

**CORPORATE WARRIORS OR COMPANY ANIMALS?:  
AN INVESTIGATION OF JAPANESE SALARYMAN MASCULINITIES  
ACROSS THREE GENERATIONS**

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## ABSTRACT

'Corporate warriors' and 'company animals' are common terms used to describe Japanese *sararīman* (salarymen), the former referring to salarymen as the samurai of Japan's post-war economic miracle and the latter suggesting servile creatures of Japanese corporations.

This thesis explores Japanese salaryman masculinity, that is, the 'hegemonic masculinity' in Japan. The study collects the life-histories of 39 men across three generations of salarymen, so that the oldest men in my sample were in their 70s and the youngest in their 20s. While research on Japanese masculinities has expanded rapidly in recent years, no other study, to the author's knowledge, explores generational changes. This generational approach allows exploration of maintenance of and changes in hegemonic masculinity over time.

This thesis pays attention to the phases of salarymen's lives. In the period of growing up, participants were continually confirmed in their self-worth through a hierarchy grounded on age and gender in the settings of the family, school and neighbourhood. Across the three generations, participants grew up in a homosocial and heterosexual world, barely mixing with the opposite sex and focusing on educational outcomes for successful careers after their schooling. Despite their immersion in comradeship, most participants ensconced themselves comfortably in the institution of marriage. While a few unconventional families emerged in the sons' generation, the traditional gendered division of labour is reproduced across the three generations. Many participants rejected equal opportunities for women in the workforce and participated very little in housework and childcare, claiming that providing the family income was their 'childcare'. Participants understood themselves as corporate warriors, or elite male workers, rather than company animals. Nevertheless, some young respondents evinced a tinge of jealousy for increasing number of '*freeters*' (part-time workers). Moreover, several men in the grandfathers' generation regretted their current minimal contact with their children and grandchildren as a result of their absence from home while children were growing up. Thus Japanese salarymen in this study expressed aspects of both the corporate warrior and the company animal in reflecting on their experiences.

## DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text of the thesis.

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## NOTE ON THE TEXT

The names of the participants in this study are fictitious (pseudonyms).

Japanese full names mentioned in this thesis are written in the Japanese order, with family names followed by given names. In the case of the participants in this study, their names are indicated by family names together with the Japanese comprehensive courtesy title 'san' (e.g. Amano-san), which is used to indicate status titles such as Mr., Mrs., Miss, and Ms. in Japanese.

The Hepburn style of romanisation is applied in rendering Japanese words, macrons indicating long vowels, for example, 'ō' as in *ryōsai kenbo* (good wife wise mother), in order to convey the pronunciation of Japanese words. Those Japanese words in the Hepburn style are italicized, as exemplified in the above example. They are intentionally used because of their importance in the Japanese discourse on sociology, these terms being followed by English translations in brackets. However, macrons are not used for the Japanese words that are commonly used in English, for example, Tokyo.

Quotations from the narratives of the participants in this study as well as those from publications in Japanese are translated by the author.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Reasons for exploring Japanese salarymen and their masculinity**

Why on earth are you interested in “masculinity”? This, whether expressed or implied, represents the most typical response to my research interest in men and masculinities from my friends, acquaintances and people I have encountered during my doctoral candidature. In retrospect, I realise that my personal interest in Japanese corporate men and their masculinity has its origins in my work experience in a relatively large trading company in Japan. My work experience dates back more than a decade when Japanese people firmly believed that Japan’s stable economy would last and had not the slightest suspicion that the bubble economy would burst. The section to which I was assigned was engaged in official development assistance (ODA).<sup>1</sup> It was apparent that the men in the section were proud of their jobs, believing that their projects were facilitating needy countries’ socio-economic development. Probably, the fact that the majority of these men wore a moustache represents an exception to Japanese male white-collar workers. However, the majority of ruling-class men in recipient countries<sup>2</sup> wore moustaches. In the hope of presenting themselves as important people (men) to government officials and project leaders in the recipient countries, my male colleagues adopted the expedient of wearing a moustache. Consequently, their assimilation into the culture of the ruling class people in these countries meant their embodiment of, not only Japanese hegemonic masculinity, but also the dominant masculinity of other countries. Perhaps, because of this, in my eyes, their sense of self as men appeared to be stronger than that of men in other departments who conducted business with Japanese clients or clients in advanced Western countries who were their peers. It was intriguing that my male colleagues understood, consciously or unconsciously, the imperfect symbolic aspects of Japanese hegemonic masculinity (i.e. well groomed appearance with no moustache or beard) in other countries and adopted the recipient countries’ symbolism of dominant masculinity. In addition, it is also intriguing that my colleagues knew that adding moustaches to their presentation did not undermine Japanese hegemonic masculinity. I was fascinated by their performance of masculinity and the intersection of identity and power.

In my section, men’s duties and women’s duties were clearly separated, just as Ogasawara (1998) documented in her study of male and female white-collar workers in a large Japanese company. Despite the fact that the Equal Employment Opportunity Law was enacted at that time, no one seemed to believe that women were entitled to conduct important business. Indeed, it was virtually the case that only men had responsibility for projects in the department, despite the fact that men and women

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<sup>1</sup> ODA aims at the economic and social development of developing countries, providing monetary help, infrastructure and public facilities. In this context, using the national budget, the company exported various (often simple) agricultural, fishery and medical tools and machinery to developing countries.

<sup>2</sup> At that time, countries such as India, Nepal, Rwanda and Kenya were the targets of ODA projects in the company.

worked together in pairs. Men were called *tantōsha* (a person (man) in charge), whereas female workers were called *onnanoko* (girls) *en masse* inside and outside the company. Serving tea to colleagues was no longer the female employees' duty in the company; however, I had to serve tea every time my immediate superior had guests. In addition, almost every morning, my partner asked me to buy coffee from the top floor where a vending machine was situated, giving me money for two coffees. His payment for my coffee did not relieve my dissatisfaction. However, feeling myself a coward and hopeless, I did not have the nerve to confront him and suggest that he should go and buy the coffee. On what grounds, could he ask me to run an errand for him? Was it because he felt himself superior? This did not make sense because I had no obligations to fulfill his personal needs. Why did he always treat me to coffee? Did he feel guilty about it? I do not think so. Perhaps, receiving service from a woman at so little cost made him feel better than being self-sufficient because emotional labour was a female worker's tacit duty. This was a microcosm of household relations, which he as a breadwinner would expect in the future. Similarly, when important people (often high officials) from recipient countries came to Japan, female workers were frequently asked to accompany male colleagues and their guests to dinner as if the women gave additional appeal to the occasion.<sup>3</sup>

The Japanese salaryman has a number of aliases, most commonly company person (*kaisha ningen*) (although it is implied that it is usually men who are being referred to), but also economic animal,<sup>4</sup> corporate warrior (*kigyō senshi*) and company animal (*shachiku*). During the Second World War, the name 'corporate warriors' was conferred on salarymen in contrast to soldiers who were called industrial warriors (Miyasaka 2002, p.4). The term became popular again during the high economic growth period. The appellation "company animals" appeared in the early 1990s. The name implied that salarymen were bound to their companies and that their working conditions were worse than those of slaves (Ōsawa 1993, p.120). "Corporate warrior" and "company animal" are contrastive terms. While "corporate warrior" implies a positive character to salarymen masculinities, "company animal" implies a negative and servile masculinity (see Chapter 1).

My male colleagues appeared to be corporate warriors who were fervent workers delightedly working for their company. I remember the moment when a female colleague told us, in front of her work partner, that his wife was giving birth and wished him joy; however, to my surprise, his reaction was brusque as if he was embarrassed. Most of my male colleagues never discussed their family life, even after work when we went out for drinks. I do not know whether they did not talk about their private lives

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<sup>3</sup> Looking after guests' personal needs was also the female workers' job. I was once asked to accompany the Minister of Fisheries from Morocco in his personal shopping as a guide, a request that never would have been made of my male colleagues.

<sup>4</sup> This term was used during the high economic growth period (1955-1973) when Japanese salarymen were internationally renowned for their work ethic.

because they thought that the female workers were too young to share their stories<sup>5</sup> or because they simply drew a clear line between work and the family. It was unmistakable, however, that it was taboo to bring up the topic of the family among men, not only while drinking after work, as Allison (1994, p.53) demonstrates, but also at work.

I tried to be pleasant but I was not necessarily always submissive. There is one occasion that I will never forget. When my partner invited me for drinks, I believe, to reward me for my assistance at work, I declined his offer. I was stunned by his reaction, a mean hiss. Those who overheard our conversation seemed to be sympathetic towards my partner. As a result of my occasional nonconforming attitudes, ultimately another male colleague wrote in a farewell card given to me on my last day in the company that I should change my attitudes and become cooperative in my new workplace. I was upset and felt that my whole contribution was denied. The colleague who wrote this comment had never indicated the slightest discontent with my performance; however, at the same time, he was a strong supporter of the idea that “we are one big family” in the section. Probably, he considered me to be a heretic in his pseudo-family because I failed to play the role of submissive office wife. That is, I was a failure in enacting office femininity.

My interests in and concerns about gender relations and the way in which my male colleagues presented themselves lingered in my mind for a long time. I was unconsciously looking for the reasons for these perplexing and upsetting moments. In the meantime, a friend of mine sent me an on-line newspaper article about the Japanese men’s liberation movement. At that time, I was searching for a topic for my doctoral thesis. Learning about the men’s movement in Japan, I was fascinated by the idea that my doctoral thesis could explore men and masculinities. It was, perhaps, natural for me to be intrigued by Japanese corporate men and their masculinity and to choose them as the topic for my thesis because my questions about Japanese salarymen and their masculinity could thus find expression and be finally exorcised from my mind. More importantly, I was convinced that doing research on Japanese salarymen masculinity would contribute to broadening the currently limited understanding of their masculinity.

The phrase ‘corporate warriors or company animals?’ in the title of this thesis is utilised to denote my concern to discover where my research participants are situated between the two poles on this axis. When I worked with them I perceived my male colleagues as corporate warriors, but now I wonder if it is really so. Kaufman (1994, p.142) argues that power and pain constitute a pair in men’s lives and he calls this ‘men’s contradictory experience of power’. As will be evident in the following chapters, contradictions in men’s lives emerged in my study. While the two terms, the corporate warrior and the

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<sup>5</sup> Because most female workers at the time resigned their jobs at marriage, the majority were in their twenties, while their male colleagues were aged between their mid-twenties and mid-fifties.

company animal, play an important role in symbolising the conflicting characters in hegemony of salaryman masculinity, in this study, the terms are not placed in the forefront of the themes in the investigation of salaryman masculinity. My research interests lie more strongly in exploring the construction of my participants' masculinities throughout their lives than in discovering their symbolic representation as salarymen.

### **Development of research on men and masculinities arising from men's movement activism**

Research on men and masculinity is a rapidly growing field of study, empirical research commencing perhaps three decades ago. In the 1970s in the U.S., university courses were already being taught which specifically focused on men and masculinity (Pease 2002, p.2). However, during the 1970s and the 1980s only a few works on men and masculinities were produced, and this was ascribed to the lack of a coherent concept of gender (Connell 2005b, p.xii). With the development of various theories of gender (for example see Butler [1990] 1999; 1993; Connell 1995; 2000; 2002), research proliferated in the 1990s, particularly in the Anglophone countries (Edley and Wetherell 1996, p.97; Frank 1993, pp.333-334). Studies explore topics such as men and sports (e.g. see Rowe and McKay 1998 for Australia, Kimmel 1990; Messner 1992; 1994a; 1994b; 1994c; Sabo 1994a; 1994b for USA), men in the media (e.g. Lupton and Barclay 1997), male sexuality (e.g. Altman 1992; Weeks 2000; 1996), men at work (e.g. Burris 1996; Hearn 1992; Kerfoot and Knights 1996; Roper 1996).

One of the important theoretical discoveries is that there is no single masculinity but multiple masculinities (Brod 1992, p.12; 1994, pp.82-83; Brod and Kaufman 1994, p.4; Connell 1995, p.76; 2000, p.10; Kimmel and Messner 1995, p.xxi; Segal 1993, p.638; but see also Hearn 1996 for an argument about the limitations of the concept of masculinity/masculinities<sup>6</sup>). Connell (1995, pp.76-81; 2000, pp.10-11, 30-31) identifies four different masculinities: hegemonic, complicit, subordinated and marginalised masculinities (see Chapter 1). While these are organised in a hierarchy, the different masculinities are interconnected as social relations. However, in a given time and space, it is hegemonic masculinity that is placed at the top of the hierarchy. The term 'hegemonic masculinity' does not refer to the most statistically common type of man but rather to the most desired form in relation to social, cultural and institutional aspects (Connell 1995, p.77; 2002, p.11).

In Japan, the study of men and masculinities emerged only in the mid-1990s, except for a few founding studies during the 1980s (Taga 2005b, p.136; 2005c, p.154; 2003, p.1). In the East Asian context, Japanese researchers have produced more studies of men and masculinity than other East Asian countries' researchers, with academic interest in men and masculinities commencing in 1992, when a

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<sup>6</sup> Hearn (1996, p.213) argues that 'the concept may divert attention from women and gendered power relations' between women as a group and men as a group.

“Men’s Studies” course was established in Kyoto University (Taga 2005b, p.137; 2005c, p.159). A growing body of research on men and masculinities has been published in Japanese since the late 1990s (e.g. Sunaga 1999; Taga 2001). Along with this trend, much literature on Japanese men and masculinities, written in English, and mainly by non-Japanese researchers, has also emerged (e.g. Dasgupta 2000; 2003a; 2003b; 2005a; 2005b; Gill 2003; Ishii-Kuntz 2003; Lunsing 2001; 2002; Mathews 2003; McLelland 2005a; 2005b; 2003a; 2003b; 2000; Roberson 2003; Roberson and Suzuki 2003).

