

Hmong Women in the 21st Century

Let me first start with a few disclaimers. The first is that this is not an academic speech. The first two keynotes were, and we felt that we needed balance to have more community oriented people speak. So, this is a speech with my opinions, the opinions of one woman. I am not the smartest woman, only the one who was asked to speak. I will speak my mind today because I was asked. However, I spent time talking to other smart women to see what they thought as well.

Also, behind every strong Hmong woman, is an even stronger Hmong man, or Hmong men, be they brothers, husbands, or other clan members. I would like to acknowledge the love and support of my biggest fan and supporter, my husband, Lao Lu Hang, who is here for this keynote. He is the only man who has been with us for these past three keynotes and often, he is the only Hmong man in the audience.

There are some who now say that I am one of the founders of the Hmong women's movement. College students and graduate students continue to interview me and my peers in HWAT. My journey to balance my values around gender equity and social justice is now embodied in this small but mighty organization, *Hnub Tshiab*: Hmong Women Achieving Together, which is hosting this event today. This organization and this speech is a response for a call to action from over 40 Hmong women who joined their hearts and minds together over three years ago to think of the future for Hmong women in the 21st Century and to assist in improving the lives of Hmong women. In doing so, they organized and worked to build a vision to transform the community to be more responsive to a large and growing demographic that now has considerable purchasing power and the ability to transform this city. In walking the path and lending a hand in that effort, I arrive today to tell the story of the Hmong women in the 21st Century.

There is a Hmong proverb that goes like this, "Cuaj lub cub tawg tsis npaum li ib tug tub, cuaj tus ntxhais tsis npaum li ib tug tub". Translated, this means, "Nine fires are

not as bright as the sun, nine daughters are not worth as much as one son.” This proverb captures what so many of us who are Hmong women struggle with.

I am not unique. My story is a common one. I am humbled the Board asked me to speak. Any one of my friends could have chosen this topic and spoken well to it. For some who do not realize it, there are many Hmong women who have achieved leadership positions in Minnesota and beyond. Our collective arrival has struck some as motivational and inspiring, and also generated fear among more traditional Hmong men. Within the span of one generation, there are so many young Hmong women who have gained prominence and leadership that we are a force to be reckoned with. While there are many who are proud of us, more often than not, they don't know what to do with us.

How do we work together to learn about this new group of Hmong women who are bursting onto the local landscape, to support and be with them as they maneuver the challenges that surely other women in general face, but with the added load of rapidly changing gender roles within the Hmong community itself? Hmong women in the 21st century are not victims of an oppressive culture, nor are they to be feared within the community. Displacement, war, and survival are external forces that have changed Hmong women forever. They are more educated, strong, skilled, economically powerful, and rising up into public and community positions. They are also envied, emulated, and sought after for their talents. However, the fact remains that for most of us Hmong women in the 21st Century, our social status within the Hmong community itself has not changed dramatically despite the gains made in the larger mainstream community. In most families, gender roles are often very strict. Those who are leaders outside the home must still establish and have strongly divided gender roles in the Hmong community

itself to be successful. Hmong women often still do not see themselves as leaders. There was a survey at a National Hmong Conference once that asked the question, “ Can Hmong women be leaders?” I’d say that today, the question would be a resounding, “YES!”

Even if they are a leader at work, they are not necessarily leaders within their families or their clan due to their gender.

- Hmong women still have very limited visible and public decision making roles within the clan system for decision-making.
- People would not listen to Hmong women, even if they are invited to a family meeting
- Husbands would still lose power in front of their clan elders if their wives spoke out of turn or seemed “out of control” which then erodes their power
- Hmong women who are married are still seen as having what I call a “support” role in the identity formation of their husband as a community leader – building her own reputation is unusual and sometimes, not accepted
- Hmong women have a role of indirectly making decisions and have their husbands, dads, or brothers be the “visible” public face in a household

Being a Hmong woman in the 21st century means you need to balance your personal sense of power and leadership with internal community demands, and the pressure to conform to very strong gender dynamics and traditions that are hard to change. Our challenge today is for Hmong women in the 21st century is to gain acceptance that we have arrived and are not likely to go back to the nostalgic old days.

Whenever cultural change happens, it is uncomfortable. On occasions where gender has been thrust into the forefront, there are those who say that Hmong women have “roj taws tuam ntuj” or that Hmong women have gone against the cosmic order of the Hmong world. If you are one of these Hmong women who have had to make an unpopular decision, having stood up for something that goes up against culture, you know how ugly it can get.

