

## Some Aspects of the Filipino Family

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The Filipinos in Hawaii were the last racial group to come into the Territory, and a great majority of them came as single men. With their migration came the necessity of extensive adaptation to a new environment, to new customs, standards, laws, and language. Like other recently arrived immigrant groups, the Filipinos, owing to physical, temperamental, and cultural differences, have a tendency to segregate themselves.

The Filipino population of the Territory is comparatively young. In 1930, 53 per cent of the Filipinos in Hawaii were in their twenties. But even more noticeable than this abnormal age range is the preponderance of men over women. According to the 1930 census for the Territory, there were five males to every female. The migration of men to the Territory and the Pacific Coast has brought about a situation in the Ilocos provinces (from which most of them come) which is somewhat similar to that of France and Germany during the World War. The able-bodied young men have migrated in such great numbers that the women have to run the farms, repair roads, and work on irrigation projects.

**Family Organization.**—The Filipino family is of the paternal type. The husband is the head of the family, and he has more authority than any other member. His is the final word on important family matters. Contacts with the community are made through him. It is his duty to provide the necessities of life. He approves or disapproves of family relations with outsiders. He is the final disciplinarian. In case the wife fails in her effort to discipline her children, the husband intervenes and enforces parental respect. He does it by the use of the belt or rod in the case of the younger children who are not yet able to perceive the meaning of a firm and determined scolding. A milder form of punishment such as depriving them of certain privileges is applied in the case of the older members.

As a result of migration, however, the power of the husband has diminished and the status of the wife and the children has been enhanced. The Filipino family in Hawaii is for the most part a small group including father, mother, and children, with few relatives, and in some cases entirely emancipated from the control of the wider kinship group of grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. The trend is toward a diminishing of the traditional responsibilities and a redefinition of the roles of the members of the family. Certain functions and traditions which once operated to hold even an inharmonious family together have now weakened or disappeared.

The enhancement of the status of woman in the Filipino



family in Hawaii is due largely to the severance of kinship controls, the abnormal sex ratio, and the waning of traditional responsibilities. Back in the Philippines where farming is the main occupation, the family is very nearly self-sufficient. Most of the things needed are raised by the family. In Hawaii, on the other hand, the dollar or so a day which the husband earns is insufficient to support an average sized family. Consequently, the woman in Hawaii has assumed a wider range of activities and responsibilities. In addition to her household duties, she has become a contributor to the family income by undertaking simple business transactions such as the selling of home-made candies, embroidered pillow cases, and handkerchiefs or by taking in washing or boarders. A woman with a pretty daughter is apt to be most successful in these economic activities. More common than co-operation in production, therefore, is co-operation in the contribution of wages to the family income.

The woman in Hawaii has a decided advantage over her husband. In a place where the sex ratio is so abnormal and where divorce can be secured without difficulty, the woman is tempted to try new husbands for old. This is especially true if she is still young and attractive. Children do not seem to be obstacles to family dissolution nor do they add to family stability in many instances.

The children in the family, although they have become more individualistic and independent, still tend to adhere to the principle of filial piety. Individualism on the part of the children is due to the educational differences from their parents. For the most part, the parents received very little schooling. Although they may accept the opinion of their children when Western ideas and customs are involved, the parents still insist upon the final word in the majority of cases.

The parents believe in educating the boys as much as possible. Great sacrifices are made on their behalf. They contend, however, that educating a girl beyond the requirements of a good wife and a wise mother is a waste of time and money, since the girl is to leave her parents at marriage and therefore cannot repay the debt she has incurred.

The parents and eventually the older children lay the foundation for the attitudes, manners, and morals of each child in the family during his formative years. Seniority is the most important factor in determining the role which each child in the family plays. Everyone is obligated to show a reasonable amount of respect for an elder. For example, it is bad form to call an older person by his name only without the use of the word **manong** for men and **manang** for women. These words literally mean brother and sister respectively. The Christian doctrine of brotherhood as taught by the Catholic church in the Philippines has extended the scope of these words beyond the limits of the family circle.