According to these researchers, Japanese *sararīman* (salarymen) masculinity is considered to be the dominant or hegemonic masculinity (Dasgupta 2005a, p.10; 2005b, p.169; 2003a, p.118; 2000, p.193; Gill 2003, p.145; Ishii-Kuntz 2003, p.199; Mathews 2003; Miller 2003, p.52; Roberson 2003, p.127; Roberson and Suzuki 2003, p.1). Despite the clear notion of corporate masculinity as dominant/hegemonic, substantial empirical research on Japanese salarymen and their masculinity is still in its infancy. The focus has been on ‘marginal’ masculinities, for example, gay men (Lunsing 2002; 2001; McLelland 2005b; 2005b; 2003a; 2003b; 2000). Researchers such as Gill (2001) who studied day labourers and Roberson (1998) who studied working-class men in Japan gained insights into the masculinity of their research participants, seeing them as gendered beings (Gill 2003; Roberson 2003). The few studies of salarymen in English (e.g. Allison 1994; Ogasawara 1997; Vogel [1963] 1971) do not specifically examine the masculinities of salarymen, but rather discuss their work patterns, working conditions and so on. This thesis focuses specifically on the hegemonic masculinity of Japanese salarymen. By introducing Japanese salarymen’s own accounts of themselves, the thesis explores the construction of their masculinity throughout their lives. On the one hand, the majority of the participants indicated their unawareness of their privileged masculinity in Japanese society but rather expressed an unconscious conformity to cultural and social expectations. Some of them, however, revealed their awareness of the costs of salaryman masculinity to themselves and others. On the other hand, by contrast, a few young participants who were consciously satisfied with their privileged masculinity showed some doubt about the constraints of the salaryman role.

As hegemonic masculinity is shaped and maintained through the structures of society but also changes over time (Connell 1995, p.77), this thesis explores similarities and differences across three generations of salarymen – in this thesis described as the grandfathers’, the fathers’ and the sons’ generations. In addition, similarities and differences within each generation are examined. To the author’s knowledge, my project is the only study that explores three generations. The life of the three generations covers the period from before the Pacific war (from the mid-1920s) through the post-Pacific war, the economic miracle (1955-1973), the bursting of the bubble (the early 1990s) and present debates concerning Japanese work and family life (see Appendix 2). While these changes are

reflected in the participants' narratives, little has been done which links changes in interruptions in the performance of masculinity as a result of these dramatic economic and social changes over the last century. This thesis aims to contribute to creating new knowledge of longitudinal transformation of Japanese hegemonic masculinity. The present introductory chapter, firstly, discusses the development of research on men and masculinities. Secondly, this chapter explains the theoretical reasons for researching men and masculinities. The final section concerns the organisation of this thesis.

As mentioned earlier, the unprecedented increasing attention to and the mushrooming research on men and masculinities from the early 1990s is striking. According to Newton (cited in Nye 2005, p.1938), the number of books and articles concerning men and masculinities multiplied sevenfold during the 1990s. Today's discourse on men and masculinities, whether popular or academic, acknowledges its debt to the women's liberation movement and feminism's development of critical knowledge of gender (Adam and Savran 2002, p.2; Coltrane 1994, p.42; Frank 1993, pp.336-338; Kaufman 1994, p.154; Kimmel 1987, p.10; Pease 2002, p.1). This caused a chain of events. Firstly, in the late 1960s, developing from aspects of feminist studies that focused on sexuality, the gay liberation movement began to deconstruct the unquestioned hegemony of heterosexuality within masculinity and among men (Carrigan *et al.* [1987] 2002, pp.99, 108; Connell 2005b, p.xii). This recognition broadened an understanding of homosexual men's subordination in the dynamics of power relations within masculinity.<sup>7</sup> The notion of diverse masculinities further developed the idea that men's varying experiences and practice throughout their lives, for example, physical and mental attributes, age, religious beliefs, sexual inclination, class and race, influence this multiplicity of masculinities (Brod and Kaufman 1994, pp.4-5). Thus the gay liberation movement opened up a new horizon for understanding various masculinities as a social structure (Carrigan *et al.* 2002, p.110).

Secondly, as a response to feminism and the ensuing gay liberation movement, two different men's movements developed. The first occurred in the 1970s and was called the 'Men's Liberation movement' (or the first wave of the men's movement) (Adams and Savran 2002, p.4; Connell 2005b, p.xii; Messner 1997, p.36). Men in this movement, although mostly heterosexual, were sympathetic towards oppressed women and gay men.<sup>8</sup> They challenged male sex roles and aimed for non-sexist attitudes and behaviour through consciousness-raising group activities (Adams and Savran 2002, pp.3-4; Connell 2005b, p.xii; Messner 1997, pp.36-41). The second wave of the men's movement took place from the late 1970s, and involved different groups of men with varying intentions and goals. The 'men's rights movement' represents an adverse reaction to feminism. Men in this movement regarded

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<sup>7</sup> Not all academics who discussed this hierarchy within masculinity were involved in the gay liberation movement, for example, Pleck (1980) (cited in Carrigan *et al.* 2002, pp.109, 117).

<sup>8</sup> As examples of few academic contributions in the Men's Liberation movement, see Fasteau (1974), Farrell (1974) and Nichols (1975) for a challenge to male sex roles and the promotion of men's liberation through consciousness raising groups. However, Farrell (1994) later joined the men's rights movement and criticised, for example, women's sexual manipulation of men.

themselves as victims of women's power and argued that feminism refused to accept that in reality men were oppressed (Frank 1993, p.337; Messner 1997, pp.41-42).<sup>9</sup> Another stream of the anti-feminist men's movement is known as the 'mytho-poetic movement', emerging from the 1980s (Frank 1993, p.336; Kaufman 1994, p.156). In contrast to the men's liberation movement, the mytho-poetic movement advocated men's deliverance from emasculating feminism and feminised society and men's reconquest of wild and powerful manhood through masculinist rituals (Adams and Savran 2002, p.5; Kimmel and Kaufman 1994, pp.261-263; Messner 1997, p.17). Attracting many socially powerful men (and some women too), the mytho-poetic movement reached the peak of its popularity in the 1990s (Frank 1993, p.336). *Iron John* by Bly (1990) became a bible of the movement. Finally, by contrast, the last category of the men's movement, called the 'profeminist men's movement', challenged men's power in society and advocated the promotion of feminism within men (Frank 1993, p.338; Kaufman 1994, p.156). While the profeminist men's movement was small-scale and modest at the beginning, compared with the mytho-poetic movement, it has established a global presence (Kaufman 1994, p.157).<sup>10</sup>

In Japan, in the 1990s, twenty years after the first wave of the men's movement in the West, the men's liberation movement quietly emerged. In 1991, *Menzu ribu*<sup>11</sup> *kenkyūkai* (a society for the study of men's liberation) was established, being triggered by a symposium entitled "Questioning Masculinity" that was organised by men who supported feminism and the gay liberation movement (Itō 1996, p.311). In 1995, this society assumed the new name of '*Menzu sentā Japan*' (Men's Centre Japan) (Dasgupta 2003b, p.112; Taga 2005b, p.135; Toyoda 1997, p.220). In the same year, '*Menzu ribu Tokyo*' (Men's Lib Tokyo) was inaugurated (Dasgupta 2003b, p.113; Toyoda 1997, p.221). Currently, there are various men's groups in Japan.<sup>12</sup> The activities of these men's groups include consciousness-raising, discussing, for example, work, the family, relationships, sexuality, male violence and so forth (Men's Centre 1996; 1997; Toyoda 1997). Men's Centre Japan has held an annual conference called "*Otoko no Fesutibaru*" (Men's festival) since 1996 (Taga 2005b, p.135; 2005c, p.158). While many men in the Japanese men's liberation movement have profeminist attitudes, they are largely concerned with difficulties in living as a man, with men's patriarchal burdens (Dasgupta 2003b, p.113), a focus that has been criticised by some commentators (Tsutamori 1999, p.12).

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<sup>9</sup> For example, in 1973 in the U.S. the first Men's Rights Association was established and in 1973 in Australia, the Lone Fathers' Association was established (Pease 2002, pp.34-35). See also Flood (1998; 2004) for men's movements in Australia.

<sup>10</sup> The National Organisation of Men Against Sexism in the U.S., Men Against Sexual Assault in Australia and the White Ribbon Campaign in Canada represent outcomes of the movement (Pease 2002, p.43).

<sup>11</sup> *Menzu ribu* is an abbreviation of men's liberation in Japanese.

<sup>12</sup> Some forty small-scale men's groups were found through researching on the Internet. See also Dasgupta (2003b) for men's groups in Japan.



Akin to the men's rights groups in the West, Japan has witnessed an anti-feminist advocacy of manhood, represented for example by the book, '*Fusei no fukken*' (*The Restoration of Paternity*) (Hayashi 1996). Drawing on Jungian psychology, Hayashi (1996) argues for the recovery of paternal masculinity, which is explicitly different from maternity/femininity. Hayashi (1996, p.66) maintains that it is desirable for the father to discipline and train his children and to instruct them in social rules, whereas it is preferable for the mother to play a role in comforting the children, thus setting a high valuation on the father as the mediator between the family and society (Nakatani 1999, p.51).<sup>13</sup> Japanese religion, Shinto, represents another source of the backlash against feminism. Collaborating with Shinto politicians of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the Association of Shinto Shrines maintains that the Fundamental Law on Gender Equality (*Danjo Kyōdō Sankaku Shakai Kihonhō*) should be abolished because gender equality in society destroys public morals (Hardacre 2005, pp.241-243). In fact, the LDP is committed to promoting the family as the fundamental unit of society and to undermining the 'alleged excesses' of individualism (Hardacre 2005, p.241). The nation-wide counterblast against the gender-equal society continues as nationalists' sentiments yearn for a return to imperial Japan in which the family was the fundamental unit that functioned according to the traditional division of labour based on sexual differences and men's authority was legally protected (see Chapter 2).

The gay liberation movement and the diverse men's movements induced by the Women's Liberation Movement and feminism thus contributed to maturing the theoretical and conceptual understanding of men and masculinities amongst scholars. Additionally, the contemporary changes in feminist foci from white middle class women to women of various backgrounds and the shift in emphasis in educational institutions from women to gender have also played an important role in developing men and masculinities studies (Adams and Savran 2002, pp.3-4). As a result, significant studies of men and masculinities have been produced since the mid-1990s in the academic world, not only in the advanced countries but also in the less developed countries (Connell 2005a, pp.1802-1804; 2005b, pp.xiv-xv).

Gender issues have long been equated with women's problems without taking men into account, despite the fact that women's issues and men's issues are two sides of the same coin. In fact, profeminist male scholars state that women's disadvantages have a close association with men's privileges (Connell 2005b, p.248), that is, "the Woman Question" cannot be studied properly unless "the Man Question" is also studied' (Brod 1987, p.265). The purpose of studying men and masculinities is 'female empowerment', achieved by understanding the operation of men's privileges (Brod 1987, p.273; Kimmell 1987, p.10). Feminist writers such as Segal (1993, p.635) also maintain

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<sup>13</sup> See also Hardacre (2005, p.243) for Hayashi's argument for a male/female distinction based on the development of the brain.

that 'naturalized' male supremacy and power over women, some men, materials and resources should be explored. By doing so, the masculinist social system and structures are uncovered. Segal (1993, p.635) also argues that this destabilisation of men's power contributes not only to feminist goals but also to the emancipation of the subordinated and marginalised. Eveline (1994, p.129) asserts that an absence of critical examination of 'men's advantage' in the discourse of 'women's disadvantage' assumes men's privilege to be eternal and impedes feminist determinations to eliminate discrimination based on sex.

Taking the above argument as a model, the present thesis aims to unveil the hegemonic masculinity of Japanese salarymen and to discover the pressure points where men's privileges can be destabilised and women's disadvantages alleviated.

### **Organisation of the Thesis**

Subsequent to this introductory chapter, five chapters follow. The first chapter consists of two parts. The first part is a literature review and is concerned with the theoretical and conceptual framework for this thesis and the second part deals with methodology. The former part explores the development of different feminist gender theories and explains the reason for applying Connell's gender theory to this study. Following the explanation of the gender theory as a theoretical framework, the research on Japanese men and masculinities is discussed. The following three chapters are ordered according to the three major phases of men's lives. Chapter Two explores the men's gendered experiences of growing up as boys in their families and schools. More specifically, the chapter looks at their relationships with their parents and siblings. It also examines their relationships with their peers in settings such as the classroom, playground and neighbourhood. Chapter Three deals with love and marriage. Beginning with adolescence, a series of significant life events, commencing with dating and culminating in parenting, is explored. This chapter examines how the participants develop their sexual identity and what marriage and parenting mean to them. Chapter Four concerns work. This chapter, firstly, looks at the participants' transition from education to work. Secondly, it examines their perception of gender equality in the workplace. Thirdly, it discusses the men's contradictory lives as embodiments of hegemonic masculinity. Finally, it explores *ikigai* (what makes their lives worth living). The conclusion notes that it is evident that the men experience hierarchy and sex segregation from an early age and throughout their lives. Nonetheless, this experience is contradictory, as indicated in the contest between the terms 'corporate warrior' and 'company animal', both of these finding resonances in the participants' experiences.



# 1 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter consists of two parts: literature review and methodology. In the former part, initially, the development of feminist gender theories, including the sex/gender distinction, embodiment theories and performative theory, is discussed. Subsequent to this, the reasons for applying Connell's four-fold gender theory are explained. Its inclusive nature, that is, an approach that combines agency, the body, history and psychic influences, is discussed. This is followed by a brief discussion of Connell's four dimensions of gender relations, upon which this project is built. Japanese masculinities research is then reviewed and this is followed by discourses on salarymen. In the latter part, firstly, the reason for employing Connell's method, namely the life history method that brings out the interwoven interaction amongst the four structures in lived lives, is explained together with sampling and selection criteria for this research. Secondly, my reflection on the research process with regard to feminist methodological considerations is discussed.

## 1.1 Review of Feminist Gender Theories

Feminist gender theories are the foci of this section. They developed as a means of challenging what Connell terms 'categoricalism', which is briefly discussed below (Connell 1986, p.348; 1987, p.54). Subsequent to feminist critiques, the major strengths of Connell's gender theory are discussed.

### 1.1.1 Categoricalism

Categorical determinism treats men and women as pre-formed categories with their essential qualities, and focuses on elements of the categories rather than the process of their formation. This popular discourse on differences between men and women is frequently based on the polarisation of men and women due to their bodies (biology) or behaviour (psychology) (Connell 1995, p.4; 2000, p.18; Pease 2002, p.13).