Typically, this phrase means that a Hmong woman has made a decision without the proper support and due process of the clan leaders and those who say it are really mad. By definition, being a clan leader or head of household is being male. Hmong women who have turned against the social order of the Hmong universe do so because they have entered a public and visible place where others in the Hmong community feel that they have no business going, especially when there is disagreement over how a decision was made.

The most recent example of this was the decision-making that led to community divisiveness around Hmong American Partnership. In the ugliest moments, there was a protest that discounted the leadership of the Board Chair, who was a Hmong woman in her 30's and fellow board members, and a bullet being shot through the window at Hmong American Partnership when Bao Vang started work at the organization as the Executive Director. Being a Hmong woman who rises in leadership and makes community-wide decisions could mean that you put yourself in danger of personal harm if you stand up for what you believe in and want to work towards. Honestly, I don't think the Hmong women on the Board were thinking of themselves as being women and thus

needing to consult any elders in the community. They were simply serving as Board members, volunteering and serving an organization with a mission they cared about.

In my role as Chair of HWAT, I assisted in responding to these events. However, my dual gender roles became compromised because of my County job role and the work I do with Hmong women, because there were ugly rumors circulating about HWAT, and I needed to dispel the rumors that were circulating. It was a very awkward situation where my work life crossed over to my volunteer life, and my two identities as very different people collided...yet I could not divorce myself from myself. To do so would have been impossible. Luckily, I had a boss who understood my dilemma and supported me through it.

If there is such strong opposition to stating what simply “is” and existing in a decision making role as a public or non-profit community woman leader, how is it like to be living in it every day?

Believe me, it is not easy, and it takes constant attention. After speeches such as this one, I have usually received some type of Hmong community reaction, usually denouncing me. The intranet and blog sites have literally been searing at times. And, I have even received death threats for speaking out. Once, my sister-in-law who lives in Michigan asked me what I was up to because people were “saying things” about me and my group. Such is the courage it takes to stand alone at times for what I believe is right. Sometimes, I have turned around to find I am the last person standing at the center with only a few around me.

Much of the confusion and fear comes from not accepting or understanding our own culture, and the forces that have molded us as Hmong women, and how we need to go about bringing change. Things that clearly are not related to gender, often become about gender because gender roles and the dictates for who and how to behave are so strong. So, my example of this is that in the early years of my career, when I was not as smart as I am today about Hmong culture, I used to challenge Hmong men, especially elders, around me with *my very existence* in decision making circles. This was long before I started working on anything that the community saw as “radical” such as domestic abuse, sexual violence, or mental health. My first experience, I remember, was when I stepped into an Executive Director role at the Hmong Cultural Center. I got the job because no one wanted it, and the Board needed my skills as a fundraiser. I was happy to be at a Hmong organization where I could improve lives in the community. However, I was told that as Hmong woman, I could not be “a keeper of Hmong culture”, and this only in an indirect manner. It was as if I was not even worthy of being spoken to directly. Every time I needed to work on accounting records, or open the file cabinet, I had to wait for the Hmong men who worked for me to open up the drawers and punch in the password.

I use this example not to speak poorly of my own community, but rather to point out that to be a Hmong woman in a decision making role, means you must have moral fortitude, courage, and steadfast values. Also, you must understand the dynamics of your own culture. If you are doing violence prevention and intervention work, you must have the support of your male relatives or things can get extremely difficult for you. Some times, decisions that seem to have no controversy or element related to gender at all

becomes about gender when it involves Hmong women taking on leadership. For example, at each of the major retreats that HWAT has held, there has been at least one prominent Hmong woman leader, who is a professional who is unable to attend because her husband will not “allow it”. Surely, if 30-40 Hmong women are gathered it must be more about Hmong men. Well, for the Hmong men out there who are allies, I would have to tell you truthfully that *we do talk about Hmong men*. Mostly, we talk about how to support the men who are allies and how to build strong families and communities by lifting up the social status of Hmong women and girls. If you are a Hmong woman in the 21st century, it means you balance daily about the values you hold dear with the people you love most.

