

An Examination of the Concept of “Honorary Male”

Why are Female Leaders Criticized?

Suzuki Ayaka (Tsukuba University)

Translation by Audrey Chau, Nina Urban, Johanna Wieser, and Julian Wollinger

Suzuki, Ayaka. 2025. “An Examination of the Concept of “Honorary Male” Why are Female Leaders Criticized?”, *MINIKOMI: Austrian Journal of Japanese Studies* 90-1, 48-63. DOI: 10.25365/aj-2025-90-06.

Introduction

The Gender Gap Index (GGI), which is reported annually in Japanese mass media, highlights structural problems in Japanese society. Published since 2005 by the World Economic Forum, a Swiss-based think tank, the GGI quantifies and ranks the gender gap in countries around the world¹. In 2023, Japan’s GGI was 0,647, ranking 125th out of 146 countries, the lowest ever recorded (Figure 1).

As many researchers and journalists have pointed out, the main reason for Japan’s low GGI is its low scores in the categories of politics and economy. In 2023, the scores for health and education were 0,973 (59th) and 0,997 (47th) respectively, which are rather high among the participating countries. On the other hand, the scores for politics and economy were 0,057 (138th) and 0,56 (123rd). The figures for the indicators used for politics are all low: 0,111 (131st) for the ratio of male to female members of parliament (members of the House of Representatives), 0,091 (128th) for cabinet ministers and 0,000 (80th) for the tenure of male to female heads of the executive branch over the past 50 years. In the category of economy, the ratio of male to female employees in managerial

occupations is particularly low, at 0,148 (133rd). In short, female leaders in the political and economic spheres are constantly underrepresented.

Efforts to increase the number of women in leadership positions have so far been undertaken as a national policy, as described below. The difficulty, however, is that simply increasing the “number” of women leaders is not enough. In recent

years, the nature of female leaders has been discussed utilizing the term “honorary male” (*meiyo dansei*), as follows: “In Japan’s history, there have apparently only been seven #female governors / Of course, it’s a problem if there are only more female politi-

cians who are like honorary males, but still, Japan is harsh...”², “Even if we say that women can be leaders, if women are fulfilling the ‘male’ role of a leader by acting like men, then they may just be honorary males”³. These discourses raise the question of whether increasing the number of female leaders without challenging the masculinised status of “leaders”, can be directly linked to gender equality.

This paper takes up the term “honorary male” as it is used in the context of criticising female leaders, and considers what exactly the concept of “honorary

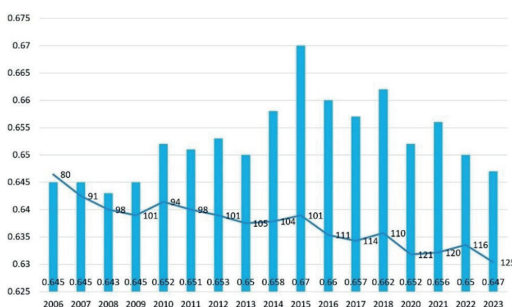


Figure 1: Development of CGI (bar chart) and Japan's rankings (numbers on the line)

male” is. To this end, the argument is developed as follows: First, an overview of policies aimed at training and increasing the number of female leaders in the country is given, and it is argued that the debate about “honorary males” arose around the same time (Section 1). Next, it is identified when and how “honorary males” have been discussed in the media, mainly newspaper articles (Section 2). Finally, the characteristics inherent in the term “honorary male” are discussed in comparison with similar concepts that have been discussed in feminist movements/studies (Section 3).

1. National Trends Regarding Female Leaders

1.1. State of Efforts in Japan

Since the 2000s, policies to increase the number of women in leadership positions have been implemented. In 2003, the Headquarters for the Implementation of Gender Equality, which was established within the Cabinet, decided on the target of “30 percent by 2020” (commonly known as “202030”) as part of the Positive Action Plan. This target states that “the proportion of women in leadership positions in all areas of society should be at least 30 percent by 2020”⁴. Leadership positions here refer to (1) members of parliament, (2) persons in positions equivalent to head of department or above in companies and organisations, and (3) persons engaged in highly specialised expert technical professions (decision by the Council for Gender Equality, 2007).

This 30 percent figure is well-founded. In *Men & Women of the Corporation* (1977), Rosabeth Moss Kanter proposed the concept of the “golden 30 percent”. According to Kanter, it is not “numbers” but “proportions” that are important for social minorities to exert influence in organisations and groups (Kanter 1977=1995). This “golden 30 percent”, also known as the critical mass, is said to be able to exert influence on an organisation or group when the minority share exceeds 30 percent (Dahlerup 1998)⁵. Even today,

critical mass theory continues to be the subject of a growing body of empirical research. A study by Joecks *et al.* examined the proportion of women on the boards of 151 listed German companies between 2000 and 2005 and found that when the number of female directors exceeded 30 percent, the innovative nature of the company increased (Joecks *et al.* 2013).

Unless they reach critical mass, minorities are disadvantaged rather than empowered, even when participating in organisations and groups. Kanter refers to minorities that do not reach critical mass as „tokens” (Kanter 1977=1995). When the minority is women, Murakami Ayaka (2023) describes the consequences for women who are forced into the position of tokens as follows: (1) “visibility”, in which a minority, especially women, receives a disproportionate amount of attention; (2) “polarisation”, in which their differences from the majority are emphasized; and (3) “assimilation”, in which the tokens internalise the majority’s standards. Many of the difficulties experienced by female leaders may be due to the fact that they have not reached the critical mass described above and have been placed in the position of tokens.

The “202030” target set for 2023 was ultimately not met. As of June 2020, the proportion of female members of the National Diet was 9,9 percent in the House of Representatives and 22,9 percent in the House of Councillors⁶, while the proportion of female national civil servants in the positions of head of local agencies, deputy head of divisions in ministries, or an equivalent (designated) position was 12,3, 5,9 and 4,4 percent, respectively as of July 2020⁷. In political and policy-making processes on a national level, the “202030” goal was achieved in female participation in civil service recruitment exams (36,8 percent), female participation in career-track positions (35,4 percent), female participation in national councils (40,7 percent), and female participation in expert commissions (30,3 percent). The same applies to the local level: at the

end of December 2020, the proportion of female members of local councils was 20,4 percent in city councils of government-designated cities, 16,2 percent in city councils as a whole, and 11,5 percent in prefectural councils, although the special district council was the only one to exceed this figure at 30,2 percent. According to the White Paper on Gender Equality 2021, all prefectural councils have female councillors, while approximately 30 percent of town and village councils still have none. The highest proportion of women in the local civil service was only 29,2 percent in positions equivalent to assistant managers in the head office of a municipality. The “202030” target was subsequently adopted in the Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality, approved by the Cabinet in December 2020, with the aim of achieving it “as early as possible in the 2020s” and achieving “a society in which there is no gender bias among people in leadership positions” in the 2030s, which is still being pursued.