### Biological determinism

There has been a long debate on sexual differences between natural scientists on one side and sociologists and feminists on the other. In the 1970s, the socio-biological explanation – men and women occupy different social positions on account of their innate biological natures – became the most prevalent concept of sex, from which the social construction of gender was distinguished (Connell 1999, p.451; Pease 2002, p.13). The sexualisation of bodily differences that emerged in the

eighteenth century<sup>14</sup> was reinforced by the end of the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, instead of genital organs sex hormones became established as the dominant way of explaining sex differences (Oudshoorn 1994, p.16).<sup>15</sup> The programme of genes, then, became an account of the distinction between men and women.<sup>16</sup> Sex differences have most recently been pursued into the brain. The different structure and organization of the right and left hemispheres between men and women became an explanation for the behavioural differences between the two sexes (Moir and Jessel 1989, p.38). The socio-biological explanations of sex differences thus argue that gender inequality has to be accepted because biology is inescapable. However, the existence of hermaphrodites demonstrates that one cannot use genitals, hormones and chromosomes to explain the biological categories of male and female (Fausto-Sterling 1985; 2000, p.46; Vines 1993, p.103). Social and cultural environments can engender differences in our bodies (e.g. changes in the brain due to external factors) and also modify biology (e.g. contraception) (Fausto-Sterling 1985; 2000, p.239; Halpern and LaMay 2000, p.243; Lambert 1987, p.126; Vines 1993, p.156). In addition, science is a social product and bears the cultural features from which it emerges (Harding 1986, p.250). Biological determinism is thus defective in explaining sex differences, when the impact of social influences – gender – is also understood.

### **Psychological determinism**

Psychological determinism alleges the different orientation of mentalities between the two sexes. Unceasing self-help publications concerning the heterosexual relationship prove the widespread belief in sexual difference (e.g. Evatt 1993; Gray [1992] 2003; Pease and Pease 2000). The psychological rhetoric that reinforces the dichotomy between the two sexes was also used in the propaganda of the Mythopoetic men's movement in the U.S. in the early 1990s. Bly (1990) became a best-selling author for his book *Iron John*, advocating the resurgence of the innate quintessence of masculinity – 'Zeus energy' (Bly 1990, p.22). However, the simple dualism of popular psychological determinism is defective. Since the 1890s, in pursuit of facts about men and women, various studies (so-called sex difference research) have been conducted. These found few uncontested differences between men and women because such research focuses on averages and, therefore, ignores the fact that most

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<sup>14</sup> Until the eighteenth century, male and female bodies were considered to be fundamentally similar. Female genitals were thought to be hidden inside the body (Oudshoorn 1994, p.6). According to Emily Martin (1991; 1987), the presumed differences in developmental processes between male human cells and female human cells came to be considered as being imprinted onto men and women as gender differences. For example, men were linked with intelligence because of the nature of their active male cells, whereas women were connected with 'altruistic emotions' on account of the passivity of female cells (Martin 1987, p.33).

<sup>15</sup> For example, Goldberg (1974, pp.75, 93) asserts 'the hormonal renders the social inevitable', meaning that male hormonal aggression is men's advantage that dominates and subordinates women.

<sup>16</sup> Dawkins (1976), in his "selfish" gene hypothesis, argues that genes determine human behaviour in order to maximize the genes' survival, resulting in the evolution of sexual differences.

men and women are in overlapping categories, with members of the other sex above and below each individual's score (Burr 1998, pp.11, 27-29; Caplan and Calpan 1999, pp.63, 92; Halpern and LaMay 2000, p.229; Lambert 1987, p.126; Maccoby and Jacklin 1974, pp.4, 351-355).

### **Sex Role Theory**

Sex role theory was initiated by Parsons (1954) and developed by Parsonian scholars up to the 1960s (Delphy 1993, p.2).<sup>17</sup> The concept of sex role theory is that people acquire a position (status) and learn 'a set of expectations which are allocated to one's sex' (masculine roles for men and feminine roles for women) through interactions with the family, schools, the media and so on (Connell 1995, p.22; Delphy 1993, p.2; Edley and Wetherell 1995, p.71). Viewing people as entities who satisfy society's needs, Parsons considered men's roles to be instrumental and women's roles to be expressive and thus to complement each other (Parsons 1954, pp.80, 96; Parsons and Bales 1955, pp.51, 318-319).

The concept of sex roles became the target of feminist criticism in the 1970s because it confines women to the conventional division of labour (Delphy 1993, p.2). In addition, sex role theory assumes a simple bifurcation of biological differences between men and women (Edley and Wetherell 1995, p.88; Kimmel 1987, p.12; Messner 1998, p.258; Parsons and Bales 1955, p.23). The theory does not acknowledge changes in role performance within society and across time (Carrigan *et al.* 1987, p.78; Kimmel 1987, p.12). Because of this static characteristic, sex role theory assumes people's compliance with the norm and, therefore, does not recognize the dynamics of individual agency that entails the diversity of masculinities and femininities, the occurrence of resistance and political movements (Carrigan *et al.* 1987, p.77; Stacey 1993, p.66). Finally, there is no explanation concerning the source of sex roles (Walby 1990, p.93). Recognising sex role theory as an inappropriate analytical framework by the mid-1980s, many theorists had moved away from this framework (Messner 1998, p.258). The concept of sex roles gave rise to the concept of gender (Delphy 1993, p.2) that begot one of the most influential feminist gender theories – the sex/gender distinction – to which the next section turns.

#### **1.1.2 Sex/Gender Distinction**

Two decades after the celebrated *locus classicus* '[o]ne is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' in *The Second Sex* ([1949] 1953, p.273) written by Simone de Beauvoir, feminist theorists drew a clear line of distinction between sex and gender (Gatens 1983, p.143; Grosz 1994, pp.15-18). From the 1970s, until challenged by corporeal feminists such as Grosz and Gatens and postmodernists such as

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<sup>17</sup> See Hacker (1957) for her comprehensive discussion of men, the masculine role and its change as one of the earliest papers based on sex role theory.

Butler in the mid-1980s, the sex/gender distinction became the feminist sociologists' way of understanding the social construction of sexual differences in the development of gender theory (Edwards, A 1989, pp.2-3). The term 'sex differences' was used to describe the minimal biological differences between men and women, while gender differences were regarded as socially and culturally constructed behavioural and psychological features (Gatens 1983, p.144), thus implying that gender is unstable and negotiable.<sup>18</sup> The sex/gender distinction considered gender differentiation to be built on biological sex, but with enormous variability in each society (Delphy 1993, p.3): '[t]he constancy of sex must be admitted, but so too must the variability of gender' (Oakley 1972, p.16).

The dualism of sex and gender came to be seen as problematic because the unquestioning application of the sex/gender distinction leads those who use it to understand sexuality in a dualist mode, with a tendency to favour either social determinism or biological determinism due to the theory's bifurcated nature: the body versus the mind dualism (Gatens 1983, p.147; Grosz 1994, p.21). It is also problematic to view gender as the variable 'content' and sex as the invariable 'container' without questioning why this is so (Delphy 1993, p.3). Such a distinction deludes us into paying little attention to the complicated interplay between sex and gender without favouring one over the other (Gatens 1983, pp.149-150; Grosz 1994, p.22; Butler 1993, p.5, 1999, p.10). There is an inseparable relationship between sex and gender because they are both social products mediated through society and culture (Grosz 1994, p.21; Haraway 1991, p.15; Rubin 1975, p 179). Grosz (1994, p.22) argues that the sex/gender distinction is no less defective than the mind/body distinction. The conception of the body as *a priori* and the psyche as neutral leads to the 'passive conception of the subject' (Gatens 1983, p.147). Various theorists have endeavoured to overcome simple dualism, for example, by identifying how changes in the performance of femininities and masculinities can occur. Sociology of the body represents one of those that have been proposed.

### 1.1.3 Embodiment Theories

According to embodiment theorists, many sociologists could be described as social determinists who strive to minimize the biologically assumed differences between men and women and, therefore, disregard the significance of the body in the formation of subjectivity (Gatens 1987, p.149). Some feminists pay attention to the biological body as an important key to understanding gendered subjectivities without reducing gender differences to mere biological determinism (e.g. Gatens 1983, 1995; Grosz 1994). These feminists draw on psycho-analytic theory, Foucault and phenomenology to produce two main approaches to overcoming the sex-gender and individual-society dualism: corporeal

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<sup>18</sup> Sex/gender theorists often cited Margaret Mead's anthropological study (1935), which claimed that three non-Western societies, i.e. Arapesh, Mundugamor and Chambri societies in Papua New Guinea, had arbitrarily different masculine and feminine norms thus demonstrating that there were no consistent links with biological sex.

feminism and Butler's theory of performativity. The following section briefly reviews Freudian and object relation theories, Foucault's theory of power and the body and phenomenology as precursors to embodiment theorists; a discussion of corporeal feminism and performative gender theory then follows.

### **Freudian psychoanalytic theory and object relations theory**

Feminist theorists of the 1970s condemned orthodox Freudian psychoanalytic theory on the grounds that it was patriarchal and phallogocentric (Greer 1971, p.91; Firestone 1971, p.53). Reassessing Freudian psychoanalysis, Mitchell (1971, p.166; 1974, pp.xv-xvi), by contrast, defended Freud's theory and asserted that the concept of penis envy implies the girl's unconscious envy of the symbolic power which men and the penis have over the mother. Feminist object relations theory produced an analysis based on the child's development through inter-subjective relations within the family, adapting Freud but also departing from him (Benjamin 1988; Chodorow 1978; Dinnerstein 1976). While the Oedipus complex focuses on the conflict between instinctive drives and the frustrations of the child caused by the familial relationships (Freud 1949; 1930), object relations theory is concerned with the issue of emotional intimacy and separation between the mother and the child (Campbell 2000, p.78). Penis envy in Freud's theory is interpreted in object relations theory as the girl wanting a penis that symbolises autonomy and independence, which appears to attract the mother's love for the father and the boy (Chodorow 1978, p.125). In Chodorow's view, exclusive childcare by the mother causes insufficient autonomy in the girl and a desire to dominate women in the boy, which is expressed in adult women's inclination to relatedness and adult men's inclination to impersonal relationships (Chodorow 1978, p.214).

Freudian psychoanalysis and object relations theory have shortcomings in common: the assumption of the conventional family structure, i.e. the mother as the full-time caretaker and the father as the busy breadwinner in the heterosexual nuclear family (Campbell 2000, p.94; Fee 1986, p.49), the supposition that the goal of child development is to achieve heterosexuality (Campbell 2000, p.186; Chodorow 1989, p.77; Fuss 1995, p.73) and the neglect of social relations (Connell 1987, p.28).<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, Connell (1994, p.33) states that psychoanalysis informs us that masculinity and femininity are "constructed" in the process of child development and that emotions, sexual feelings and identity shape the relationships among people, and vice versa, which constitute one facet of gender relations.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> In fact, Chodorow (1989, pp.3-4), in her later work, admits the limitation of psychoanalysis i.e. individualism and the lack of cultural, historical and social considerations.

<sup>20</sup> See also Burack (1992) for her discussion on conflicting arguments between feminist proponents and opponents of object relations theory.



### **Foucault and bio-politics**

Foucault (e.g. 1977; 1978) argues that knowledge of the body or 'the political technology of the body' is connected with power and, therefore, dominant discourses manipulate the body and the subject's experience of the body (Foucault 1977, p.26). Foucault (1978, pp.139-140) called the exercise of modern forms of power 'bio-politics' in which institutional disciplines through education, work, public health and so forth generate 'bio-power' that, in a dispersed way, controls the body and life of the population (Foucault 1977 p.136; 1978, p.139). However, power in Foucault's theory is not coercive but productive or 'constitutive' of social relations (Bordo 1993, p.167). Feminists have criticised Foucault's generic body that pays no attention to gender differences (Bartky 1997, p.132). Feminists argue that the dominant discourses of femininity and masculinity operate to inscribe very different experiences and norms on male and female bodies, with female bodies more intensely monitored (Bordo 1993, p.143). While Foucault claims that power entails resistance, because he does not articulate the mechanisms of resistance to bio-power (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983, pp.205-207), his theory cannot avoid appearing to be a one-way relationship between the body and society (Connell 2002, p.39).

### **Phenomenology**

In contrast to Foucault, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology situates subjectivity in the lived body: it is the body that 'understands other people' and that 'perceives things' (Merleau-Ponty 1962, p.186). The body exists in the world with its intentionality and with 'openness upon its possibilities' (Young 1990, p.148). More importantly, Merleau-Ponty (1962, p.106) underlines the reciprocal relationship between the body and the world. However, as with Foucault, Merleau-Ponty lacks a gender lens. Outlining a specific feminine bodily comportment, motility and spatiality, Young (1990, p.147) argues that the way in which the woman's body exists in the world is more restricted than the way in which the man's body does.

While Foucault and Merleau-Ponty overcome the dichotomy between the body and mind, the formation of subjectivity differs between each. Foucault argues that subjectivity is constituted on the surface of the body through disciplinary discourses. Merleau-Ponty asserts that the subjectivity is created in embodying possibilities through bodily experiences of the world. In other words, Foucault's subjectivity brings the body into its performance, whereas Merleau-Ponty's subjectivity reflects the performance of the body. The major limitation of both theories is their lack of an insight into gender (or gendered bodies) because they view the body as a universal generic human body. This problem is addressed by corporeal feminism.