The challenge of navigating two very different social systems puts a lot of pressure on Hmong women to always restrain and hold back a part of their true selves in order to adapt to each setting as if they are a different person. I’m not saying that others don’t to the same, but for Hmong women, it is particularly stressful. If you know a Hmong woman who works with you as a professional, there are very different expectations of her when she reaches home. In a recent on-line study of Hmong professional Hmong women, we found that the more educated Hmong women are actually less satisfied and more depressed than other Hmong women. While no definitive conclusions can be drawn, I can safely guess that the social and psychological distance between herself as a professional in the workplace is a very different role than the one she plays in her family or clan system.

In a recent community engagement effort that Hnub Tshiab undertook, we discovered that even among our supporters there was a double-bind message for us. A

double bind message is when there are two equally important but conflicting messages that leads to a state of paralysis for clients who are undergoing therapy. The messages for us were, “engage in social change work, don’t engage in social change work”. One of my key messages today is simple, and that is that the force of change is upon us to build a more equality for Hmong women, and there is no turning back: a critical mass of people who believe in social justice and equity for Hmong women and girls has already formed due to the influences of acculturation and the need to survive in America. We can no longer deny that for Hmong women in the 21st Century are smart, have more choices than they ever had, and are assets in our community. Even worse, for those who are worried about how Hmong women are disrupting the social order, we are also not relying on traditional family and clan structures to resolve and work on the things that we care about. Women are starting to organize themselves, and that can be threatening for some who believe that Hmong women have no business doing what we are doing.

Naly Yang, my sister and the strongest Hmong woman I know, summed up what I think Hmong women experience when they try to focus on gender and equity work: the true test of courage is when something happens in your family and you must choose between your values and the people that you love. If you believe that no woman should experience abuse, and it happens to be your mother who moves in to live with you, you must withstand the pressure of not just your father expecting you to return her to him, but also his entire clan because you are giving her shelter. To be loving and loved as a Hmong woman in the 21st Century means that you must on a daily basis make the choice of the values you hold that may be counter to the values that are expressed differently every day toward you in the Hmong community itself. Do you protect your mother, or

send her back as expected? Do you deny the woman who loves you, or deny the man who loves you and believes you must obey him? Even if you disobey him, can you stand tall and strong against a legion of Hmong elders who will renounce your relationship and withdraw their love and support? Can you give up all the love you have had of clan and family for your mother's safety? Sometimes, these are the choices.

To understand this better this particular challenge, I would like to share my analysis of what I think is going on with Hmong women in the 21st Century and what has happened to them because of the changes due to war, cultural adaptation, and the transformation of gender roles as it relates to leadership. Is there really inequality in the Hmong community for Hmong women, or has the shared belief system that lasted for more than 2000 years simply being challenged by expanded knowledge and information in a modern and complex world? The culture norms and beliefs that were so dominant in keeping together a communal and shared agricultural society together is changing so rapidly that to some, the cosmic order of the Hmong universe is standing on its head. What are we to make of it, especially related to gender? In order to fully appreciate how things have changed, I will first share with you some a bit about Hmong culture and traditional Hmong animist traditions.

While those who have accepted a different religion into their lives, the descriptions further into this part of the speech do not always hold true. However, it is still true that being male defines the Hmong culture, and that women who take on visible and public decision making roles does defy the traditional order of the Hmong universe.

In the traditional Hmong belief system (or, the cycle of birth, marriage, death, and reincarnation), Hmong women are the keepers of home, and physical world. They are

the ones who tend all the things of the earth in the fields, food, and take care of children. As Dr. Patricia Symonds writes, “Hmong is equal to maleness and maleness is equal to Hmongness”. Hmong men are the spiritual keepers. They take care of the ancestor spirits, perform and coordinate rituals and ceremonies and define the clan as belonging to the same ancestor. Hmong women and girls, in traditional order of the Hmong universe are the ones who bear children, boy babies, to keep the patriline going, but it is their husbands, fathers, and sons, who are the spiritual bearers and the keepers of the clan and ancestral spirits. While there are Hmong women who are shaman who can communicate and look into the spirit world, it is Hmong men who feed the ancestor spirits, the rituals, and ceremonies that define the family and clan relationships.

Hmong are traditionally animists, and the belief in spirits both good and evil are at the center of keeping the ancestors happy and protecting those who are in the living world. Spiritual and physical worlds co-exist and spirits especially may cross over into the physical world. For example, in funerals the bodies of the dead must be watched over by relatives until that person’s spirit is guided to enter the spirit world through funeral rites. Animals in our world must be sacrificed and their spirits brought along with the loved ones to take into the spirit world. Men are the ones who conduct these ceremonies, not women.