The Act on the Promotion of the Active Engagement of Women in Working Life, which entered into force on 1 April 2016, sets out the basic principles for the promotion of active participation of women in the economic sector. The objectives of the act are: 1) to establish basic principles for promoting the active participation of women in the labour market; 2) to clarify the responsibilities of the state, local authorities and employers; 3) to formulate basic policies and action plans for employers; 4) to establish support measures to promote the active participation of women in the labour market; 5) to respect the human rights of men and women, and achieving a prosperous and dynamic society capable of responding to the growing trend of low birthrates and an ageing society, the diversification of people’s demands and other changes in the socio-economic situation.

Scholarly evaluations of the Act on the Promotion of the Active Engagement of Women in Working Life, which is limited to ten years, are mixed. Nakano Madoka (2017), for instance, argues that while the

law has prompted large companies to address the causes of women’s high turnover and limited promotion opportunities, it largely neglects women outside major firms. Moreover, the normative principles articulated in the act have themselves been subject to critique. Article 2.2, in particular, stipulates the following principles:

The provision of an optimal environment in which *men and women*, regardless of gender, can *easily fulfil their roles as family members with regard to childcare, nursing care and other family life activities*, while at the same time pursuing their professional activities, with mutual cooperation and social support, thus enabling a smooth and continuous reconciliation of professional and family life. (emphasis by the author)

Kiyosue Aisa sharply criticised this principle, stating that “there is no perspective on women in diverse families, difficult financial situations, etc.” (Kiyosue 2017:36). This criticism is undoubtedly inevitable, given that the law assumes that heterosexual couples form a family and that care, such as childcare and nursing care, is not outsourced but takes place in the home.

1.2. An Eruption of Discomfort Regarding Elite Women

As we have seen, the efforts made since 2000 to increase the number of women in leading positions have not borne much fruit. In addition to this situation, there has recently been a growing sense of unease, expressed mainly on social media, towards some women in senior positions in politics, the national civil service and private companies.

As a typical example, let us take a look at the incident of the flaming of an elite female bureaucrat at the end of February 2021. The incident arose from a series of media reports alleging that Yamada Makiko, then spokesperson for the Cabinet (her title at the time), had received expensive hospitality from a broadcasting company where Prime Minister Suga

Yoshihide's eldest son worked. Amid daily reports of the incident, the content of Yamada's comments in a video recorded and released when she was the vice-minister of Internal Affairs and Communications caused controversy. This video was published on YouTube on 4 June 2020 by the Association Learning of Tomorrow (*chō kyōiku kyōkai*; 超教育協会)⁸. In the video, which was designed to send a message to university students about how to succeed in the future, Yamada spoke about the importance of meeting lots of people and taking on a variety of challenges, while also sharing her own personal experiences. However, her statement that one should never refuse a drinking session (*nomikai*) as a means of achieving success and that she herself was "a woman who never refuses a drinking session" was seen as problematic.

The controversy was exacerbated by several factors. Many women are still faced with the "second shift" of household responsibilities when they come home, putting them in situations where they have no choice but to refuse drinking parties. As long as the responsibility for caring for the home and a culture of communication outside working hours are maintained, the "don't turn down drinks" prescription is of no use to them. Yamada's background as an "elite woman" also added to the criticism. After graduating from the School of Law at Waseda University, she joined the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (now the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications) in 1984, and became the first female secretary to the prime minister in Abe Shinzo's cabinet in November 2013, subsequently serving as chief cabinet secretary, director-general of the Information Distribution Administration Bureau and vice-minister of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. From September 2019, she was appointed as the first female spokesperson for the cabinet under Suga Yoshihide. The *Mainichi Shinbun* newspaper, which reported on a series of incidents, described her as "a symbolic presence

of 'women's success' promoted by Abe's government"⁹.

In response to the news report, columnist Kawasaki Tamaki published an essay entitled "If this continues, I too will become an old-timer" The shudder that went through the women who became elite by never turning down a drinking session – the sad way of life of honorary males who are denied". After noting that the term "honorary male" used in the subtitle of the essay is "a word that is sometimes used as an insult on the Internet and requires careful handling" (Kawasaki 2021), Kawasaki suggests that Yamada's comments may have been driven by the male-centric culture and homosocial nature of companies and organisations, and that in order to join their ranks, she had to learn to drink, smoke, play golf and become an "honorary male". But Kawasaki does not stop at criticism. In response to women leaders who sympathise with Yamada's pride in being "a woman who never refuses a drinking session", and who look back and wonder if they too are being judged for this, Kawasaki expresses the following mixed feelings:

We cannot blame them in the slightest. Those were the times, those were the outstanding women who survived such a society, desperately clinging to the pyramid and climbing it, paving the way for the younger generations to follow. The "woman who never refuses a drinking session" was also an ill-advised way of getting by those days. (Kawasaki 2021)

While Kawasaki criticises the "assimilation" into the majority of men in the organisation and the work culture in which attending drinking parties is implicitly mandatory for promotion, she also shows a certain understanding that without it, today's female leaders would not have been able to "pave the way for the younger generations".

What were "those days" like? A turning point in the post-war history of women's labour was the passage of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law in 1985, which came into force in 1986.

This law opened the way for women who had graduated from four-year universities to work in the same career-track jobs as men. On the other hand, it also led to a widening gap between women in career-track jobs and women in general employment, women in non-regular employment and women with no jobs¹⁰. The year 1985, when the Equal Employment Opportunity Law was enacted, is also considered the “first year of women’s division” and the “first year of women’s poverty” (Ueno 2017:99).

The women who were employed as career-track workers between 1986 and 1990 are known as the first generation of women under the Equal Employment Opportunity Law. The aforementioned Yamada joined the ministry in 1984, and although she was recruited slightly earlier, she can be said to have built her career at about the same time as the women of the first generation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law. The 2004 White Paper on Gender Equality contains the results of a questionnaire survey conducted on the first generation of the law in question. There were 91 respondents, of whom 46 (50,5 percent) were married, 38 (41,8 percent) were unmarried and 64 (70,3 percent) were childless. The most common challenges to continuing to work were childcare (21,7 percent) for married women and the lack of role models (23,7 percent) for unmarried women, compared with 15,2 percent for married women. The main reasons for being able to continue working were “the husband’s understanding and cooperation” (32,6 percent) and “no children” (17,4 percent) for married women, while “being single” was cited by half (50,0 percent) of unmarried women.

The survey also asked participating women covered by the first generation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law,

as well as members of various councils, to predict what employment and working conditions would look like in 2020. Figure 2 summarizes the share of positive responses to three questions: (1) whether it would become easier for women to find jobs due to fewer age-related questions in recruitment and hiring; (2) whether the gender wage gap would shrink significantly as more women entered management positions; and (3) whether more than 20 percent of men would take childcare leave. Across all three questions, first-generation Equal Employment Opportunity Law workers gave fewer positive responses than council members. Commenting on these results, the White Paper states:

Many of the women cited the lack of role models as a major challenge, revealing how the first generation of Equal Employment Opportunity Law workers had to build their careers without the guidance of senior female leaders. Having worked in such an environment, they tend to be more pessimistic about their employment prospects than the councillors (Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office 2004: 76).