### **Embodiment: Corporeal feminism**

Drawing on phenomenology, and Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, Grosz (1994; 1995) and Gatens (1983; 1995) propose a corporeal feminism. Grosz (1994, p.22) describes the body as 'psychical corporeality' and Gatens (1995, p.viii) as '*imaginary* bodies', a mediated system of experiencing our body. Gatens (1983, p.150; 1995, p.31) and Grosz (1994, p.23) consider the body to be the principal site where personal and social significance become manifest. They object to the concept of 'the human body' because it is an historical and cultural fact that a society is organised according to sexual differences. They claim that 'there are at least two kinds of bodies' – the male body and the female body (Gatens 1983, pp.148-150; 1995, p.24; Grosz 1994, pp.18-22). Female and male physical realities and events (e.g. pubertal bodily changes, menstruation, pregnancy, erection, ejaculation and so forth) are intertwined with our lived sexual differences in society and, therefore, influence the formation of our subjectivity, reflecting different social meanings and values of the female body and the male body (Gatens 1983, p.149). Gatens (1983, p.150) thus emphasizes the inescapability of analysing the imaginary body rather than understanding sexuality in terms of a simple distinction between sex and gender. The strength of corporeal feminism is its rejection of the social determinism of personal and gendered identity, which considers the body to be neutral, passive and a '*tabula rasa*' (Gatens 1983, p.144; Grosz 1994, p.18). Corporeal feminism not only emphasises the significance of the body as lived in understanding the formation of subjectivity but also brings about a new theory of the active body beyond the above discursive construction of the docile body. Recently, Grosz (2005, pp.174-176) argues that while there are at least two kinds of bodies, the existence of two sexes is only 'virtual' reality because only one sex (single and universal male) exists, thus suggesting the need of a new concept of the female subject that is not a mere counterpart of the male subject. The following section concerns Butler's performativity that, by contrast, repudiates the category of sex.

### **Performative theory of gender**

According to Butler ([1990] 1999, p.173; see also Butler 1993), gender is performative.

Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being.

(Butler 1999, pp.43-44)

Butler argues that gendered identity is constituted through a series of repeated acts, gestures and enactments over time. These acts are performed in accordance with a scenario, the 'heterosexual matrix', a system that maintains the law of heterosexual coherence, naturalising the dichotomy

between male and female bodies, their cohesion into the norm and the consistent gender binary of male masculinity and female femininity (Butler 1999, pp.30, 175, 194).

Performativity of gender is the process of people's embodiment of the gendered norm, akin to Foucault's notion of the disciplinary process of subjectification to social norms. That is, the identity produced by gender acts manifests itself on the surface of the body and is discursively sustained (Butler 1999, p.179). Accordingly, Butler does not consider gender to have an inner psychic life (Butler 1999, p.173). Thus gender is understood as a practice within the cultural intelligibility of regulated discourse (Butler 1999, p.184). However, as discourses are temporal and the meaning of language is subject to change, Butler (1993, p.226; 1999, p.179) asserts that the stylized repetition of performances involves the possibility of an alternative constitution of gender because it does not always conform to the gender norms.

Butler denies sex as an unmediated natural category, arguing that sex can exist only within culturally intelligible discourses and, therefore, sex is no less a cultural construction than gender (Butler 1999, pp.11-12). In addition, she maintains that sex is a product or effect of gender, which sustains the heterosexual matrix (Butler 1999, p.187). That is, the performer of gender comes to believe that sex is natural.<sup>21</sup>

The performative theory of gender has created a sensation among supporters as well as critics of Butler. Critics claim that Butler fails to notice that the facts and events of the body play an important role in forming gendered subjectivity, as corporeal feminists argue. Her focus on the sexually marginalised indicates that she pays little attention to subjects who are marginalised on other grounds, for example, disabled people (Mairs 1997, p.299). However, the potential for change resides in Butler's notion that contingent social practices entail the 'unthinkable' within the heterosexual matrix (Butler 1999, pp.98-99). In other words, in order for the social norm (e.g. heterosexuality) to continue to exist, Butler (1999, pp.98-99) argues that, the existence of a comprehensible concept of the 'unthinkable' (e.g. homosexuality) is necessary. That is, the norm and the divergent form coexist within the same culture. In addition, because the performative gender identity is insubstantial and temporal, its occasional failure to perform according to dominant social norms entails the possibility for change (Butler 1999, p.179).

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<sup>21</sup> Quoting Simone de Beauvoir, Butler (1999, p.12) challenges the biological sex of 'one' who becomes woman, asserting that, while de Beauvoir does not give a sufficient explanation for the 'one' to be necessarily female, the 'one' would be female in the heterosexual matrix.

### 1.1.4 Connell's Gender Theory

This thesis applies Connell's gender theory because of its inclusive nature. Built on a critique of other approaches to sex, gender and sexuality, Connell's gender theory encompasses agency, includes the impact of the body and of the psyche in producing and expressing sexuality, and locates gender within history (social structures) (Connell 1987; 1995; 2002). The next section describes Connell's main strengths, followed by Connell's four-fold structure of gender.

#### Strengths of Connell's gender theory

Firstly, Connell comprehends agency as an important concept in elucidating the grounds and reasons for the transformation of gender relations. While agency is broadly understood as 'being a person' which, at the same time, suggests the notion of identity and subjectivity, the traditional humanist understanding of agency presumes an autonomous, rational and unified subject (Davies 1991, pp.42-43; Webster 2001, p.8). These properties enable people to organize political activities that are based on common identities, for example as "women". The concept of agency, however, varies among the theories which have been discussed so far.

Categorical theories disallow a subject's agency, given that people's behaviour is determined by biology, psychology or society. For example, in biological essentialism, the body represents a programmed 'machine' (Connell 2002, p.31; see Davies 1990, p.320 for a critique of sex role theory). In Foucault's theory, identity is a 'fiction', despite the inclusion of resistance (Fraser 1992, p.7), which makes it almost impossible to see agency (Beasley 1999, p.95). As for feminist embodiment theory, subjectivity cannot avoid involving a biological dualism of male and female because of the intersubjectivity based on sex-specific bodily events (Connell 2002, p.35). By contrast, in Butler's performativity, agency does not exist in the self-determining and coherent subject (Butler 1999, pp.4-7). Instead, regarding agency as an effect of repeated actions, Butler (1999, p.188) argues that 'strategies of subversive repetition' open up the possibility of agency. However, she does not give us an account of the mechanism of subversive repetition for change. Consequently, Butler's agency lacks a strong determination and a specific direction to change the *status quo*, which is expressed in collective actions organised for specific consequences (Webster 2002, p.17; Weitz 2001, p.669).

The agency that Connell (1995; 2002) proposes, on which this thesis draws, is not situated in the traditional humanist concept of agency but does allow for collective action. Connell opposes the poststructuralist idea of the discursively constructed body with its contingent nature, claiming instead the significance of the materiality of the body, the close relationship between agency and the body and the interconnectedness between the body and social practices (Connell 1995, pp.60-64). Connell (1987, p.78; 2002, p.47) equates agency with the perpetual creative activity of the body, which always

produces a physically or emotionally different body from the body that has begun the practices. That is, bodies and their practices construct social structures. The body is neither the absolute object of social practice because it is the site where one engages in the social world; nor is the body the absolute subject of social practice because there are necessarily material and institutional constraints. In other words, the body is both an object and agent of social practice. Shaping social structure and personal trajectories, social practices create history. Connell (1995, p.61; 2002, p.47) calls this process '*social embodiment*' and these practices the 'body-reflexive practice'.

This, however, does not mean that agency is a unified or fixed entity. Agency is, rather, a shifting potential. Human agents, for example, resist gender roles at preschool (Davies 1990), conforms to the gender norm at secondary school (Collins 1999), reconstructs sexuality as homosexuality (Connell 1995) and expresses itself in hairstyles (Weitz 2001) within material and social constraints. These examples indicate the complicated processes of adaptation, negotiation and divergence that agency goes through (Connell 2002, p.81). In so doing, new practices and possibilities of change in gender relations, in the process of individual and collective history making, are created (Connell 1995, p.69). Agency is thus understood as activities and creativities of bodily practices within material and social constraints, which always have a potential for the transformation of the social structures.

The second strength of Connell's approach is the rejection of biological essentialism. Connell (1995, p.71; 1999, p.464; 2002, p.48) asserts that biology cannot account for gender practices but, rather, the anatomy and reproductive process of human beings form a 'reproductive arena' where socially and culturally mediated meanings of men and women, and masculinity and femininity are produced. Thus he points to the inseparable relationship between biology (human bodies) and society. Moreover, he asserts that although 'the body' is often the focus of philosophical and sociological study, this generic body is inadequate because there are millions of different bodies – with their differing sizes, ages, health conditions etc. – in the world (Connell 1995, p.56; 1999, p.453; 2002, p.39).

Thirdly, Connell (1987; 1995; 2000; 2002, p.68) argues that '*everything about gender is historical*'. Involving bodies, social practices shape social structures and personal paths, which can create an unconventional state for new practices. Thus gender is a process that has historicity (Connell 1995, pp. 47-48; see also Maharaj 1995, p.52). This historical process of changes in gender only reveals itself in specific lives or situations. For example, some men's encounter with the environmental movement and feminism, challenging as it does their attitudes and behaviour in friendships and relationships based on hegemonic masculinity, represents an historical moment of change in personal trajectories (Connell 1995, pp.125-130). The pursuit of bodily pleasures in personal and social practices also entails the possibility for change in (hetero) sexuality (Connell 1995, pp.149-150). On a larger scale, the

psychological and religious concept of the father (Abramovitch 1997) and the ideal image of the father in the U.S. (Pleck 1987; Pleck and Pleck 1997) have been changing over the centuries. Even in contemporary society, the meaning of fatherhood has been undergoing transformation over the past few decades (LaRossa 1995). Gender is thus a 'product' as well as a 'producer' of history (Connell 1995, p.81).

Finally, Connell (1987; 1995; 2002) adopts an aspect of the psychoanalytic approach to sexuality and gender, in particular, the emotional attachment to an object. Connell deploys Freud's discovery of patterned relationships in the family unit that has led to the investigation of emotional relations in sociology (Connell 1994, pp.16-17; 2002, p.62).

Connell thus opens up new horizons for theorizing gender by integrating agency, the body, history and the psyche into his theory of gender. Complicated and intertwined relationships between the various social factors and sexuality, which construct social structures, are explained in the next section.

#### **Four-fold dimensions of gender relations**

Connell's earlier model of gender relations consisted of three dimensions: power relations, production relations and cathexis (emotional relations) (see Connell 1987; 1995). More recently, acknowledging the importance of the construction of identities in communication, Connell added symbolic relations to the three dimensions (Connell 2000; 2002). These four relations – social structures – are indispensable for understanding gender relations and are the framework which this thesis uses to explore the masculinities of Japanese salarymen across three generations.

Connell builds his theory on the work of predecessors such as Mitchell (1971) and Walby (1990). Mitchell (1971) attempted to explain the social position of women and their oppression by applying four structures of gender relations: production, reproduction, socialization and sexuality, arguing that women's exclusion from society and confinement to the home are resolved by the transformation of all four structures through women's integration into these structures (Mitchell 1971, p.120). Connell (2002, pp.56-57) criticises Mitchell's categorisation of structures by claiming that reproduction and socialisation are not structures, while also suggesting the need to add power relations to her theory. Walby's theory of patriarchy identifies six structures of patriarchy: paid employment, household production, culture, sexuality, violence and the state (Walby 1990). Because her work is centrally concerned with patriarchy, Connell (2002, p.57) indicates that her model focuses almost exclusively on power relations. The following section outlines Connell's four-fold model. Following this summary, Connell's model is used to discuss the Japanese literature on masculinity.

### ***Power relations***

Understanding power is indispensable in theorising men and masculinities (Brittan 1989; Connell 1995; Kaufman 1994; Segal 1990). Similarly, it is imperative when theorising gender to perceive the operation of power. Connell (1995, p.74; 2002, pp.58-59) asserts that “patriarchy” is one of the structures which is crucial for understanding gender relations. The essence of the theory of patriarchy is that the dominance of men is maintained by the overall subordination of women (Connell 1987, p.111; 1995, p.74; 2000, p.24; 2002, p.59; see also Beasley 1999, p.55; Walby 1990, p.20). However, Connell’s power relations do not refer exclusively to those between men and women but ‘oppression of one group by another’ (Connell 2002, p.59). In addition to institutionalized patriarchal power, Connell (2002, p.59) incorporates into his structure discursive power, which operates through discourses and texts, an insight which derives from poststructuralism, especially Foucault. The power of the state (institutions) is particularly pertinent to discursive power. Connell (2002, p.59) suggests that it is important to understand the intertwining relationships between the material and discursive accounts of power, for example, as expressed in the hierarchy of masculinities.

### ***Hierarchy of masculinities***

Connell (1995, pp.77-81) perceives a hierarchy within masculinities and suggests four different masculinities – hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginalized masculinities. These constituents of the dynamics of masculinity reveal the intricately intertwined multiplicity of masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity signifies culturally, socially and institutionally the most glorified form. Hegemonic masculinity does not refer to the most common character or type of men, but rather the most admired and rewarded masculinity, although performance of this masculinity is often dangerous, unhealthy and restrained (Connell 1995, p.77; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, pp.832, 846). For example, the sportsman (an iron man) represents hegemonic masculinity in Australia<sup>22</sup> (Connell 1990). Subordinate masculinity is located in opposition to hegemonic masculinity and is symbolically associated with femininity (Connell 1995, p.78). Not only gay masculinity but also those men who convey effeminate images are included in this group. Complicit masculinity does not meet the criteria of hegemonic masculinity; however, men in this category still receive some of the patriarchal dividend i.e. the benefits of being male in contemporary society (Connell 1995, p.79). Such men may be good partners, friends and colleagues to women. Nevertheless, they may neither want to acknowledge problematic aspects of patriarchy nor have the intention of improving gender relations for women and thus are complicit in the maintenance of patriarchy. Marginalized masculinity is exemplified by oppressed groups such as ethnic minorities (Connell 1995, pp.79-80).

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<sup>22</sup> On a world scale, Connell (1997, p.5; 2003, p.2) views gender as a ‘global structure’ and argues that, in the current world gender order, ‘transnational business masculinity’ is the hegemonic form of masculinity (1997, p.14; 2003, p.5). See also Connell and Wood (2005) for globalisation and business masculinities.