Clans and sub-lineages are traced through Hmong males back to a common ancestor to define the patriline. The Hmong belief system is very strong, and all Hmong rituals and ceremonies require the existence of a Hmong male who stands as the spiritual keeper of clan and family in order for the proper order to be kept. Even if a family or clan

is no longer animist, the clan elders still define the clan through a common male ancestor. Gender roles are the same, despite the absence of animism and having a shaman.

When little girls are Hmong, they belong to the clan of their father, grandfather, and brothers. Until they marry, they are attached to their father's clan. Once they marry, they are then brought into the spiritual safe keeping of their husband's home, but she only truly belongs to her husband's clan and becomes powerful once she dies and enters the spirit world. If a woman is divorced, she exists in a spiritual void. If she is animist, she cannot give birth in a home with different ancestral spirits if her husband doesn't want her anymore. If a woman gives birth out of wedlock, she must leave her parent's home and go elsewhere. Babies that have no spiritual link are believed to be in jeopardy of illness and even death. Being forced to marry if you are pregnant (whether you are a teenager or someone who is full grown) is as much about spiritual protection as well as giving the baby a home and the salvaging of pride for the clan. Therefore in many aspects of childbearing, marriage, death, and rites of passage, spirituality and an attachment to a male relative is of utmost importance.

If a woman becomes an unattached woman, someone who is both unwelcome in her ex-husband's home, her father's home, or her grown son's home, she is spiritually and physically in grave danger. My mother still shares stories of Hmong girls in Laos who are and were sold into slavery, early marriage, servitude, or to be the minor wives of wealthy families. Being a lone woman or girl, without the protection of a strong male clan member is a terrible fate. If you happen to be an orphan girl or woman, this is even worse. While some might argue with me, the bearing of sons is both for protection as well as respect from other clans. Also, because the patriline and a women's worth is her

family or clan is due to her ability to bear strong healthy children, particularly boys. Being a childless woman is a cause for serious concern. In some situations, it is cause to go and finding minor wives to be in a polygamous marriage to bear children.

So far, we have established that in traditional Hmong beliefs, a Hmong woman must be tied to a Hmong man to be spiritually whole which defines her existence and how she is to be protected and connected in the world. What has happened to Hmong girls and women today where this belief system is not even understood or is being slowly eroded?

I have three points to make about Hmong Women in the 21st Century. First, cultural change in the Hmong community has already been forced by war, education, economics, and religion, and the need to survive in America. There is no turning back now. Second, Hmong women have more choices and are take on more discretionary power to change their lives. And finally, as Hmong women gain in access to people who can assist them in their education, careers, and leadership opportunities, a set of different rules are in play that can enable them to reach higher positions without needing to consult with others.

Let's to go to the first point, and let me re-state it. I don't think that my parents were thinking that I would become who I am today. They had hopes of survival, reaching a land of opportunity where their children would grow up free and safe. The persecution of Hmong people in Laos was real, and after being reunited with my father who spent time in a re-education camp, we fled Laos. Our story is a common one, because during a time when the Hmong were being killed due to their association with the Americans, it

was doubly bad to be an educated person. Having escaped and cheated death on many occasions as a family, coming to America did not seem like it would be all that hard.

The forces of change, however, would work on us girls immediately, as it did on hundreds of thousands of others. In Laos, boys would be educated if they were from very wealthy families who could buy themselves into education. Or, if you were a really smart boy but dirt poor, like my dad, and had a birth certificate, then you could maybe attend a village school. There were very few girls who had the resources or the investment of their family and clan members to go to school. Because girls would eventually marry outside of the clan, investment in Hmong girls to provide an education was usually diverted to boys. My mother never touched a pencil until she came to the United States. Or, as she says, she couldn't tell chicken scratch from a letter. And indeed, in a mostly agricultural society, you did not need an education to survive. I don't have to go through all the arguments about why education is important, but once a girl is educated, ultimately, *there will be some girls who inadvertently excel academically beyond some boys.*

Education was not the only force of change, there was also the ability of Hmong women to work outside of the home. I have worked in two Hmong refugee camps in my career: Ban Napho and Wat Tham Krabok. The greatest fears the men expressed were the ability to earn a living, and that their wives would start cheating on them due to the need for them to work to survive. The need to survive means that what is true about most working class poor is true of Hmong families as well; the two income household became a reality and a necessity. In order to make it in America, both parents would have to work harder than they had ever worked in order to be self-sufficient and provide for their families to lift them up and out of poverty.