More than three decades after the Equal Employment Opportunity Law came into force, many women recruited in its early years who remained in the workforce now occupy senior positions. They advanced their careers

despite the absence of institutional support for reconciling work and family life. Today, however, their status as “female leaders” is subject to critique. A key entry point into this debate is the term “honorary male,” often invoked in criticisms of women leaders. What kinds of discomfort do women articulate toward some female leaders through the use of this label? The following section traces the origins and uses of the term “honorary male.”

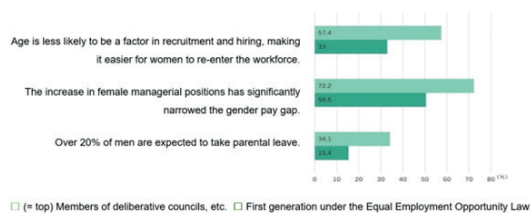


Figure 2: Projections on the employment and work Situation in 2020 based on the “2004 White Paper on Gender Equality” by the Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office.

2. How have “Honorary Males” been Discussed?

2.1. Today’s Understanding of “Honorary males”

As mentioned in Kawasaki’s essay quoted in the previous section, the term “honorary male” carries a negative connotation of “it is not desirable to be like this”. The definition of “honorary male” varies slightly from author to author. The main descriptions include: “a minority of women who behave like men” (Ueno 2005); “broadly speaking, ‘women who have been influenced by masculine values’” (Artesia 2020); “slang for women who have adopted masculine values” (Nitta 2014); “women who conform to a society designed for male workers” (Ogawa 2015), and “women who, despite being female, have become ‘male fundamentalists’ of male chauvinism” (Kobayashi 2016). Taking all these definitions into account, “honorary males” are those who (1) internalise masculine values, (2) behave like men, (3) do not question this behaviour, and (4) represent a minority of women.

The term “honorary males” is thought to have originated from “honorary whites”. Just as “honorary males” does not imply actual honour, even though it contains the word “honour”, “honorary whites” does not refer to an honourable white person. The term “honorary whites” was coined and popularised by opponents of the apartheid system in South Africa between 1948 and 1994. The apartheid system was a policy of racial segregation that discriminated between whites and others, with Asian people also facing discriminatory treatment. But even among Asians, the Japanese differed from the Chinese and Indians, who were mostly seen as lowly workers. At the time, Japan was a ma-

ajor trading partner of South Africa, and Japanese expatriates were treated the same way as whites under a “gentlemen’s agreement”.

The term “honorary whites” originated in discussions of the treatment of Japanese as “quasi-whites” in apartheid-era South Africa. As Yamamoto Yume (2022) notes, it was not an administrative designation but first appeared in South African newspapers in the 1960s. Chinese and Nikkei residents, in particular, were often portrayed as indistinguishable, and press coverage with a tone of sarcastic criticism emerged around this issue. In the 1970s, amid the growing international anti-apartheid movement, the term gained traction in Japan. By drawing attention to the category of “honorary whites,” activists sought to encourage Japanese audiences to view events in distant South Africa as directly relevant to themselves, thereby making the anti-apartheid movement more accessible and resonant with the general public (Makino 2016).

When did the term “honorary males”, presumably derived from “honorary whites”, come into use? Figure 3 shows the popularity of the search term “honorary males” on Google Trends. Popularity indicates the demand for a term in Google searches. The value of the highest search demand during a period is set to

100, and all other scores are calculated relative to this value. Looking at the period from 2004, when Google Trends started its service, to May 2023, the highest search demand for “honorary male” was in March 2005 (100), followed by January

2006 (70), October 2008 (55) and May 2004 (51)¹¹. Figure 3 shows that there are two patterns of change in popularity over this period. The first change happens from January 2004 to September 2017, where there is a clear difference between high

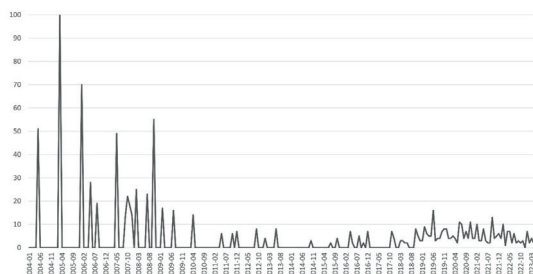


Figure 3: Popularity trends of “honorary male” based on Google Trends data (2004–2023)

and low demand for searching. During this period, it can be assumed that the keyword “honorary males” was searched for whenever an event or incident was reported. The second is the transition after October 2017. Although the popularity figures themselves were not high during this period, it seems that the keyword was constantly being searched for. It can be said that this is the period in which the above-mentioned debates about “honorary males” took place.

2.2. References to “honorary males” in academic literature

To the best of my knowledge, there is no academic research that has developed a coherent discussion of what/who “honorary males” are and why or how they become such. However, there are references to “honorary males” in academic literature, although they do not focus on the subject. For example, Tamura Kimie (1994) uses J. Lacan’s theory to examine what the “unconscious desire in the relationship between women and men” (Tamura 1994:2) that produces and reproduces discrimination against women is. She describes the difficulty of discussing gender differences in feminist research as follows: In essence, since the function of language itself, as the logos of logical thought, is based on the male principle, “as long as a woman remains within the logos of language and expresses herself, she can at best be an honorary male” (Tamura 1994:3). Here, Tamura points out that if a woman speaks on the basis of the “logos-language function”, which is based on the masculine principle, then she is not a woman, but an “honorary male”. However, there is no specific reference to what an “honorary male” is to begin with.

The term “honorary male” has been in use relatively often in literary studies. In such cases, it is the female characters in the work who are presented as “honorary males”. Taniguchi Hideko (2000) critically discusses the character of Portia in Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* and her role in the story in

terms of “honorary males”. Portia settles Antonio’s case by disguising herself as a lawyer and masquerades as a man to help her fiancé Bassanio and his friend Antonio, who desperate need because of Antonio’s financial support for Bassanio. Despite the presence of Bassanio, no one realises that the lawyer is Portia, and Portia herself does not reveal her true identity. Taniguchi argues that Portia’s setup leads her to become “a kind of honorary male by dressing up as a man and reinforcing male-centred values by existing as a ‘superior woman like a man’” (Taniguchi 2000:36). The “honorary male” is also not described in detail here, although it is said to reinforce the male-centred ideology by forcing women to dress as men to compete with men on an equal footing.

The paucity of references to “honorary males” in academic literature may be due to the fact that, at least in the 1990s, the meaning of the term was to some extent shared. It was assumed that the reader would understand the term without further explanation. This suggests that the term “honorary male” was in use before the 1990s. In the next section, I examine the use of the term “honorary male” in newspaper articles where it can be traced over a longer period.