An individual addressing another by either **manong** or **manang** depending upon the sex of the person addressed implies his subordination and humbleness, an attitude which should be assumed by a younger person. In fact it is customary to abstain from using the name of the person addressed except to avoid ambiguity. It is the responsibility of the older person to see that the younger members follow this standardized form of communication (social) among members of the family and with outsiders. The early moral training of a member is judged by his adherence to this form of address toward his elders and by his conduct toward strangers. Younger persons in the family are usually called by their first names or nicknames.

It is absolutely taboo for the children to call their parents by their names. In most Filipino families, the mode of address is somewhat Americanized. **Pa** for father and **ma** for mother are used interchangeably with the Ilocano words **tatang** and **inang** which mean father and mother respectively. On the other hand, the parents call their children by their nicknames or by such generalized terms as **baroc** for son and **balasangco** for daughter. The use of these terms is permitted to anyone who is married or is a parent. Thus it is good form to call the son of another family **baroc** or a daughter **balasangco**.

Little formality in the manner of address between the parents is observed. The term **sica** which is equivalent to the pronoun "you" in English is commonly permitted. Thus, instead of calling her husband by his name, Juan, for example, the wife would simply say **sica**. At other times the parents would call each other by their first or nicknames even in the presence of strangers.

The American words, **uncle** and **aunty**, are commonly used instead of **uliteg** and **ikit** which mean uncle and aunt respectively. It is not permissible, however, for Filipino children to say Uncle John or Aunt Mary. Names are used only to avoid ambiguity or confusion. Address between cousins follows that of the family—**manong** and **manang** are used according to seniority.

Strangers are treated differently. Although the same words **manong** and **manang** are used as for elders, there is a different shade in meaning, based upon distance. It is good form to address a young man **manong** or a young lady **manang** merely to signify respect.

**Ama** and **ina** which mean father and mother respectively are used for old people. It must be noted that the addition of "ng" to a Filipino name denotes affection or familiarity. Accordingly, it would be presumptuous to call a strange lady **inang** instead of **ina**.

**Marriage.**—In the Philippines, romantic marriage was frowned upon. The boy's parents took the initiative in selecting the girl and in making arrangements with her par-



ents, even without the knowledge of the couple concerned. Young people were not free to choose their own life-mates. Today, however, this old custom is rapidly passing out of vogue and the tendency is toward greater freedom of choice. The parents, though they greatly resent it, are losing the role they formerly played. This is especially true in Hawaii where the young people have acquired self-expression and democratic ideals under American influence.

The marriage market for Filipinos is exceedingly favorable. According to the 1930 census of the Territory of Hawaii, 90.6 per cent of the females 15 years of age and over were married. This ratio is higher than in any other racial group in Hawaii. Due to the great sex disparity the demand for Filipino women is high even among the very young and in 1930, 49.3 per cent of females from 15 to 19 years of age were married. Obviously the girls have a good deal to say as to whom they shall marry.

Marriage in a Filipino family is an occasion of much gaiety, dancing, and feasting. In Hawaii, there is not very much difference between the practices of the Filipinos and the Occidental groups. There is one very outstanding difference, however, in that in the Filipino wedding, the couple are asked to dance an old folk dance called the *cariniosa*, and while they are dancing the relatives, friends, and guests drop their *bitor* (gifts) on the dance floor or put them in a receptacle placed there for that purpose. The gifts are usually in the form of money and sometimes amount to several hundred dollars. The more money collected for the couple, the greater is their prestige in the community. The number of gifts is a good indication of the popularity of the couple in the community.