The third force of change is religion. As many of the active members of those who worked on resettlement were the churches of various denominations from Lutherans to Baptists to Catholics, a great many families converted when they arrived in the United States. All of us were baptized within a year of arrival to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. One of my earliest memories is of being an angel in the Christmas play at the little church next to our rented apartment. Pastor Blanche was not only responsible for teaching my father how to drive, he was ultimately responsible for fostering enough independence for my father to move us to St. Paul in 1978.

If a Hmong family has no relatives, no spiritual or clan leaders, no one with whom to share Hmong culture with or to even “be Hmong with” then the ability to relate to being Hmong, understanding the cosmology and world order are completely eroded. For a Hmong man such as my father who was educated in the last days of French Indo-China, where he was separated from his parents and family for months at a time, the leap to being a Christian was not so great. So, if a little girl receives an education, sees her mother going to school to learn English, going to work everyday, and does not grow up with the regular spiritual rituals of being Hmong but instead goes to church every Sunday, then the forces of change are at work in significant ways that transform her way of thinking about not only life but about gender. Again, this is a common story, even though it is my story because I am a Hmong woman in the 21st Century.

In summary to my first point then, the war, displacement, refugeeism, education, economics, and changes in religion have all influenced, shaped, and changed the experiences of hundreds of thousands of Hmong families, and in particular, of Hmong girls and women. In addition, while traditionally, the Hmong have lived in villages of 10-

15 families, we now live concentrated in areas like the Twin Cities, where almost 1 in every 3 school children are of Hmong descent. The relative geographical isolation of Hmong families and clans from each other has diminished completely. In the Twin Cities, we are now one big community instead of a string of villages over a large geographical space. Another way to look at it is that the Hmong community and Hmong culture itself has diversified beyond a point where it is inappropriate to refer to it as one community with a shared set of beliefs. We are disrupting the insular tradition that has been a part of being Hmong for over 2000 years. Furthermore, if one takes into account the virtual communities that have arisen because of the connectivity due to technology and the global economy, we are no longer in the same world that we have been and we cannot be any longer.

My best demonstration of this point is that when I was at Wat Thamkrabok over three years ago, the Hmong refugees there knew that we had landed in Thailand and knew of our delegation because they had cell phones and had been informed by relatives in the United States about our arrival. A couple of them had gone to internet cafes and read up on the progress of our delegation with Mayor Kelly in the Thai papers, and some had TV's and were watching the coverage of the local media. We, on the other hand, not being able to read or understand Thai, were much more lost than they were about our progress and impact.

As I started earlier, there is no turning back the clock now. There are some who romanticize the good old days when the village was the center of the world and everything and everyone had an order. In all the conversations with these individuals over my lifetime, most have been Hmong men; usually older gentlemen in their 50's and 60's

reminiscing about a time when the cosmic order of the universe had some semblance and everyone had a proper balance and place. When I talk to older Hmong women in the same age range about it, they also miss it, but more the people and places. No woman has expressed a desire to go back and live there. It might just be me, but as I reflected on this, I believe I have never had a Hmong woman, in all my years of growing up, express a strong interest or desire to go back to the way things were.

As the keepers of the Hmong social order, the protectors, the ritual keepers, the cultural leaders, I do believe that Hmong men must grieve and mourn the loss of social control. The forces of change are external to the Hmong community and so large that as in any situation, different reactions and methods of coping must arise. And, since this is not a speech about Hmong men, you will need to come back at a different time to hear a different speech about this aspect of being Hmong men in the 21st Century, but the point is that change is happening in men's roles as well. Perhaps my husband can help deliver that one.