### ***Production relations***

Production relations change over time and vary between cultures (Connell 2002, p.60). The division of labour signifies the allocation of work to different workers. The gendered division of labour means the differentiation of work and training by sex, involving a gendered pattern of production, consumption and distribution (Connell 1987, p.103). The unpaid work of carrying out domestic responsibilities is also involved in this structure. Connell (1995, p.74; 2002, p.61) calls a capitalist economy a 'gendered accumulation process'. In this process, male-centred large corporations and global/local markets yield a profit and the profit is distributed in favour of men: men accrue a patriarchal and material dividend (Connell 1995, p.82). Simultaneously, capitalism sustains the power of and the profits for men in the gendered production relations (Connell 1987, p.104). What Mies (1986, p.112) terms 'housewifization' – women's isolation from society and financial dependence on their husbands – caused by the capitalist global economy no longer depicts the reality (if it ever did), given that women in many developed countries have returned to the workforce in large numbers since the 1960s. Walby (1986, pp.3, 41) argues that there is tension and conflict between patriarchy and capitalism, pointing out that the capitalistic demand for a cheap workforce of women in the public arena deprives the patriarchal system of its claim on women's voluntary labour at home. However, the conflict between work and home is resolved by women's double day, performing paid work and voluntary housework at home (Pocock 2005, pp. 35-36; Probert 2003, pp.124, 128).

A number of studies in the Marxist feminist tradition have discussed the gendered accumulation process (e.g. Adkins 1995; Cockburn 1983; 1991; Game and Pringle 1983; Halford and Leonard 2001; Walby 1986; 1990). Walby (1990, p.53) argued that men's privileges have been secured and sustained by patriarchal strategies of exclusion and segregation of women. The exclusion strategies attempt to prevent women from entering paid work in general, or lucrative occupations in particular. The marriage bar was one exclusion strategy, confining married women to the household (Cockburn 1991, p.54; Game and Pringle 1983, p.46). The segregation strategies divide work into men's and women's work and skills and place more value on men's work and skills in order to maintain their comparatively higher income and positions. Feminist theorists argued that the valuing of some skills above others was arbitrary, or rather depended on gender. For example, Game and Pringle (1983, pp.18, 36) argue that deskilling due to mechanization is defined as 'reskilling' because of the mystification of machines and their association with men as technical experts. A relatively recent segregation strategy is the division of the workforce into full-time male workers and part-time female workers (Walby 1990, p.54). A vertically and horizontally gender segregated workforce and men-only socialization after work or on weekends result in strengthened homosocial bonding between men inside and outside work, reinforcing male power (Cockburn 1991, pp.152, 189). Male-dominated unions have also been complicit in exclusionary strategies, regulating women's entry, especially into



skilled trades and prioritizing men's issues on the union agenda (Cockburn 1991, pp.110-111 for the U.K.; Pocock 1997a, p.64; 1997b, p.10; Thomson and Pocock 1997, p.67 for Australia).

### ***Emotional relations***

Until recently, desire and emotion were frequently disregarded in the field of sociology because these matters were considered to be part of human nature or private affairs (Weeks 1986, p.11). Indeed, while the family has received much sociological attention, emotional relations in the family have not been researched in much depth. More recently, influenced by feminists and masculinity researchers exploring theories of emotional relations within the family (Pease 2002, p.18), sociologists, including Connell (1987, p.111; 1995, p.74; 2002, p.63), have begun to perceive emotional relations to be a significant structure in theorizing gender relations. Incorporating Freud's discovery into his theory, Connell (2002, p.62) pays attention not only to individuals' minds but also to the relationships between those minds and the wider social structure, which form a pattern, for example, in the family.

Emotional relations are increasingly analysed as aspects of 'public' life. For example, Hochschild (1979; 1983) discusses emotional labour within a number of situations and jobs, including those of air hostess and debt collector. While sexual and emotional attachments are the foundation of the formation of the family unit in many advanced countries, sexuality is not limited to the private sphere. Sexuality also has a strong connection with power, production relations and the division of labour (Connell 2002, p.62), as indicated by the pervasive nature of sexual harassment in school (see Chapter 2) and the workplace (see Chapter 4).

Dominant medical discourses and institutional power regulate sexuality. Homosexuality, pornography, contraception and abortion have political histories because they are controlled by the state. Men's heterosexuality is an important factor in heterosexual male dominance in society. The power of heterosexual men in patriarchal society controls and oppresses the sexuality of women (as well as gay men) as evidenced in the form of 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich 1979). Misogyny and homophobia are negative emotional relations which are also expressed in the public domain.

### ***Symbolic relations***

A significant structure in gender relations is built upon meanings and symbols (Connell 2002, p.65). Symbolic relations are seen in language, tone of voice, dress, makeup, demeanour, body language, bodily performance, films, architecture, etc. – anything that express gender attributes. These factors

indicate not only differences between genders but also imply different rules for gendered categories. Among these aspects, language is possibly the most significant (Connell 2002, p.66).

## **1.2 Review of Research and Discourses on Japanese Men and Masculinity**

As mentioned in the Introduction, while researching on men and masculinities in Japan is a relatively recent trend, research on Japanese men and masculinities at an international level is mushrooming. Much of the literature on Japanese men and masculinities is written in English and mainly by Anglophone researchers; most of the existing literature concerning Japanese men and masculinities focuses on non-hegemonic masculinities, except for Dasgupta's studies of Japanese salaryman masculinity (Dasgupta 2002; 2003a; 2005a; 2005b) and Taga's ongoing project that explores the masculinity of Japanese multinational corporate men who live in Australia (Taga 2004). These studies are largely derivative of and based on Western gender theories. The influence of Connell (1987; 1995) is seen in Dasgupta's work as he applies the notion of hegemonic masculinity to salarymen (Dasgupta 2005a, p.9; 2005b, p.168) and, in Taga's research, this idea was adopted as a result of Connell's inspiration (Taga 2004, p.1).

The existing literature on Japanese men and masculinities suggests that the masculine norm in Japan involves heterosexuality and the traditional gendered division of labour. This masculine norm is sustained by the power of the company. Changing socio-economic circumstances, for example, recession and subsequent restructuring, have been undermining the leverage of the company, while non-heterosexual people's networks have been expanding. These facts reveal that the masculinity that derives from the power of the company and the unquestioned normality of heterosexual marriage and parenting inevitably entails vulnerability. The following section reviews research on Japanese men and masculinity, arguing that the Japanese masculine norm can be constructed as a "dependent" masculinity.

### **1.2.1 A Review of Japanese Masculinities Research**

Sunaga's study of the relationship between baldness and masculinity represents early research on (marginalised) men and masculinities within Japan (Sunaga 1999). Sunaga's interest in bald men stems from the framework that the body is the subject and the object in social relations and that, referring to Connell, appearance as part of symbolic relations is important in performing masculinity (Sunaga 1999, pp.11, 16). Baldness is often associated with negative images and embarrassment. Sunaga (1999) explores how bald men negotiate their masculine identity with the stigma of being bald.

He focuses on respondents' experiences of being bald through in-depth interviews. Many respondents say that it is bothersome to socialise with women because they assume that women regard them as unattractive or that women would laugh at them. However, Sunaga (1999, p.144) asserts that such assumptions are not necessarily caused by women's reaction to baldness but rather by other non-bald men's teasing them about their baldness. When men with a full head of hair make fun of bald-headed men, their masculinity is tested (Sunaga 1999, p.170). In order for the bald-headed men to pass the masculinity test, they have to demonstrate (or feign) their nonchalance because the slightest hint of anxiety is considered to be unmanly by both non-bald and bald men (Sunaga 1999, p.178). In this context, the non-bald men differentiate the bald-headed men as being inferior and non-bald men's bonding and masculine superiority are confirmed and reproduced (Sunaga 1999, p.200). Simultaneously, the bald men's masculine identity is undermined (Sunaga 1999, p.145). Because the bald men do not resist the non-bald men's teasing for the sake of saving their tacitly alleged masculinity, the bald men's sense of inferiority is maintained and reproduced through the evaluation made by the non-bald men.

Another study conducted by a Japanese researcher in Japan concerns the formation of identity amongst men outside the Japanese masculine norm, including homosexual men and self-identified effeminate men (Taga 2001). Taga (2001) pays attention to these subordinated men's experiences and agency. Their oppression by the masculine norm and resistance against it throughout their lives are the foci of his study. Departing from sex role theory, Taga (2001, pp.52-57) explores the reciprocity between participants and society by collecting their life histories.

Taga (2001, pp.73, 172-173) argues that 'important others' play a significant role in the identity formation of the marginalised men, for example, homosexual participants' encounters with other homosexual men and self-identified effeminate men's encounters with commentators who have new ideas concerning masculinity as well as with men from the men's liberation movement (Taga 2001, pp.92-106). Sharing worries and issues with other homosexual men who understand the respondents enable them to come to terms with their identity. In the men's liberation movement, effeminate participants gain an alternative way of perceiving their identity. In other words, the important others allow the marginalised men to reconsider the internalised masculine norm and convert it into a more positive image. Taga (2001) refutes static agency in sex role theory and demonstrates how men actively change and negotiate their agency throughout their lives, thus also commenting on multiple masculinities.

Research on subordinated men in Japan is prolific. McLelland (2000) examines representations of Japanese homosexual men in the contemporary Japanese popular media and compares them with his respondents' understanding of themselves as gay men.

In entertainment shows on television and in mainstream magazines, gay men are represented as deviant or cross-dressing men (McLelland 2000, pp.58-59). They are treated as a source of surprise, humour and fun. In women's comics, McLelland (2000, p.88; see also Lunsing 2001, pp.286-288) argues that romances between beautiful and feminine young men are irrelevant to gay men's reality and are rather reflections of 'the limitation of heterosexual relationships' and the constraints on Japanese women's sexuality. In the media targeted at women, gay men are considered to be best friends and ideal partners for marriage because they are understood as sympathetic and responsible womanly people (McLelland 2000, p.105; see also Lunsing 2001, p.288). In the gay media, most gay magazines function as pornography, stimulating sexual arousal in the reader. There are hardly any magazines that deal with gay identity or lifestyles as Euro-American magazines do (McLelland 2000, pp.123-124). Gay men in these magazines, in contrast to gay men in women's comics and magazines, are depicted as 'hyper-masculine' and are no less aggressive and violent than in mainstream pornography (McLelland 2000, pp.159-160; 2003a, pp.64-67; see also Lunsing 2001, p.267).

McLelland's interviews show that the representations of the gay men in the popular media have no bearing upon respondents' understanding of themselves, except in the case of respondents' interest in sex, which aligns with the representation of gay men in gay magazines (McLelland 2000, pp.216-218). Difficulties in 'coming out' and establishing long-term relationships confront the respondents (McLelland 2000, pp.218-221). These are due to the social expectation of marriage, lack of understanding of gay men and constraints imposed by the family and the workplace. Given that the concept of 'gay rights' is irrelevant to many Japanese gay men, McLelland (2000, pp.233-238) argues that in Japan where sex is considered to be a private matter or an extension of play, it is even more difficult to establish political discourses concerning sexuality among gay people beyond (pro-) feminist academics and activists.

McLelland's latest work traces various cultural factors that 'enabled individuals who experienced a wide range of *hentai seiyoku* or "queer desires" both to conceive of themselves and be conceived of by others as distinct kinds of people' in various historical moments (McLelland 2005a, p.2). Drawing on a Foucauldian genealogical approach, McLelland (2005a) retrieves discourses on queer desires in the media from the 1930s and demonstrates the transformation of *kono sekai* (this world, a reference to a 'wide variety of sexual subcultures' in Japan) since the 1930s (McLelland 2005a, p.1).<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> See also Lunsing (2002) for '*kono sekai*'. Lunsing (2002, p.67) argues that the Japanese term *kono sekai* cannot be represented by the English term 'gay community' as in San Francisco.

The advent of Western sexology in the early Meiji period (1868-1912) displaced the acceptance of homosexual practices in the Edo period (1600-1868) for an understanding that heterosexuality was the norm (McLelland 2005a, pp.19-21; see also Frühstück 2003). Heteronormativity was promoted by the government for the purpose of creating a strong nation of healthy morals and citizens. However, while Japan's imperialism encouraged heterosexuality, for example by providing military brothels for the army, the print media suggested that the army's homosocial environment actually supported homosexual relationships between soldiers (McLelland 2005a, pp.38, 42-54). In contrast to Anglophone countries where discourses on homosexuality were under strict censorship, in Japan, from the early 1950s, various types of literature on a non-conformist sexual culture were available (McLelland 2005a, pp.66-70). Among these magazines, a variety of Japanese terms relating to homosexuality appeared,<sup>24</sup> indicating multiple homosexual identities in post-war Japan (McLelland 2005a, pp.74-77, 83). A gay magazine, *Barazoku*, launched in 1971, replaced the term *gei bōi* with 'homo' (a self-identified homosexual man who seeks homoerotic relationships). These men are depicted as masculine in *homo* magazines (McLelland 2005a, pp.144-145). With the emergence of the 'gay boom' in the early 1990s, the mainstream media paid increasing attention to gay and lesbian organizations and the promotion of the political identity or rights of homosexual people. This gave rise to the contemporary English meaning of gay (*gei*) as an identity category for male homosexuals in Japan (McLelland 2005a, pp.177-178; 2003a, p.61). From the end of the twentieth century, the Internet provides information about places and contacts for homosexual people, being more efficient than the earlier perverse media and the later *homo* magazines. Additionally, the Internet plays a significant role in enabling homosexual men to express their homosexual identity freely in cyberspace. McLelland (2005a, pp.184-188; 2003b, pp.141-150; 2003a, p.74) asserts that this phenomenon has the potential for 'trying out online identities that may then move into offline life'. The Internet also provides a space where transsexual individuals, from the 1990s, voiced their discontent about the medical ideology, which situates people who do not perform their gender according to their biological sex as ill, thus having a profound impact on members of sexual minorities (McLelland 2005a, p.218). McLelland (2005a, p.222) concludes that Japan's sexual minorities have their own distinct development which is different from that of their Western counterparts and whose story deserves to be told.

Through interviews Lunsing (2001) explores how Japanese people, who do not conform to the social norm (or what he refers to as "common sense"), cope with the institution of marriage. While he also discusses the experiences of feminists and lesbians, my focus is his discussion of homosexual men.