2.3. Mentions of “Honorary Males” in Newspaper Articles

Newspaper articles mentioning “honorary males” were sampled as follows. The four newspapers selected were *Asahi Shinbun*, *Nikkei Shinbun*, *Mainichi Shinbun* and *Yomiuri Shinbun*. The keyword “honorary males” was searched in the Asahi Shinbun Cross Search, Nikkei Telecom, Nikkei and Mainichi Shinbun print search and the Yomiuri Shinbun print search. Three articles found in Asahi Shinbun Cross Search in the *AERA* magazine and one article found in Nikkei Telecom’s „Nikkei Bulletin News Archive” were excluded to maintain consistency with newspaper articles. A total of 20 articles were collected (Table 1)¹².

Year	Date	Newspaper	Title	Issue	Category
1985	11 July	Asahi	The “Iron Lady” is an honorary male (Nairobi correspondence)	Morning	General (3)
1992	14 June	Nikkei	"The Women Who Left the Dollhouse" by Angela Hallworth (Book Review)	Morning	
1993	10 March	Yomiuri	[Modern History Revisited] (215) The Thatcher Era (Part 2) To dictatorship through the imposition of a per capita tax (Serial)	Evening (Tōkyō)	W Culture
	13 Oct.	Yomiuri	[Sounds of the tide and the wind] Women's tragedies contributed by Wakita Haruko	Evening (Ōsaka)	Culture
1994	24 May	Yomiuri	[Continuation: Gender Studies] (Part 15) Meals at a different table from that of my husband - A Serial Contribution by Hasegawa Mariko	Evening (Tōkyō)	Culture
1997	17 April	Asahi	Apple of the eye/Aomori	Morning	Aomori
1998	13 March	Nikkei	Bamboo Barrier - Saitama Prefecture Deputy Governor Bandō Mari (Tomorrow's Topics)	Evening	
	4 May	Asahi	Noguchi Ikuko appointed director of Fukuoka City Women's Centre (With This Person)/Fukuoka	Morning	Fukuoka
	25 June	Asahi	Okifuji Noriko: My issue with the 98th Upper House election from a grass-roots perspective (Part 6)/Kanagawa	Morning	Kanagawa
2002	12 Feb.	Mainichi	[Thought Box] I can't keep up with you = Yamada Takao	Morning (Tōkyō)	
2015	8 May	Asahi	Performance by the theatre group "Warai no Naikaku" in Ōsaka from the 14th to the 18th, satirizing societal issues, including female discrimination against women	Morning	Ōsaka City
2018	24 April	Asahi	(Editorial) The obstacle of the “Ban on Women”: A discussion with Moriyama Mayumi, Satō Fumika, and Takano Toshihiko	Morning	Opinion
	27 April	Asahi	(Editorial) NO to Sexual Harassment, why can't we stop it? A discussion with Murao Nobutaka, Nakano Madoka and Tanaka Toshiyuki	Morning	Opinion
2019	1 March	Asahi	(8 binding spells to say goodbye to: Part 3) Turning to “male society” to survive	Morning	General (5)
	18 July	Asahi	(Interview on the new Reiwa Era) Ambition and desire grow thin - With author Hayashi Mariko	Morning	Opinion
2020	18 July	Asahi	Book Review: ‘The Empress: Koike Yuriko’ by Ishii Taeko	Morning	Reading (2)
	21 July	Asahi	Online slander lawsuit settled for 3,15 million yen: “Nobody is happy” says Fuka Haruna	Morning	Society (2)
2021	2 March	Asahi	(My ThinkGender) Ōku Akiko, a film director who does not stir up conflict based on gender, age or opposition	Evening	Social Integration
	8 March	Nikkei	The misogynistic remarks of poet and sociologist Minashita Kiriū reveal a desire for homogeneity (theory of diversity evolution)	Morning	
2022	3 Oct.	Nikkei	Hayashi Mariko's way of surviving in a “male-dominated society” by accumulating power without being coquettish	Evening	

Table 1: List of newspaper articles concerning “honorary males”

The earliest article was published in the *Asahi Shinbun* on 11 July 1985: “The ‘Iron Lady’ is an honorary male (Nairobi correspondence)”. This article reported on an NGO forum held at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, where participants from London were asked to share their views on issues such as unemployment, cuts to welfare budget and the downsizing of childcare and care for the elderly that took place under the Thatcher government. Statements such as “Even though we have a Queen, and even though we have a female Prime Minister, we still say, ‘men first...’ Thatcher? She’s an honorary male. You can’t expect anything from someone who has gained status in established society by becoming as close to a man as possible” were published. A Yomiuri article from 10 March 1993, titled “[Modern History Revisited] (215) The Thatcher Era (Part 2): To dictatorship through the imposition of a per capita tax”, also discusses Thatcher as an “honorary male”. As part of a series of articles on the history of Thatcher’s government, it is noted that Thatcher had the reputation of being “an honorary male for political expediency” and that “she was not a real woman”.

The articles published in the 1990s up to 1998, did not use the term “honorary male” as to evaluate prominent female politicians, but rather there was a noticeable trend towards women questioning whether they themselves had become “honorary males”. For example, in the article “[Continuation: Gender Studies] (15) Eating at a different table from that of my husband” of 24 May 1994 in the serial column by Hasegawa Mariko, she recounts her experience on a visit to Tanzania with her husband as a wildlife researcher. Although it is not customary for men and women to eat at the same table among the local Tongwe people, Hasegawa, as a wildlife researcher, gave instructions to the Tongwe men and ate with them, leading her to wonder if she might have been considered an “honorary male in the course of [her] duties”. She also stated, “[she] regret[s] that at the time [she]

was busy working as an ‘honorary male’ and did not have the luxury of treating the Tongwe women as fellow women.”

The same is true for other women’s stories. The *Asahi Shinbun* article “Apple of the Eye/Aomori” of 17 April 1994 was written by a journalist working for the *Asahi Shinbun*. Reflecting on her first year on the job, the author says that “even though I drive a full-size car around the prefecture and stop alone in small restaurant on my way home from work, people don’t look at me strangely because I am ‘the journalist’” and wonders if she is “an ‘honorary male’ in the sense of South Africa’s ‘honorary whites’” and if “the title ‘newspaper journalist’ diminishes [her] ‘feminine’ aspects and gives [her] some kind of special treatment”. She expressed mixed feelings about being envied by women in roles such as mothers and wives, saying candidly: “I wish everyone could live freely and naturally”. In addition, the *Asahi Shinbun* article of 4 May 1998, “Noguchi Ikuko appointed director of Fukuoka City Women’s Centre”, interviewed Ms Noguchi, the newly appointed director of the Fukuoka City Women’s Centre “Amicus”. Noguchi mentioned receiving a message saying “Don’t become an honorary male” while working in the *Nishinippon* editorial office. She acknowledged the importance of not forgetting the female perspective, but also pointed out the difficulty of maintaining it without reinforcing gender roles.

In the 2000s, there was only one such article. Since the late 2010s, however, the number of articles referring to “honorary males” has increased. Articles published during this period are characterised by the use of the term “honorary male” when discussing incidents and social issues. As shown in Table 1, whereas previously, most articles were published in the local and cultural sections, this period saw an increase in the number of articles published in the opinion, social, and general sections. This is consistent with the Google Trends data mentioned above, which suggests that discussions

of “honorary males” became more commonplace during this period.