**Family Substitutes.**—It is not uncommon to find a group of five or six single men living together in a plantation cottage. In this case the organization is patterned after the family. By virtue of his age, the oldest member of the group usually becomes the head. The position of each member of the group depends to a great extent upon age. Education, the length of residence in the plantation, and the type of work performed in the plantation are important determining factors if the age range in the group does not vary greatly. A member working as a *luna* (foreman) or office or store clerk holds a much higher position in the group than a mere laborer. The head exercises a great deal of authority in matters of the household. He assumes the role of both the father and mother of the family. Whenever the other members are too extravagant with their earnings, he reprimands them. His advice is sought on personal problems. If anyone of the group fails to do his duty, complaints from the other members are made through him. He is usually the representative of the group in contacts with the outside. If any dispute or misunderstanding arises among the younger



members, he is consulted, and often his decision is accepted. With such a set up, the youngest member frequently assumes the role of the youngest child in the family. He seldom does his share of the housework especially when the others are lenient and are willing to do it for him. Confident of the support of his house mates, he seldom hesitates to get into a brawl.

In the household tasks, there is a division of duties. Those who go to work earliest in the morning do the cooking and the filling of **kaukau** (lunch) tins. Those who work on the night shift of the mill or who come home first in the afternoon prepare dinner. These groups of single men take great care and pride in the appearance of their dwellings and frequently they cultivate beautiful flower gardens and potted plants.

The financing of such households varies. Frequently each individual is made responsible for the purchase of certain food items. In other households, the expenses are divided equally among the members at the end of the month. This is possible because of the extensive credit-buying in the plantation. When the Filipinos first started buying automobiles, they frequently did it on this **compang** partnership basis.

**Conflicts.**—In the interaction of personalities in the family group, there are conflicts as well as concord among the members. (The new American environment has aggravated the conflicts between Filipino parents and their children). In the old country, children were not expected to question the wishes of their parents. Girls were not allowed to go out at night unless they went with their parents. (Here in Hawaii, the children go to the public schools where they are taught self-expression in words and in action and, above all, to be Americans. To the parents, who are still thinking in terms of their old background, these children seem ill-mannered, disobedient, and often very obstinate. Whereas the children look upon the parents as old fogies and kill-joys.

One Filipino university student offers a good example of the conflicts that arise from the meeting of the two different standards. In this case the parents of the girl always insisted that one of them accompany her as chaperon, to university social functions. This the student resented greatly, feeling it was unfitting, considering her age. Finally the situation became so unbearable that she decided to go to the mainland to escape parental surveillance.

**Adjustments.**—The trend, however, is towards a diminishing of conflicts and a corresponding increase in proper adjustment. As the parents realize that their children need not be trained as they were, much of the conflict will be eliminated. More and more the parents realize their own inadequacy in the new environment. (They are now beginning to see how much it means for their children to be America-



nized and they are beginning to take great pride in the achievements of their children. One needs only to go to a Filipino party to realize just how anxious the parents are for a proper training of their children in the American way. In such parties, a great part of the entertainment is given by juvenile dancers, singers, musicians, and even orators. With the pride and interest Filipino parents are taking in their children's struggle to become Americans, there is every assurance that the new generation will find its proper place in the life of the new Hawaiian community.

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ABSTRACT: "CHANGING MORAL BASES OF THE JAPANESE FAMILY IN HAWAII." In Japan the people think of the family as a continuing organization embracing not merely a man and his wife and children but also all others connected by blood or adoption. Not only the living but also the dead are included, and one might even say that those not yet born are members. The family therefore is based on a vertical relationship—on successive, superimposed generations—from parents to children, with primary emphasis upon the patriarch-son relationship, and it exists through historical continuity. In such a cultural situation, family sentiments arise in the efforts of every member to perpetuate and improve the family name and status. The family name is a symbol of the group which has a long history in the community. It is essentially a collective representation which has the power to enlist a strong we-feeling.

In Hawaii the Japanese family system is undergoing changes. Immigration has resulted in the creation of conditions that tend to weaken the moral bases of the family. The removal of the immigrants from their families and home communities meant that they left behind the prestige which went with their land, house, family cemetery, and the village shrines which constantly reminded them of the love and affection of their forefathers. The economic system of Hawaii, with its money wages, has tended to undermine family solidarity. The presence of other people whose family system have different moral bases has helped to weaken family sentiment among the Japanese.—Jitsuichi Masuoka, (*Sociology and Social Research*) XXI (1936), pp. 158-169.