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<sup>24</sup> For example, *danshō* (cross-dressing male (passive) prostitute), *nanshoku* (active customer of *danshō*), *pede* (pederast) and *gei bōi* (gay boy, an effeminate homosexual man, a performer in the entertainment world)

Most homosexual men who were born in the post-war period married, thus following the social expectation that everyone will marry (Lunsing 2001, p.121). Some married for convenience to provide a façade of marriage. Sometimes the wife knew of her partner's homosexuality but was happy to share her life with him as a wife and even as a mother and was contented with her married status and life in these circumstances (Lunsing 2001, p.125). Others married only temporarily, the couple even planning their divorce together (Lunsing 2001, p.125). However, overwhelmed by pressure to marry, many gay men did so without telling their wives about their sexuality. When their wives discovered their husbands' secret, the marriage often ended in divorce (Lunsing 2001, pp.128-130). It is also common for gay men to realise their homosexuality after their marriage (Lunsing 2001, p.131). Lunsing (2001, p.138) argues that the higher incidence of self-identified gay men's marriage and the greater number of wives who know about their husbands' homosexuality than in Western countries are characteristics of Japan, where the pressure to marry and produce children is stronger than in many Western countries. It is also noteworthy that few Japanese married gay men are anxious about deceiving their wives, thus indicating the coercive nature of common sense and that marriage is understood more as a social institution than intimacy based on trust and love.

Relationships between single gay men do not last, the longest period among Lunsing's research respondents being three months (Lunsing 2001, p.179). The inability to establish long-term relationships is ascribed to gay men's pursuit of sexual contacts, as seen in McLelland's study, and constraints caused by their partners' private and public circumstances, e.g. work and family commitments (Lunsing 2001, pp.179, 185). Lunsing also discovered that gay men in his study found coming out difficult. While some gay men come out among selected close friends, only a few gay men come out in front of their parents, believing that they cannot accept their sons as homosexuals (Lunsing 2001, p.243).<sup>25</sup> Coming out in the workplace is also rare. Sexuality is considered to be a totally private matter. Additionally, Japanese people tend to draw a clear line between the public sphere and the private sphere. Consequently, they think that coming out only causes trouble in the workplace and, therefore, expect gay men to avoid doing so (Lunsing 2001, p.236, 2002, p.63; see also McLelland 2005b, pp.104-105). This also indicates the compulsion of common sense and its emphasis on heterosexuality. Despite the fact that the majority of patrons of gay bars in Osaka and Tokyo consist of salarymen (Lunsing 2002, p.63), gay salarymen pretend to be heterosexual at work and in their marriage.

Notwithstanding all these findings, Lunsing (2001, p.337) asserts that the contemporary liberal political and economic environments in Japan will liberate gay men and allow them to live openly as gay. Although there is almost no discussion about same-sex marriage among homosexual people, except

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<sup>25</sup> Lunsing (2001, p.243) also points out that gay men do not want to worry their mothers by doing something their mothers disapprove of.

among activists (Lunsing 2001, p.341; see also Maree 2004; Maree and Izumo 2000), Lunsing (2001, p.346), nevertheless, argues that, while direct appeals to the changing of laws in Western society is rarely seen in Japan, recently launched educational approaches to change people's common sense will produce positive results.

The above research clearly indicates that heterosexuality is the norm in Japan where the institution of marriage is commanding, while homosexuality is measured and devalued. In particular, gay men who openly live as gay confront social dissent.

In contrast to the above researchers, Dasgupta (2000; 2003a; 2005a; 2005b) explores hegemonic masculinity i.e. Japanese salaryman masculinity. He focuses on the process of change in hegemonic masculinity. Firstly, at the 'macro' level, through analysing a variety of written materials including academic and non-academic works, Dasgupta (2005a) examines the way in which Japanese salarymen came to represent hegemonic masculinity in Japan after the Second World War. Secondly, at the 'micro' level, drawing on a participant observation method and in-depth interviews, he explores how newly hired employees are moulded into the ideal model of hegemonic masculinity. Dasgupta centres his investigation upon the transitional period of the first month in which new employees undergo an induction training organised by their companies. His study, however, is also concerned with experienced salarymen's accounts of their lives in the workplace as well as in the home.

In discourse analysis at the macro level, Dasgupta (2005a, pp.69-72) argues that the establishment of salarymen masculinity as hegemonic in the discourses in the 1950s and 1960s is related to the state ideology of modernisation that emerged in the Meiji period (1868-1912) (see also Uno 1991, p.40). The rise of new middle-class white-collar workers in this period was directed towards the creation of a distinct division of labour based on the heterosexual complementarity. This model represents exactly the contemporary ideal of the gender division of labour i.e. breadwinning salarymen and their homemaking wives. In this context, hegemonic salaryman masculinity connotes married men who embody a loyal productive worker, the primary economic provider, reproductive husband and father.<sup>26</sup> By the mid-1970s, salarymen's households (especially their consumption patterns) symbolised the affluence produced by Japan's economic miracle and became the ideal in public discourse (Dasgupta 2005a, pp.80-83). The discourse of salarymen was formed by their productive and material power. Indeed, it was not until the 1990s with the bursting of the economic bubble that salarymen came under criticism as a '*gendered* construct' (Dasgupta 2005a, pp.93, 95).

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<sup>26</sup> Mackie (2002, p.203) argues that 'the archetypal citizen in the modern Japanese political system is a male, heterosexual, able-bodied, fertile, white-collar worker'. See also Mackie (1995), (2000)

Popular culture has an impact upon the formation of salaryman masculinity. Popular culture plays a role in both reinforcing and subverting hegemonic masculinity (Dasgupta 2005a, p.98). For example, self-help books affect salarymen's bodies and 'inscribe' the proper performance on their bodies (Dasgupta 2005a, pp.99, 102-108). Business magazines<sup>27</sup> targeted at young readers commonly provide the most up to date ideal salaryman masculinity and give instructions in health, grooming and social life, the traditional representation of older salarymen often being juxtaposed as 'un-cool' (Dasgupta 2005a, p.111). By contrast, comics (*manga*) ridicule salarymen and challenge hegemonic masculinity. Likewise, the Internet provides a space for discussion that often leads to questioning the reality of the salaryman's life (Dasgupta 2005a, pp.117-118). These popular representations of the salaryman indicate aspects of salarymen as both corporate warriors and company animals.

In his fieldwork, Dasgupta (2005a) explores his respondents' engagement in and negotiation with hegemonic masculinity as a process. At the micro-level, Dasgupta (2005a, p.294) argues that salaryman masculinity is 'in a constant state of being crafted and re-crafted' through the interactions between individuals, society and culture. Unlike the focus-group discussion in two different companies in one of which Dasgupta was met with 'confused silence', men being unsure what to say about the unfamiliar topic for masculinity, individual interviews reveal the process of learning about gender through families, schools, friends and popular culture. Dasgupta's respondents emphasised *daikokubashira* (the breadwinner, see Chapter 3) as the ideal form of masculinity (Dasgupta 2005a, pp.140, 149, 153).

Dasgupta (2005a, pp.160-161) considers the respondents' entry into employment and the subsequent induction period to be a crucial moment in the process of 'crafting' salaryman masculinity because this is a period of transition from a carefree student to a responsible fully fledged adult (*shakaijin*). The actual training (*kenshū*) for newly hired employees, as Dasgupta (2005a, pp.167-174) experiences, entails, to a large extent, disciplining the employees' bodies and minds, which is represented by detailed daily schedules, workshops and lectures on responsibilities, demeanour and the meticulous manners expected of *shakaijin*. In response to the induction training, the respondents express their mixed impressions, some regarding the training as useful in relation to learning practical knowledge, while others consider it to be 'brainwashing' into fixed ideas or ideologies (Dasgupta 2005a, pp.182, 185-188). Dasgupta (2005a, p.189) asserts that, while the induction training functions as an inculcator of ideas about salaryman masculinity, the respondents work upon it with acceptance, pleasure and resistance in individually specific ways (Dasgupta 2005a, p.189).

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<sup>27</sup> Popeye, Bart, Gainer and Big Tomorrow (Dasgupta 2005a, p.111)



Not only young salarymen but also experienced salarymen harbour negative images of salarymen. Their image of a typical salaryman commonly shows a man wearing a suit, catching a crowded commuter train, working long hours, performing the breadwinner role while being distant from his family, thus being 'unmanly' (Dasgupta 2005a, p.204). In the ongoing project of constructing salaryman masculinity, many respondents appear to be moulded into the typical salaryman. However, some respondents are reluctant to accept this role, whereas others resign themselves to the picture of the stereotypical salaryman (Dasgupta 2005a, p.206). Dasgupta (2005a, pp.209-221) shows how differently individuals engage in and negotiate with hegemonic masculinity through endorsement, reluctance and resignation, thus indicating conflicting constructions within hegemonic masculinity.

Heterosexuality is a prerequisite for hegemonic masculinity (Dasgupta 2005a, p.222). Accordingly, marriage is an essential part of salaryman masculinity. Indeed, most respondents, the majority of them being unmarried at the time of Dasgupta's interviews, support the concept that marriage is a rite of passage to becoming a fully fledged adult (Dasgupta 2005a, p.234). More importantly, marriage invests men with authority as *daikokubashira* (the breadwinner), which constitutes the most important aspect of hegemonic salarymen masculinity. Despite the current trend towards gender equity, the ideology of *daikokubashira* is still powerful (Dasgupta 2005a, pp.241). This was evident in the married respondents' confidence deriving from their role as the main breadwinners and their (unconscious) assumption of power over their wives. In addition, many single respondents expressed their wish to settle down to the ideal salaryman family-life (Dasgupta 2005a, pp.240-248). By contrast, the sole gay respondent, unlike married gay men in Lunsing's study, has a strong sense of identity as gay and has achieved coming out to many people, including his mother, sister, friends and, in addition, some male colleagues. Although this gay respondent still selectively plays the role of a heterosexual man among his colleagues, who, he assumes, would not understand him, Dasgupta (2005a, pp.257-263; see also Lunsing 2001, p.235) emphasises the existence of various ways of negotiating with hegemonic salaryman masculinity among heterosexual respondents and the coexistence of hegemony and a nonconformist masculinity. This also indicates the potential for change in hegemonic masculinity.

Male bonding constitutes part of corporate culture and often involves drinking after work. While many respondents distinguish work-related relationships from true friendship, some respondents enjoy going out for drinks with male colleagues and interacting with them (Dasgupta 2005a, pp.281-283). Dasgupta (2005a, p.284) argues that alcohol is an 'instrument in "crafting" the process' of salaryman masculinity. Its power to loosen up people reinforces male-bonding in the homosocial environment after work, which also strengthens company comradeships in the workplace. However, Dasgupta (2005a, p.286) also states that respondents seek pleasure and emotional fulfilment in the private sphere (heterosexual partnerships) more than in the public sphere (the workplace). In this context,

some respondents feel that work-related social events intrude upon their private time, whereas other respondents try to balance their privacy and work, thus indicating again the dynamics of negotiations within hegemony (Dasgupta 2005a, pp.285, 290-291).

The ideology of hegemonic salarymen masculinity is powerful and permeates the respondents' lives. However, hegemony is not one-way coercion. The respondents' engagement in hegemonic masculinity entails 'dynamics of appropriation, subjugation, and marginalization, as well as resistance, subversion, playful engagement, and modification', thus indicating an ongoing process of shaping and reshaping hegemonic salarymen masculinity (Dasgupta 2005a, pp.293-294). Referring to Connell and Kimmel, Dasgupta (2005a, p.301) suggests that hegemonic masculinity in the global world merits exploration to advance our understanding of masculinity.

This task is taken over by Taga (2004). His latest research looks at Japanese transnational corporate men who live in Australia (Taga 2004). Through in-depth interviews, Taga (2004) explores their experiences in the public sphere as workers and in the private sphere as husbands (and fathers). In addition, these men are situated in the wider world of globalisation. The relationship between globalisation and the respondents' experiences of it as bearers and recipients of globalisation is also examined. In his report, nineteen respondents' own accounts of themselves are introduced under various themes, with personal history, work and family life being the major themes. Most respondents grew up in families where fathers were breadwinners and mothers were housewives and all married participants have replicated this pattern in their own families (Taga 2004, pp.7, 47-49). The majority of the respondents were involved in club activities during their education. While sportsmen's narratives emphasise learning hierarchy and endurance as the benefits gained from playing sport, others who participated in cultural clubs appreciated their social skills as a good outcome of club activities (Taga 2004, pp.13-14). Respondents indicate that marriage is regarded as important by Japanese companies because of their greater trust in married men than in single men. Indeed, they tend to send their married employees overseas (Taga 2004, p.19). Despite public commentary concerning a decline in life-time employment, most respondents believe that it virtually exists in their companies (Taga 2004, p.19). By contrast, many respondents consider that the seniority system is collapsing because their salaries are becoming linked to their appraised capability rather than their period of service with their companies (Taga 2004, pp.25-27).

Because most respondents work shorter hours in Australia than they used to in Japan, although in many cases longer than Australian workers, and have few social drinks after work, they spend more time with their families. As a result, they feel a stronger bond with their children, which was almost impossible in Japan (Taga 2004, pp.35-38, 50-52, 57-58). The participants consider the clearly

allocated tasks and responsibilities of each worker in Australia and the Australian workers' sense of gender equity to be different from the Japanese way of doing business and Japanese workers' attitudes. In particular, the respondents think that Australian female workers are more motivated than their counterparts in Japan (Taga 2004, pp.41-44). Respondents' awareness that they have to change their attitudes towards female colleagues in Australia reflects their disrespect towards female colleagues in Japan. Indeed, slighting views of female workers and resistance to the gender equity legislation were apparent in my study (see Chapter 4). Many respondents feel empowered in Australia because of their higher occupational positions and better relationships with their families than they experienced in Japan.

As with these studies, my research found that the gendered division of labour in the family and at work are the primary identity markers of salaryman masculinity. In addition, these studies as well as my study also found both contradictory responses to salaryman masculinity. For example, hegemonic masculinity represented by the corporate warrior is challenged by the image of the company animal, this 'company animal' status being resisted by some salarymen in Dasgupta's study. The respondents in Taga's study gain critical perception of masculinity from the different perspective of Australia, thus indicating pressure points for changing conceptions and practices. My study centres upon the process of change over three generations, which covers a longer period of time than that of Dasgupta's research. In addition, my project deals with various phases of the participants' lives in a more detailed manner than does Taga's study. Before turning to my primary research materials, an overview of how the salaryman is represented in Japan is outlined below.