During the 2010s, two main incidents have been discussed, using the term “honorary male”. The first is the custom of not allowing women to enter religious spaces. An *Asahi Shinbun* article entitled “(Editorial) The Obstacle of the ‘Ban on Women’: A Discussion with Moriyama Mayumi, Satō Fumika, and Takano Toshihiko” published on 24 April 2018 is consistent with this. An incident that occurred on 4 April 2018 forms the background to the discussion. During the spring tour of the Grand Sumo Spring Tournament in Maizuru City, Kyōto Prefecture, the mayor suddenly lost consciousness during his speech. Nurses at the venue rushed into the sumo ring to provide first aid, but the Japan Sumo Association declared that they had to leave the ring because they were women. After the mayor was taken to a hospital, and the women left the ring, it was reported that a large amount of salt was thrown on them. The ban on women in the ring has long been problematic and has created practical problems for female mayors, who cannot give speeches in the ring in the same way as their male counterparts. The article is based on interviews with three experts. One of them, Satō Fumika, criticises that, like the issue of women being banned from the sumo ring, the exclusion of women from organisations has been justified throughout history. She also argued that if organizations with such a history try to include women without changing their nature, women will either be labelled as “second-class” or only those who can adapt to the organization will be treated as “honorary males”.

The second incident was the sexual harassment of a female journalist by the Vice-Minister of Finance, which was reported on the 12 April 2018 and caused a huge stir. The 27 April 2018 *Asahi Shinbun* article entitled “(Editorial) NO to Sexual Harassment, why can’t we stop it?”, consists, like the previous article, of interviews with three experts. In her interview, Nakano Madoka says that

women who worked before the Equal Employment Opportunity Law were also victims of sexual harassment, but that they put up with it in order to survive in a male-dominated society, which “may have given the men in power the wrong idea”. Nakano refers to these women as “a generation that was forced to acquire the status of ‘honorary males’” and points out that when younger women saw these “older generations”, they “may have felt that they had to persist as well”.

During this period there were also articles about women protesting against being called “honorary males”. The 21 July 2020 *Asahi Shinbun* article entitled “Online slander lawsuit settled for 3,15 million yen: ‘Nobody is happy’ says Fuka Haruna” reports that a lawsuit against an individual who defamed Fuka on social media has resulted in a settlement. One of the specific defamatory statements was that she was referred to as an “honorary male”. In a *Nikkei Shinbun* article of 3 October 2022, entitled “Hayashi Mariko’s way of surviving in a ‘male-dominated society’ by accumulating power without being coquettish”, author Hayashi Mariko reveals that she was once called an “honorary male” (implying that she gained privileged status by flattering men), to which she replied, “I have no intention of currying favour with men”. This suggests that directly labelling certain individuals as “honorary males” is now perceived as “slander” and is beginning to become a problem even among private individuals.

2.4. Summary

In this section we have looked at the changing ways in which the term “honorary male” has been used in online media, in academic research and in newspapers. The earliest confirmed use of the term “honorary male” was in a 1985 newspaper article, referring to Margaret Thatcher, the British Prime Minister, known as the “Iron Lady”, for her neo-liberal policies, as an “honorary male”. Although less frequent, articles using the term “honorary male” continued to appear regularly throughout the 1990s, and the concept

was also referred to in academic literature. However, there is evidence that the term “honorary male” has been in use more frequently since the late 2010s.

From this point of view, the discourse surrounding the “honorary male” from the late 2010s to the present seems to be different from the way it has been used in the past. Up until the 1990s, particularly in the press, the narrative of the “honorary male” was used against particular individuals or in the reflections of women workers. Today, the term is used in a wider range of subjects and has taken on an aspect of defamation, with people being sued for using it.

The third section will consider the characteristics of the term “honorary male” used to express discomfort with and criticism of female leaders. There are similar concepts in feminism that have been used alongside “honorary male”. By comparing these terms, I believe we can infer why this label has come to be used today to express said discomfort with and criticism of female leaders.

3. Daddy’s Girl and *kō-itten*

3.1. Daddy’s Girl

“Daddy’s girl” (*chichi no musume*) is another term that has been discussed extensively, especially in Japanese feminism. Although there is no clear definition, the term generally refers to women (=daughters) who are more devoted to their fathers than to their mothers and who have internalised masculine values through their fathers.

“Daddy’s girl” is very close in concept to “honorary male” and in some respects the two are connected. One example is an article by the English literature scholar Fujimori Kayoko (1997). She attempts a feminist reassessment of the writings of the American author Mary McCarthy. Fujimori points out that one of the reasons McCarthy’s works have not been on the chopping block of feminist criticism is that she has been perceived as an “honorary male”. In discussing this, the paper refers to Miranda in Shakespeare’s *The*

Tempest. Miranda lives with her father, Prospero, on a deserted island. Isolated from the outside world, she is unaware of the ways of women in her time. Raised by her father, Miranda is portrayed as a woman who is subservient to him and has internalised his way of life and masculine values. Fujimori notes that “daddy’s girls” are “more likely to be recognised by male society as ‘quasi-members’ because they are familiar with the rules of that society and do not pose a threat to it and therefore do not undermine its order” (Fujimori 1997:100). On this basis, she argues that women who are expected by their fathers to have certain skills, and who strive to meet their fathers’ expectations and thereby achieve accomplishments that are recognized by male-dominated society, are commonly referred to as “honorary males” (Fujimori, 1997:100). Thus, Fujimori includes the concept of “daddy’s girl” in defining “honorary male”.

If the conditions for the emergence of “honorary males” are an individual’s survival strategy within male-dominated firms, it is in the home that “daddy’s girls” are raised. In her discussion of misogyny rooted in Japanese society, Ueno Chizuko (2010) highlighted the mechanism of “daddy’s girls” as one factor contributing to women’s internalization of misogyny. According to Ueno, as daughters grow up, they witness their fathers directing misogyny against their mothers in the form of domestic violence or moral harassment. As a girl, she shares her mother’s gender and develops a sense of fear and despair that her father will treat her in a similar way. However, unlike her mother, the daughter (seemingly) has options to avoid such a situation. According to Ueno, one way is to use her mother as a negative example and refuse to be like her. Another is to enter a rivalry with her mother by competing for her father’s affection, and to look down on her by winning this game of favouritism. “In this way, the daughter becomes a ‘daddy’s girl’ under the patriarchy”, noted Ueno (Ueno 2010:159).

3.2. *Kō-itten*

“*Kō-itten*”, a Japanese expression used to describe a singular woman in a group of men, is a common term. It refers to a situation where there is only one woman among many men, and it is said to have its origin in a line from the “Poem on Pomegranates” by Wang Anshi, a literary figure during the Northern Song dynasty in 11th century China. The poem mentions *manryoku sōchū kō-itten* (万緑叢中紅一点), which means “one red pomegranate flower blooming among a thousand green leaves”, which differs from the contemporary meaning of “*kō-itten*” in Japan. “*Kō-itten*” is also often discussed in literary studies. The literary critic Saitō Minako published a book in 1998 entitled “Essays on *kō-itten*”¹³.

