islands. Rather, the Okinawans, insofar as they lose their separate ethnic identity, are more likely to be merged with the Naichi. This tendency is, of course, from one point of view, an accomplished fact. All public institutions regard the Japanese as an ethnic entity, whether Okinawan or Naichi. And most Okinawans and Naichi, if not all, already have a dual ethnic identity, Japanese relative to other ethnic groups and Naichi or Okinawan relative to each other. The growing number of persons of mixed Okinawan and Naichi ancestry is indicative, at the level of biological fusion, of the reduction of cultural differences between the two groups and of attitudes and actions based on consciousness of difference in identity.