### **1.2.2 Discourses of Salarymen: An Overview of the Evolution of the Salaryman**

Salarymen are often associated with the samurai. The code of the samurai (*bushidō*), including their manner, demeanour and spirit based on Zen, symbolises aspects of ideal salarymen (Dasgupta 2000, p.193; Roberson and Suzuki 2003, p.6). This ideology of the samurai is pressed into the promotion of the heterosexual patriarchal familial structure and capitalism (Dasgupta 2000, pp.193-194; 2005a, pp.69-72), despite the fact that homosexual relationships amongst samurai were regarded as part of an elite social practice and also superior to heterosexual relationships in the Edo (or Tokugawa) period (1600-1868) (Liddle and Nakajima 2000, p.101; Lunsing 2001, p.26; MacLelland 2000, pp.22-23). Towards the end of the nineteenth century, with the advent of the Japanese regime of nation building, just as girls were directed towards the state ideology of 'good wife, wise mother' (Chalmers 2002, p.20; see also Chapter 2 and 3 of this thesis), the approval of male homosexual activities dissipated (Frühstück 1998, p.64; 2003, pp.23, 41). Japan's transformation from a feudal state into a capitalist

nation founded on patriarchal heterosexual family pressed men and women into the roles of male breadwinner and husband and good wife, wise mother

The term “salaryman” (*saraīman*) established its orthodoxy in parallel with industrialization after the Second World War (Dasgupta 2000, p.193), although the use of the word dates back to 1916 when a popular cartoonist published a series of cartoons about salarymen<sup>28</sup> (Kinmonth 1981, p.289). In the post-war period, as the number of middle-class salarymen (and their housewives) increased, the matrimony of a salaryman and his wife was constructed on the principle that a man and a woman were perfectly complementary to each other (Smith 1987, p.3). The heterosexual primary breadwinners work hard for their company, for the economic development of Japan and for their families, whereas their wives do all the housekeeping jobs and bear and raise children for the convenience of patriarchal and industrial capitalism. This representation became noticeable from the early 1960s and lasted until the bursting of the bubble in the early 1990s (Dasgupta 2005a, pp.80-83, 93-95; Roberson and Suzuki 2003, p.7).

Walby (1990, p.174) argues that the exploitation of women in the private sphere has been reduced at the same time as the exploitation of women in the public sphere has been increasing. In Japan, however, the increased workforce participation of women has not shaken the conventional gender pattern of production relations in the private space. Because the idea of ‘good wife, wise mother’ is deeply embedded in women’s minds, whether they have a full-time, part-time or no paid job, they have a strong sense of responsibility for domestic duties (Atsumi 1997, p.281). Figure 1 indicates a double burden placed on the shoulders of working women. Not only men with jobs but also men without jobs do scarcely any housework. There is no evidence that this has changed over the last decade (see Gender Equality Bureau 2006, pp.63-66; 2005, pp.4-6).

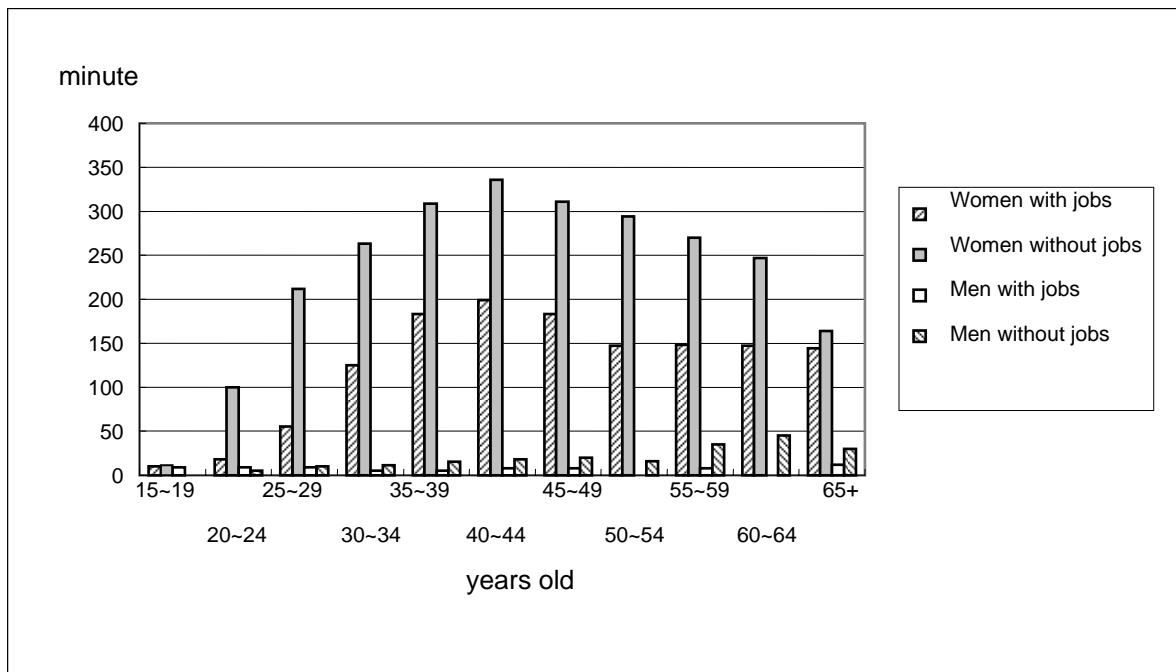
Moreover, the concept of ‘good wife, wise mother’ is now interpreted as men having a job and women having a household and a job, which suggests women’s changing roles and men’s unchanging roles (Broadbent 2005, p.215; Saitō 1999, p.206). For example, part-time workers, more than half of whom are married women, have grown in number since the mid-1970s because of the demand for flexible and cheap labour in the service and retail industries (Broadbent 2003, p.3; Nakamatsu 1995, p.79). These workers occupy one-fifth of the non-agricultural workforce and 72 per cent of these are women (Broadbent 2003, p.1). The term “part-time” has become a gendered term (*pāto*) in Japan and is exclusively used to stand for housewives.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, of the women who resign their jobs at marriage or childbirth and re-enter the labour market when their children are older, the majority become part-time

<sup>28</sup> The ‘*saraīman no tengoku; saraīman no jigoku*’ (salarymen’s heaven; salarymen’s hell) (Kinmonth 1981, p.289).

<sup>29</sup> There is a term for short-term work: *arubaito*; however, this term is used only for male and female school or university students.

workers (Broadbent 2003, p.8; Broadbent and Morris-Suzuki 2000, p.167; Gottfried 2003, p.265; Ogasawara 1998, p.18). Conspiring with the state and the corporations, Japanese capitalism has shrewdly constructed part-time work as second-rate work that is congruent with the current patriarchal gender order in both the private and public spheres. Nevertheless, the Part-Time Law, which was enforced in 1994 and revised in 2005, promotes the welfare of part-time workers and regulates their conditions and benefits, e.g. paid holidays, health insurance, maternity leave and union memberships (Broadbent 2005, p.217; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 2006a; 2006b).

**FIGURE 1**  
**Time Spent in Housework by Age and Occupational Status per Day**



Source: Management and Coordination Agency (1996) *Survey on Time Use and Leisure Activities*

The rise of the salaryman has a bearing on the intertwined relationship between economy, globalisation and sexuality, in particular, the emphasis on heterosexuality. Ruthlessly pursuing profits, capitalism offered the Japanese sex industry<sup>30</sup> a perfect opportunity to expand its economic potential (Brown 2000, p.26). Among various (hetero-) sexual services, sex tourism reached its peak in the late 1980s, Japanese men accounting for the largest number of participants. Japanese companies rewarded their salarymen by organizing sex tours to Korea, Thailand and the Philippines (Brown 2000,

<sup>30</sup> The sex industry yields about one per cent of the gross national product (GNP) (Lim 1998, p.8).

p.82),<sup>31</sup> thus promoting 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich 1980). This incurred severe censure from Japanese and Korean feminists and the media. Since then, the scale of sex tours has been reduced (Lim 1998, p.8). As a result, from the late 1980s, a large number of poor Filipino women (and women from other countries) started to come to Japan in order to meet Japanese men's (hetero-) sexual demands within Japan (Brown 2000, p.83).<sup>32</sup>

The evolution of salarymen gave rise to two polar representations of salarymen: corporate warriors versus company animals. The next section turns to these contradictory discourses of the salaryman.

### **The contradictions of the salaryman**

The most positive discursive representation of salarymen is as the "corporate warriors" (*kigyō senshi*) who assume full responsibility for the economic development of Japan and represent the most prized masculinity in the workplace by comparison with other masculinities and female workers. As mentioned earlier, this representation derives from the code of the samurai. The corporate warriors fight (work) hard out of loyalty (devotion) to their masters (corporations). Being heterosexual and, therefore, having a wife and family, are two prerequisites for hegemonic masculinity (Dasgupta 2005a, p.222). As seen earlier, this incites some gay salarymen to disguise their homosexuality and even to marry for the sake of saving face. As Connell (1995, pp.83-84) suggests, masculinity entails dangerous aspects. In Japan, salaryman masculinity's risks are expressed in *karōshi* (sudden death by overwork), a notorious affliction of corporate warriors (Palumbo and Herbig 1994) and the increasing number of suicides committed by salarymen (Karoushi Jishi Soudan Center 2006),<sup>33</sup> to which recent attention has drawn (Ōno 2003, p.30; Watts 1999, p.1273).

The ideal of hegemonic masculinity lies in having a good job that pays well enough to support a wife and family. Accordingly, men who do not meet the requirements of hegemonic masculinity but receive the patriarchal dividend, including greater access to power and resources than women, are classified as performing complicit masculinity. Japanese hegemonic masculinity subordinates marginalised masculinities, such as Korean men living in Japan (even if they are naturalised as Japanese); Ainu

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<sup>31</sup> As part of this trend, karaoke bars, functioning as hostess clubs, were set up for Japanese male tourists visiting these countries (Law 2000, p.33).

<sup>32</sup> These women used to be called '*Japayuki-san*' [women who go to Japan] (Law 2000, p.102; Mackie 1998, p.606); however, because of its negative connotations, the use of the term is avoided by many writers today. In the Meiji period, poor Japanese girls and women were sent to Southeast Asia in order to work as prostitutes. They were known as '*Karayuki-san*' [women who go to China] (Brown 2000, p.7; Mackie 1998, p.606). Thanks to Japan's economic growth, Japanese girls and women no longer need to sell their sex.

<sup>33</sup> In 1988, 676 *karōshi* victims made a petition to the authorities. The number of petitions increased to 869 in 2005, although there were fluctuations between these years. In 1996, there was one acknowledged suicide amongst 578 *karōshi* petitioners, while the number of acknowledged suicide progressively increased to 42 out of 869 *karōshi* petitioners by 2005.

men (Caucasian native inhabitants, largely of Hokkaido), who are categorized as non-pure Japanese; Okinawan men, whose distinct regional identity is devalued; and men from the *Hisabetsu Buraku* community,<sup>34</sup> who are discriminated against as being of the lowest status (Henshall 1999, pp.48, 53-54, 61; Morris-Suzuki 1998, pp.84, 107, 181).

Power relations in the workplace are explored in more detail in Chapter 4; however, the following provides an example of power relations in the corporation, which serves to highlight marginalised femininities in their workplace. Salarymen rarely interact with subordinate masculinities in their workplace, whereas they do interact with women in ways that reinforce the hegemony of their masculinity. Ogasawara (1998) examined the power (and emotional) relations at the micro-level between salarymen and 'office ladies' (OLs<sup>35</sup>) in a large company. Ogasawara (1998) argues that, while the formal power of salarymen is sustained by the subordination of female office workers, male dominance in corporations is a myth because the female office workers have strategies to resist and manipulate salarymen in individual interactions. As the efficiency of salarymen's work depends on the cooperative assistance of female office workers, the salarymen are careful about their interactions with them and tend to be attentive to them in order to gain their cooperation (Ogasawara 1998, pp.9-10). Female office workers take advantage of their less responsible positions to cause male colleagues inconvenience.<sup>36</sup> Female office workers' strategies represent what Scott (1985, p.36) calls 'everyday forms of resistance', in particular, 'the symbolic resistance' that involves sabotage and gossip (Scott 1985, pp.236, 282-284), but which has inherent limitations (Scott 1985, p.301). Ogasawara (1998, p.166) provides a nice distinction between the kind of power that Connell and other sociologists focus on and the resistance which Foucault identifies. Female office workers are not completely without agency but they cannot substantially change their workplace relations. They do not protest against their disadvantaged circumstances, partly because they lack solidarity and partly because they are not motivated to improve their condition due to their lack of sufficient power to change structural oppression (Ogasawara 1998, pp.67-68) and because most imagine that they will marry and become housewives (Lo 1990, p.99; Ogasawara 1998, p.60). Hence feminists started getting interested in workplace relations as more women wanted full time careers, at least for some period of their lives. Ultimately, salarymen who are favoured by female office workers climb up the ladder of success in the company. These men maintain the patriarchal structure of the corporation, thus continuing to participate in the marginalisation of female office workers.

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<sup>34</sup> People from *burakumin* were discriminated against because of their birthplace in those locations where the dominant occupation was killing animals and tanning hides before 1871 (Gill 2001, pp.15-16).

<sup>35</sup> The term OL stands for an office lady. The term OL appeared in a women's weekly magazine in 1963 as a replacement for 'business girl' (BG), the popular term at that time (Ogasawara 1998, p.23).

<sup>36</sup> For example, female office workers may reject tasks given to them by male colleagues or superiors. They may show unfair favouritism towards male colleagues or bosses. They may circulate gossip about male colleagues or bosses, which will influence their promotion (Ogasawara 1998, pp.81, 115, 119).