According to Saitō, the “upper echelons” of post-war Japanese society are not strictly “a world of ‘only men’”, but “composed of ‘many men and a few women’” (Saitō 2001:7). In both anime and *tokusatsu*, a genre of films that relies heavily on special effects and action scenes and is primarily aimed at children, as well as in educational reading materials, this setting of “many men and a few women” is conventional/customary. Saitō suggested that this reinforces the upper stratum of society, which is also composed of “many men and few women”.

The concept of “*kō-itten*” is said to be simply a question of “quantity”, but Saitō pointed out that it is less a question of “quantity” than of “quality”. What kind of woman is allowed in the midst of “many men”? In other words, what kind of woman would most men accept? Saitō focused on the “quality” of “*kō-itten*”, analysing characters that appear in anime, *tokusatsu*, and biographies, and the settings in which they are placed. As a result, Saitō found four patterns of female characters: 1. the “Magical Girl”, who is the ideal “daddy’s girl”; 2. the “Scarlet Warrior”, a young woman who is the Madonna for older men; 3. the “Evil Queen”, an adult woman who is unfit to be a mother; 4. the “Holy Mother”, who supports the characters from the shadows. The

portrayal of female characters in children’s media is poor, full of stereotypes and etched into young children’s brains. Saitō attributed this to the long tradition of negative portrayal in Japanese anime culture.

3.3. Why “honorary male”?

So, why has the term “honorary male” become so widely used when discussing issues of women and leadership, or women and power, in contemporary society, even though “daddy’s girl” and “*kō-itten*” are similar in concept?

There is a certain awkwardness attached to the term “daddy’s girl”. To label a real woman as such, it is necessary to understand the circumstances of her upbringing. In 2020, non-fiction writer Ishii Taeko published an account of the life of Tōkyō governor Koike Yuriko. Ishii describes Koike’s speech at a symposium for smokers, organised to oppose passive smoking when it first became a social problem in 1985, in the following way:

Dressed in ethnic Middle Eastern clothing, she exhaled smoke while wearing a head-to-toe veil, adding a touch of allure. She preferred to be treated as an “honorary male” in a male society, to be attached to it rather than confronting it. That’s probably why she was noticed and promoted by so many bigwigs. (Ishii 2020: 146)

In this retelling, when Ishii mentions the family environment in which Koike was born and raised, her father is often mentioned, but her mother is not, which could be a subtle reference to her being a “daddy’s girl”. However, such a detailed understanding of their family environment is limited to a very small number of people, such as other politicians. It is uncomfortable to use the term “daddy’s girl” to express discomfort with or doubt about a woman you are close to, such as a female boss at work. On the other hand, the term “*kō-itten*” also lacks aspects that can be captured by the term “honorary male”. Author Hayashi Mariko’s essay “*Kō-itten*” illustrates this quite clearly. The essay describes an episode in which Hayashi her-

self was in the position of the only woman among many men. Hayashi recalls her experience of being invited to join an all-male choir group filled with politicians and businessmen, and her solo performance as the opening act during their provincial tour, in the following words:

I've always thought that most women envy being the only woman in a group of men. It's the kind of thing where you win by default, *with no competition*. In my case, with a large number of men are supporting me with a wonderful choir, it seemed to look really good on a visual level. (Hayashi 2005:51)

However, this situation changed with the arrival of women from outside the male group. On their way home the choir met two women on the bullet train, who had come to attend the concert. It is said that they were the *mama-san*¹⁴ and a hostess at a club in Ginza, and the men went to pour them beer. The members of the group sitting next to Hayashi looked at her and said in a somewhat exasperated tone, "We've been in the mountains for two days *without a woman*" and "That's right! We can't help it, can we?" (Hayashi 2005:52-3). Hayashi said she listened with mixed feelings.

As Saitō argued above, this essay shows that the privilege of being the "token woman" in a male-dominated group is not given to just anyone; rather, the men in the group decide who to include. The essay suggests that in Hayashi's case she was welcomed as a non-sexual woman who would not disrupt the male group dynamic. The group members who say, "without a woman" indicate that she is not seen as a sexual "woman". The constant stream of choir members refilling the drinks of the two women on the bullet train suggests that they were perceived as "sexual objects" by the male group and therefore treated differently.

Thus, it can be said that the distinctive feature of "*kō-itten*" lies in the way it is focused. As Hayashi argues, there are "no rivals", and when we think of the term "*kō-itten*", our attention is drawn to

the relationship between the single woman and the many men within a group. For women in the position of the "token woman", there are no "rivals" within the group, and women outside the group cannot be "rivals" because they are not allowed into the group. Because the focus is on relationships within the male group, women who are outside of it are not part of the discussion when the term "*kō-itten*" is used.

The use of the term "honorary male" in comparison to "daddy's girl" and "*kō-itten*" provides the following advantages: Firstly, it offers the convenience of being able to use the term independently of a particular individual's upbringing. This is both a feature and a drawback of the term "daddy's girl". Secondly, we can broaden the discussion to include women who are outside the male group and who are overlooked by the term "*kō-itten*". These women, who are not involved in the internal dynamics of the male group, may find this term more appropriate to what they experience. In addition, the term "honorary male" focuses on a woman's "quality", whereas "*kō-itten*" refers to a woman's status among many men, which is why term "honorary male" is now widely used.

Conclusion

This paper has outlined the current debate surrounding the term "honorary male", examined the changes in the way it is used, and looked at its frequent utilisation in contemporary Japanese society. It has also compared it with similar concepts such as "daddy's girl" and "*kō-itten*". This trend is likely to be driven by the growing number of women in leadership positions, such as politicians, civil servants, and business executives. However, progress is still insufficient on a global scale. Despite a steady increase in numbers, organisations and working cultures remain so male-dominated that women are still forced to "fit in" in order to reach leadership positions. In addition, the use of the term "honorary male" is a sign of discomfort with women leaders who do

not question this. Perhaps it is time to look beyond simply increasing the number of women in power, and to question what it means to be a female leader.

It goes without saying that it is important to have women in decision-making positions, and therefore it will be necessary to continue to increase the number of women in leadership positions. However, there is a growing international debate within feminism about women leaders. This was triggered by the book *LEAN IN* by Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook (and now director of Meta). In the book, Sandberg offers many practical tips for women in business, such as not giving up on their career, finding a mentor, negotiating within the company, and working as much as possible during pregnancy to facilitate a smooth return to work after childbirth (Sandberg 2013=2018). The book's message of taking initiative has

resonated not only in the United States but also the world. It has become a best-seller in many languages.

Although Sandberg identifies as a feminist, many feminists are critical of her. Cinzia Arruzza *et al.* have dubbed Sandberg's feminism "Lean In-feminism" and have strongly criticised it for failing to include women who are not employed in corporate settings, who are often non-white and precariously employed (Arruzza *et al.* 2019). Angela McRobbie coined the term "neo-liberal feminism" to criticize the fact that, as long as it is aiming at succeeding within existing social systems, it only serves to reinforce neoliberal policies such as cutting state welfare (McRobbie 2020=2022). The discourse around the term "honorary male" that I have examined in this paper can be said to be linked to these debates on international neo-liberal feminism debates.