I now move onto my second point, which is that the every day common Hmong woman in the 21st Century is taking on discretionary power to influence the decisions that get made because of increasing ability to influence and shape choices about their own lives due to being exposed to different ways of thinking about themselves in the world. This is not to say that Hmong women did not have discretionary power to make changes or decisions before, just that there is a different level of using power that was probably not possible before. The ability to question the choices and expectations that others have laid out is to question the order of the traditional Hmong belief system itself. Sometimes the choices are of a very personal nature, and at other times, a very public and visible

nature. Not all Hmong families can be generalized. Therefore, you must take it with a grain of salt that when I talk about the “system” it is much larger than a nuclear family, or even the clan. It has to do with cultural norms, expectations, and shared beliefs about a majority of people who may or may not be in your family itself:

Questions and decisions such as:

- * Filing for a divorce without the support of the clan
- * Having a child out of wedlock, and renting an apartment instead of getting married to someone that you don't love
- * Delaying marriage to finish college and graduate school instead of succumbing to the pressure to marry and have children
- * Choosing different people to share their lives with – not necessarily Hmong
- * Rejecting the idea that success is defined by marriage and bearing a child.

Third, Hmong women are growing in their leadership roles and not relying on the community itself to be elevated into positions of power. As Hmong women gain access to people who can assist them in their education, careers, and leadership opportunities, a set of different rules are in play that can enable them to reach higher positions without needing to consult with others. Since the Hmong community is within a larger socio-cultural context, Hmong women really don't need to rely just on the Hmong community or family members. I have never had a Hmong man give me a job, and even though my bosses over the years have had different challenges in supervising me, my career appears to be moving along quite nicely.

The acceleration of the pace of change for Hmong women gaining access, independence, education, and resources has led to a gender role revolution and it's eating up both men and women in the Hmong community. For Hmong men, it is manifesting itself in trying to assert a traditional Hmong world order. I can not tell you how many Hmong wives are being imported across international boundaries, but I know it is a lot. Hmong women are delaying marriage, filing for divorce from abusive marriages, dating partners from different cultures and sexes and re-defining what it means to be a "successful" Hmong woman. I also remember when my sister's best friend's mother ran away with another woman in the 7th grade. The community was in an uproar. Or, as a friend of mine asked, "Are you scared that your husband will start cheating on you? Will that be us?"

As a community, we need to strike a balance of knowing who we are and where we want to go. This could be reached by coming to several agreements that have been stated in this speech:

- Hmong women in the 21st Century are here to stay. The forces of change have already changed us, and we are not likely to change back, so work with us.
- Create more discretionary spaces for Hmong women and men together within clan and the community to have a dialogue and communicate about how gender roles are transforming the community.
- Recognize that identity changes are happening, and that Hmong women, as much as they should still be a part of the identity of a clan, family, or spousal relationship, they also need to establish and be free to establish their own

identities within the Hmong community and outside the Hmong community.

These need to be separate and recognizable as different from their husband's identity.

- The gender role revolution is happening all around us. We need to recognize it and channel these dynamics into a powerful force for change and improvement.
- Talent that is readily shared outside the Hmong community but then goes unacknowledged or suppressed within the Hmong community should not happen. We should all strive to eliminate the cultural barriers that prevent Hmong women from fully contributing to families and clans.

In closing, I have two final points to make. First, I really love Hmong culture, and being a woman in it. It has not always been easy. There is a code of silence in the community to bury the bad things, the hurt, the painful things because the Hmong have suffered through so much as new arrivals to this country. As a Hmong person, I don't want to be labeled as being a "bad" or "dysfunctional". We have enough on our hands with survival. So instead, we hide the things that must be opened up and addressed in order to move forward. It is because I love the Hmong community that I work to improve it. There's a Hmong proverb that talks about needing to sweep your own house before you go out trying to sweep other homes. That is what I suggest. I sweep others homes in my regular work, should I not sweep my own house, too?

Second, to set the record straight, I have never had any desire to be a clan leader or the head of the household, which is the fear that some men have for their wives because they will start dominating the relationship. Indeed, I would *detest* being a clan

leader. I am providing leadership all day long at my job, and when I get home, I really just want to relax. I am glad that my husband gets to have this role instead of me, as I am exhausted at the end of a long and hard day. However, I should like to live and work to see the day, when, and if any of our three daughters would want to be a clan leader, that this opportunity would be open to her and that she would be welcomed in that role; and that she would be listened to, and thought well of in terms of having a fine mind and excellent judgment. I would wish that she be able to do simple things like be able to hand over funeral money at her own father's funeral if she so desired, and that need not have a male member do it for her, just because she's a woman. I would wish for her to be able to stand up here and be able to deliver a speech about how the gender role revolution improved her life and the lives of her peers in the 21st Century.

Thank you.