Bibliography

- Arruzza, Cinzia / Nhattacharya, Tithi / Fraser, Nancy. 2019. *A Manifesto: Feminism for the 99%*, New York: Verso. (= translated by Keiai, Yu 惠愛由訳. 2020. *99% no tame no feminizumu sengen* 99%のためのフェミニズム宣言. Kyōto: Jinbunshoin 人文書院).
- Artesia アルテイシア. 2020. *Meiyodansei #joshi wo komaraseru hito* 名誉男性 #女子を困らせる人 [Honorary males #People that embarrass girls]. MyNavi-Woman マイナビウーマン. Accessed June 6, 2023. <https://woman.mynavi.jp/article/201229-4/>.
- Dahlerup, Drude. 1998. "From a small to a large minority: Women in scandinavian solitics," *Scandinavian Political Studies* 11, no. 4: 275–298.
- Fujimori, Kayoko 藤森かよこ. 1997. "Mary McCarthy no The Group saidoku: josei zasshiyō shōsetsu / atarashii onna-tachi no zassetsu monogatari / hayasugita pawā feminizumu shōsetsu" Mary McCarthy の *The Group* 再読: 女性雑誌用小説 / 「新しい女」たちの挫折物語 / 早すぎたパワー・フェミニズム小説 [Re-reading Mary McCarthy's The Group: Novels for women's magazines / Tales of the failure of the "new women" / Premature power feminist fiction]. *Eibei hyōron* 英米評論 [English Review] 12: 95–143.
- Hayashi, Mariko 林真理子. 2005. *Kō-itten shugi* 紅一点主義 [Principles of *kō-itten*]. Tōkyō: Bunshun bunkō 文春文庫.
- Ishii, Taeko 石井妙子. 2020. *Jotei Koike Yuriko* 女帝 小池百合子 [The empress: Koike Yuriko]. Tōkyō: Bungeishunjūsha 文藝春秋社.
- Joeks, Jasmin / Pull, Kerstin / Vetter, Karin. 2013. "Gender diversity in the boardroom and firm performance: What exactly constitutes a 'critical mass'?" *Journal of Business Ethics* 2013, no. 118: 61–72.
- Kanter, Moss Rosabeth. 1977. *Men & women of the corporation*. New York: Basic Books. (= translated by Takai, Yōko 高井葉子訳. 1995. *Kigyō no naka no otoko to onna: josei ga fuereba shokuba ga kawaru* 企業のなかの男と女-女性が増えれば職場が変わる. Tōkyō: Seisansei shuppan 生産性出版).
- Kawasaki, Tamaki 河崎環. 2021. "Kono mama de wa watashi mo furukunaru" nomikai o kotowarazu ni erakunatta joseitachi ni hashitta gekishin: hitei sareru meiyō dansei no hishiki shoseijutsu" 「このままでは私も古くなる」飲み会を断らずにエラくなった女たちに走った激震 - 否定される名誉男性の悲しき処世術, ["If this continues, I will become an old-timer too" The tremor that ran through the women who became elite by never turning down a drinking session - the sad way of life of honorary males who are denied]. *PRESIDENT Online*. Accessed May 26, 2023. <https://president.jp/articles/-/44050?page=1>.

- Kobayashi, Yoshinori 小林よしのり. 2016. “Meiyo danse no shinri o saguru” 名誉男性の心理を探る [Exploring the psychology of “honorary males”]. *BLOG ana na, oshietaroka* BLOGあなの、教えたろか [BLOG: Hey, let me teach you something]. Accessed June 6, 2023. <https://yoshinori-kobayashi.com/11456/>.
- Kiyosue, Aisa 清末. 2017. “Joseigaku – jendā kenkyū wa hen'yō o motomerareru no ka: josei no katsuyaku suishinhō jidai o mukaete” 女性学・ジェンダー研究は変容を求められるのか: 女性の活躍推進法時代を迎えて [Must women's studies and gender studies transform? In the era of the Act on Promotion of Women's Participation]. *Josei gaku* 女性学 [Women's Studies] 24: 31–42.
- Makino, Kumiko. 2016. “The framing discourses of ‘honorary whites’ in the anti-apartheid movement in Japan” *IDE Discussion Paper*, 575: 1–15.
- McRobbie, Angela. 2020. *Feminism and the politics of resilience: Essays on gender, media and the end of welfare*. Cambridge: Polity Press. (= translated by Tanaka, Haruko / Kono, Shintaro 田中東子・河野真太郎訳. 2022. *Feminisumu to rejiriensu no seiji: jendā, media, soshite fukushi no shūen* フェミニズムとレジリエンスの政治: ジェンダー, メディア, そして福祉の終焉. Tōkyō: Seidosha 青土社).
- Murakami, Ayaka 村上彩佳. 2023. “Daigaku soshiki ni okeru jendā byōdo: daigaku shokuin no danjo hiritsu ni chakumoku shite” 大学組織におけるジェンダー平等: 大学職員の男女比率に着目して [Gender equality in university organisations: Focusing on the gender ratio of university staff]. *Senshū jinbun ronshū* 専修人文論集 [Expert Journal of Humanities] 112: 177–196.
- Naikakufu danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 内閣府男女共同参画局 [Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office]. 2004. *Heisei 16 nenban danjo kyōdō sankaku hakusho* 平成16年版男女共同参画白書 [2004 White Paper on Gender Equality].
- Nakano, Madoka 中野円佳. 2017. “Erīto josei e no shien wa josei zentai ni shisuru ka? ‘kachigumi’ josei no kadai to josei katsuyaku suishin no eikyō” エリート女性への支援は女性全体に資するか? 「勝ち組」女性の課題と女性活躍推進の影響 [Does support for elite women benefit all women? The challenges of “winner” women and the impact of promoting women's participation]. *Josei gaku* 女性学 [Women's Studies] 24: 11–20.
- Nitta, Tetsuji 新田哲史. 2014. “Josei seijika wa, hontō ni ‘meiyo danse’ na no ka: dai 1 kai ‘joshiryoku’ de chiiki no kadai o kaiketsu” 女性政治家は、本当に「名誉男性」なのか 第1回「女子力」で 地域の課題を解決 [Are female politicians really “honorary males”? The first “feminine power” solving regional issues]. *Tōyō Keizai ONLINE* 東洋経済ONLINE [Tōyō Economy ONLINE]. Accessed Juni 7, 2023. <https://toyokeizai.net/articles/-/52384>.
- Ogawa, Tamaka 小川たまか. 2015. “‘Otoko nami ni hatarakitai wake janai’ josei tachi no fuman” 「男並みに働きたい訳じゃない」女性たちの不満 [The discontent of women who “don't want to work like a man”]. *DIAMOND Online*. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://diamond.jp/articles/-/71285>.
- Saitō, Minako 斎藤美奈子. 2001. *Kō-itten ron: Anime, tokusatsu, denki no hiroinzō* 紅一点: アニメ・特撮・電気のヒロイン像 [The red flower theory: Heroine images in anime, tokusatsu and biographies]. Tōkyō: Chikuma shobō 筑摩書房.
- Sakai, Junko 酒井順子. 2020. *Danson joshi* 男尊女子 [The male superior, female inferior]. Tōkyō: Shūei-sha bunko 集英社文庫.
- Sandberg, Sheryl. 2013. *Lean in: Women, work, and the will to lead*. New York: Knopf (= translated by Murai, Akiko 村井章子訳. 2018. *LEAN IN: Josei, shigoto, ridā e no iyoku* LEAN IN: 女性, 仕事, リーダーへの意欲. Tōkyō: Nikkei BP Marketing 日経BPマーケティング).
- Tamura, Kimie 田村公江. 1994. “Feminizumu e no seishin bunsekiteki shiten: J. Rakan no shinifian riron ni okeru edipusu no imi” フェミニズムへの精神分析的視点: J. ラカンのシニフィアン理論におけるエディプスの意味 [A psychoanalytic perspective on feminism: The meaning of Oedipus in J. Lacan's signifier theory]. *Ōtani gakuho* 大谷学友. 7 (41): 1–17.
- Taniguchi, Hideki 谷口秀子. 2000. “Otogibanashi no jendā to feminizumu” おとぎ話のジェンダーとフェミニズム [Gender and feminism in fairy tales]. *Kyūshū daigaku gengo bunkabu* 九州大学言語文化部 [Kyūshū University Department of Linguistics and Cultural Studies]. 11: 29–38.
- Tsutsui, Jun'ya 筒井淳也. 2023. “‘Nihon wa jendā gyappu 125 i’ o sono mama uketotte wa ikenai...‘shisū’ ga han'ei shikirenai genjitsu no Sekai” 「日本はジェンダーギャップ125位」をそのまま受け取ってはいけない... 「指数」が反映しきれない現実の世界 [We should not accept ‘Japan is ranked 125th in the gender gap’ at face value...The ‘index’ cannot fully reflect the real world]. *PRESIDENT WOMAN*. Accessed September 19, 2023. <https://president.jp/articles/-/71210>.
- Ueno, Chizuko 上野千鶴子. 2005. “Shirizu ‘genza’ e no toi dai 4 bu sōzōryoku no yukue: Feminizumu wa doko e mukau no ka? Neoribe no shita de hirōgaru ‘onna onna kakusa’ otoko ni yūri na shakai wa kawatteinai” シリーズ「現在」への問い 第4部 創造力の行方: フェミニズムはどこへ向かうのか? ネオリベ

の下で広がる「女女格差」男に有利な社会は変わっていない [Series questions to the “present”, pt. 4: The fate of creativity – where is feminism heading? The “women-women gap” expanding under neo-liberalism; The society favourable to men has not changed]. *Mainichi Shinbun* 毎日新聞, October 31, 2005, Evening Edition.

Ueno, Chizuko 上野千鶴子. 2010. *Onnagirai: Nippon no misojini* 女ごらい: ニッポンのミソジニー [Hate for women: Misogyny in Japan]. Tōkyō: Kinokuniya shoten 紀伊国屋書店.

Ueno, Chizuko 上野千鶴子. 2017. “‘202030’ wa nan no tame ka?” 「202030」は何のためか? [“202030”: What is it for?]. *Gakujutsu no dōkō* 学術の動向 [Trends in academic research]. 22 (8): 98–100.

Yamamoto, Meyu 山本めゆ. 2022. “*Meiyo hakujin*” no hyakunen: minami afurika no ajiakei jūmin o me-guru esuno-jinshu poritikusu 「名誉白人」の百年: 南アフリカのアジア系住民をめぐるエスノ - 人種ポリティクス [A century of “honorary whites”: Ethno-racial politics surrounding South Africa’s Asian population]. Tōkyō: Shin’yōsha 新曜社.

Endnotes

¹ The GGI indicates gender inequality in the four areas of politics, economy, healthcare and education, with values ranging from 0 to 1, the closer to 1, the lower the inequality. Although the GGI is well-known in Japanese society, it is by no means sufficient to quantify the degree of “gender equality” in a country. For example, the GGI, which strictly examines the “disparity” between men and women, does not include fe-male-specific phenomena such as the maternal mortality rate (Tsutsui 2023).

² <https://twitter.com/matsudosimasuda/status/1434375067173994499> (accessed July 23, 2023).

³ <https://twitter.com/Erinadinfinity/status/895784135104638976> (accessed July 23, 2023).

⁴ “Positive Action”, Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, https://www.gender.go.jp/policy/positive_act/index.html (accessed June 30, 2023).

⁵ See Murakami Ayaka (2023) for a discussion of the problems of gender ratios in university organisations using critical mass theory.

⁶ “White Paper on Gender Equality 2020”, Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, 2020.

⁷ The following data up until the data for local civil servants refers to the White Paper on Gender Equality 2021, Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan.

⁸ Since the report was made, the video has been closed to the public.

⁹ Nomura, Fusayo 野村房代. 2021. Katsute wa “seikatsusha mesen” kyōchō Yamada kōhōkan wa doko de kawatta no ka かつては「生活者目線」強調山田広報官はどこで変わったのか [Where did the once “seikatsusha mesen” emphasis Yamada public information officer change?]. *Mainichi Shinbun* 毎日新聞, February 27, 2021. <https://mainichi.jp/articles/20210226/k00/00m/040/186000c> (accessed May 26, 2023).

¹⁰ In her essay “Tea Girls” (*ocha joshi*), Sakai Junko describes the awkwardness between women in the workplace immediately after the implementation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law as follows: “In the company, which is like a family, a ‘man-like woman’ in the name of a career-track employee has appeared [...]. The women in general employment who played the role of mother or sister in the company now must support the ‘man-like woman’ as well. It is a relationship in which both those who look after and those who are looked after cannot help but feel a certain discomfort” (Sakai 2020:34).

¹¹ It is not clear why search demand increased at each point in time, so we can only speculate. For example, one incident reported in May 2004 (popularity = 51), when search demand first increased, was the Abu Ghraib prison abuse case. After the fall of Saddam Hussein’s regime, a whistleblower revealed that US soldiers had repeatedly sexually abused Iraqi prisoners of war at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, which was run by the US military as a detention facility. Part of the US government’s internal investigation report was leaked to the mass media, leading to international condemnation. The fact that there were female soldiers among the perpetrators has also been sensationalised. We can assume that the demand for the search term “honorary males” increased because female soldiers committed acts of aggression together with male soldiers in the male-dominated domain of the military.

¹² The “Category” column in the table lists those displayed by each company’s article search service.

¹³ In the following, reference is made to the *chikuma bunko* edition published in 2001.

¹⁴ A *mama-san* is a woman in a position of authority in a nightclub that is often perceived to be maternal. She is usually in charge of the other workers. (translators’ note)