Not only female colleagues but also women outside the workplace reinforce salaryman masculinity. Male bonding among salarymen is strengthened by company-funded drinking after work in contemporary Japan. The exclusively men-only drinking is considered to be part of the salarymen's commitment to their work (Allison 1994, p.23; Brannen and Wilen 1993, pp.72-73). A group of salarymen, usually consisting of the boss and his subordinates (sometimes including clients), goes to a hostess club where they can drink and loosen up. Hostesses let the men indulge themselves in their masculine identities (Allison 1994, p.8). The role of the hostess includes filling glasses with liquor, lighting cigarettes and, most importantly, animating the conversation of customers by performing as a very feminine woman who treats a customer with due respect and sexually excites him.<sup>37</sup> The hostess is thus obliged to accept her sexualisation by salarymen.<sup>38</sup> Salarymen's masculine egos and their sexual fantasies are satisfied simply by the temporising sexual allusions made by the hostess. In this context, money – the financial ability to buy services from women – symbolises their power and their masculinities, which simultaneously reinforce their homo-social bonding as corporate warriors (Allison 1994, p.204).<sup>39</sup>

In contrast to this representation of salarymen, the discourse on OLs portrays them as lively and merry young women (Ogasawara 1998, p.24). Although their tasks at work are openly described as easy and tedious clerical jobs, female office workers do not appear to be concerned about their jobs. The media pays much attention to their lifestyles and portrays them as spending their earnings on a variety of leisure activities, such as the latest fashions, dining out, drinking, attending various lessons and traveling, thus characterising female office workers as important active consumers (Ogasawara 1998, p.25).<sup>40</sup>

The polar opposite to the corporate warriors is the company animals (*shachiku*).<sup>41</sup> The term company animals suggests that salarymen are chained to their work like livestock to such an extent that they have no individuality and blindly obey their companies (Miyasaka 2002, p.38). The term may be interpreted as a stern warning against the salarymen's docility and selfless sacrifice to their companies; however, the purpose of the term is to deride salarymen. In public discourse, the term

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<sup>37</sup> Even though serious business discussions may occur at the club, salarymen usually take pleasure from playful conversations with hostesses which often involve bawdy talk (Allison 1994, p.14).

<sup>38</sup> While salarymen enjoy chatting and joking about the body of the hostess, they seldom bring up the male body as a topic of conversation because the male body is not an object of criticism or comment (Allison 1994, pp.72, 196).

<sup>39</sup> Likewise, the company-organised golf with customers or colleagues operates on the creation of trust exclusively among men in high positions (Ben-Ari 1998, p.153).

<sup>40</sup> In her analysis of Japanese comics, Ito (1994, p.84) explains one of the common scenarios – a boy and a girl from the countryside, who are in love, go to Tokyo in order to work and their relationship does not last. The girl (OL) easily accommodates herself to the new life and enjoys herself in the big city, whereas the boy dwells upon the good old days.

<sup>41</sup> The term was created by the commentator, Sataka Makoto (Morita 2000, p.7).



'company animals' is less common than the term 'corporate warriors'. Nevertheless, self-help publications and business magazines (e.g. *Nikkei Business*) use the word '*shachiku*' to classify salarymen into different groups ranging from positive to negative ones (Miyasaka 2002, p.32; Morita 2000, p.7; Sataka 1998, p.39). The stereotypical salarymen in *manga* (comics) is described as one who is trapped in a lowly position, droops his head every time his boss reprimands him, has an ill-favoured wife and is apprehensive of going home, thus ridiculing salarymen (Schodt 1986, p.112).<sup>42</sup>

Company animals are also derided as hopelessly unfashionable. In the contemporary discourse concerning fashion for young men, a salaryman is rejected as a shapeless '*oyaji*' (old man), who is short and thick and dressed in a dark-coloured suit and has pomaded hair (Miller 2003, pp.38, 52). Likewise, OLs describe salarymen as unstylish, graceless and annoying promotion seekers (Ogasawara 1998, p.90). A two-piece suit and a tie are the near universal uniform among corporate men across the globe. Japanese salarymen, without exception, wear a dark-coloured suit at work and are expected to give the impression that they are neat and tidy. The dress codes and grooming rules are well established (Dasgupta 2000, p.197; 2003 p.125; 2005, p.169; Jolivet 1997, p.63). Almost all large corporations discipline their salarymen to conform to the standards promulgated by their companies by providing a guidebook that lists detailed instructions (Yoshimura and Anderson 1997, pp.11, 23).<sup>43</sup>

Also suggesting their subordination to the company, salarymen have to learn about the hierarchy of their companies and their positions in it. Fresh salarymen begin to learn appropriate behaviour and manners through observing their senior colleagues and also by means of a guidebook provided by their companies.<sup>44</sup> Self-improvement books and magazines targeted at salarymen inform them about specific behaviour as a proper salaryman (Dasgupta 2000, pp.196-198; 2003, pp.124-126; 2005, pp.107-108; Renshaw 1999, p.87).

The rules in relation to business cards represent two symbolic aspects of being a salaryman. Firstly, business cards reflect the hierarchy in corporations. It is crucial for salarymen to learn and obey the

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<sup>42</sup> An old cartoon from an article written as early as 1934 shows a young salaryman who practises a deep bow in front of a photo of the president of his company in order to overcome the president's inappropriate arrogance (Kinmonth 1981, p.313).

<sup>43</sup> For example, according to some guidebooks provided by companies, a short hairstyle is better, especially in banks (Yoshimura and Anderson 1997, p.23). Hair must be clean and free from dandruff. The teeth should be well brushed. Bad breath is unacceptable. The handkerchief has to be changed every day. The necktie has to be properly tied. Pants have to be well pressed. Shoes must be well polished (Renshaw 1999, p.87).

<sup>44</sup> For example, a guidebook supplied by a bank instructs the reader how to bow, how to exchange business cards, how to get on an elevator, where to stand in a lift, where to sit in a car and so forth. Regarding the behaviour in the lift, junior employees cannot stand in front of senior employees. They need to be aware of who is in the lift. They have to decide where to move (i.e. to the corner or to the rear of the lift) according to who the passengers are (Yoshimura and Anderson 1997, p.23).

rules of business cards.<sup>45</sup> Secondly, salarymen depend on the name of their large corporations to maintain their masculine identities; through their business cards salarymen borrow some of the power of their corporations, as Toyoda (1997, p.138) argues. Large companies have substantial credit in society, to the extent that salarymen can spend money on their own charge accounts by presenting their company name at bars and pubs. Reliance on the company name to bolster masculine identity is described as 'large corporation disease' or a 'reliance-upon-a business card syndrome', a salaryman's morbid fear of meeting people if he should lose his job (i.e. business card) (Toyoda 1977, pp.138-139). Their standardized appearance and manner imply the conformity of salarymen to the ideal corporate masculinity (Dasgupta 2000, p.191). While this engagement with hegemonic masculinity may give some salarymen power over others, the homogeneous façade entails the corporation's control, discipline and supervision over salarymen.

## Conclusion

A great deal of research on Japanese homosexual men has been conducted. Research findings indicate that, despite the widespread image of Japanese hetero-normativity, sexual minorities have always existed and that their history has evolved in a distinctive way, which is quite different from that in Western countries. Additionally, their increasing visibility in Japanese society implies the potential for change in Japanese 'common sense'. Japanese hegemonic salaryman masculinity, by contrast, is less researched. The existing studies suggest that, while the ideology of *daikokubashira* (the breadwinner) persists in salarymen's lives, individual salarymen are by no means homogeneous and their everyday lives continuously shape and reshape as well as challenge and subvert hegemonic masculinity, thus exposing hegemonic masculinity as a process.

This section also explored salarymen by examining discourses about them, their wives and their female colleagues. It is clear that hegemonic salarymen masculinity and its privileges are maintained by the entrenched gendered division between men and women in the workplace and in the home. More importantly, it is evident from the above analysis, as Connell (2002, p.68) states, that the four dimensions of gender relations overlap and, therefore, they cannot be treated as 'compartments of life'. It follows that Connell's gender theory can only be applied to particular research sites. My research represents such a specific study, a longitudinal one that necessarily involves life histories. The next major section explains the methodology of my research.

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<sup>45</sup> For example, having plenty of them with you whenever you go out, presenting your business card at the beginning of the meeting in order to indicate your position or title to other people, accepting others' cards with both hands with courtesy - which is better than accepting with one hand - and placing your card and received cards in front of you on the table during the meeting constitute the proper etiquette (Brannen and Wilen 1993, pp.158-160).

### 1.3 Methodology

The present section is concerned with the methodology of my research, which is based on both sociological and feminist approaches.<sup>46</sup> Firstly, this section explains the method that is used in this research and the grounds for applying it as well as sampling and ethical considerations. Secondly, the section examines methodological considerations and discusses issues of developing rapport with participants and creating my research persona, which emerged from the research process.

#### 1.3.1 Method

My research focuses on the masculinity of Japanese salarymen across three generations – the grandfathers' generation, the fathers' generation and the sons' generation, examining how their masculinity is constructed and how it changed throughout their lives. The research also explores differences and similarities across the three generations and within each generation. The three generational approach is a unique contribution to Japanese masculinity studies, combining what Bulbeck (1997) revealed in relation to three generations of Australian women with what Connell (1995) demonstrated with regard to different Australian men and masculinities, but, following Dasgupta (2005a; 2005b) and Taga (2004) who directed their attention to the research arena of Japanese salaryman masculinity. In order to do so, this study adopted in-depth interviews and collected participants' life histories as the primary data source.

Indeed it is in life history research, as the very name implies, that a proper focus on historical change can be attained in a way that is lacking in many other methods. Such focus is a dual one, moving between the changing biographical history of the person and the social history of his or her life-span.

(Plummer 1983, p.70)

The life history refers to individuals' observations on their past and present lives in their own terms. The documentation of life gives us access to the individuals' subjective world, including how they understand their experiences, their perspectives and their sense of values (Anderson and Jack 1991, p.11; Chanfrault-Duchet 1991, p.77; Connell 1995, p.89; Plummer 1983, p.14; Reinharz 1992, p.19). More importantly, the life history method gives access to social structures, social movements and social institutions because the method is necessarily concerned with the historical formation of social life (Chanfrault-Duchet 1991, p.78; Connell 1995, p.89; Plummer 1983, p.55; 1995, pp.13, 168). This is due to the fact that stories cannot emerge without 'joint actions' between people and between people and society (Plummer 1995, pp.5, 20). Thus, as the above quotation indicates, collecting life histories

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<sup>46</sup> Methodology means 'perspective' or 'theorizing about research practice', e.g. 'symbolic interactionism or functionalism within sociology' (DeVault 1999, p.28; Stanley and Wise 1990, p.26) and methods are 'research techniques, procedures and practices' such as 'surveys, interviews, ethnography' (Bloom 1998, p.138; Stanley and Wise 1990, p.26).

allows us to reflect not only on personal subjectivity but also on the social and collective circumstances that shape the life of the story tellers and their changes over time.

Researchers utilise the life history method in their research on men and masculinities. For example, as mentioned earlier, Dasgupta (2005a; 2005b) and Taga (2001; 2004) collect their respondents' life histories in order to explore hegemonic salaryman masculinity (Dasgupta 2005a, 2005b; Taga 2004) and subordinated masculinities (Taga 2001) in Japan. Their studies demonstrate contradictions and changes in masculine performances across different domains over time. Bulbeck (1997) also adopts the life history method in her study of the impact of the women's movement on three generations of Australian women. She illuminates changing structural opportunities as well as women's own changing perception of themselves associated with persistent gender inequality. The life history method is thus tailored to perceiving inconsistencies and ambiguity in social and individual lives, for example between ideologies and material practices, or in the resolution of conflicts (Plummer 1983, p.68). Additionally, the life history approach is useful at the exploratory stage of research because empirical knowledge obtained through the method enables one to 'build up miniature sensitising concepts and small-scale hypotheses' which may subsequently be utilized for quantitative statistical research (Plummer 1983, p.72). For this reason too the life history method was particularly appropriate as my study was the first to explore salaryman masculinities across three generations.

Of course, the life history method has its weaknesses, such as the limited 'accuracy' of memory and the difficulty of validating the narratives told by interviewees (Plummer 1983, p.104). These problems are mediated in my study by what Connell calls the 'socially theorized life history' approach which relates interview materials to 'prior analysis of the social structure involved' (Connell 1992, p.739). Accordingly, interview materials are 'checked' against secondary sources, e.g. academic and non-academic literature (Plummer 1983, p.104). Moreover, the contextualisation of the data in terms of other sources and theories allows the researcher to order the men's stories, to find patterns, to relate their experiences to wider social events, thus identifying which are normative and which are unusual, and to compare other theorists' comprehension of Japanese masculinities with my interviewees' understandings. In addition, the four gender structures – comprising power relations, production relations, emotional relations and symbolic relations – constituted the analytical essentials of the project, allowing systematic analysis of research findings within these four domains. However, it is difficult to contain and analyse my research findings within each domain because, as Connell (2002, p.68) clearly states, the four dimensions have complicated and intertwining relationships. Accordingly, while drawing on the four gender structures, the order of the following chapters is organised in accordance with the life course, beginning with childhood.

## Sampling

There are millions of salarymen in Japan; therefore, taking a meaningful random sample or a representative sample is not possible within the bounds of this research. There were insufficient time and funding within the constraints of a doctoral thesis to pursue a large and randomised sample. Additionally, because little is known about Japanese salarymen as gendered subjects and how their subjectivity changes with generational change, it was felt that interviewing salarymen known to the researcher (friends, acquaintances and friends of friends) would produce rich and valuable interview materials and self-disclosure about issues which were unfamiliar terrain for the interviewees and still taboo in some senses in Japanese society. Furthermore, involvement was more likely to be secured through personal knowledge or recommendation (a key aspect of social relations in Japan, as pertains in Australia). Because of cost and time constraints, the geographical and numerical scope of the research had to be limited. For these reasons the snowball method was used to find willing participants. The researcher's family, friends and colleagues were asked to introduce people who met the essential conditions (see below) as research participants. The introduced people were also asked to introduce their friends or acquaintances for the research. The researcher had contacts in several large companies.

The selection criteria were applied to interviews with Japanese white-collar salarymen who worked or had worked for a large company, which was defined as employing more than 1,000 employees. Large corporations were intentionally chosen because they are socially and culturally the most desired destination for Japanese graduates, reflected in higher income, security and in-company welfare. In a sense, the larger the company for which he works, the more a salaryman conforms to hegemonic masculinity.

Participants who met the selection criteria were further divided into three 'generations', loosely defined: the sons' generation with age ranges from twenty to thirty-nine years, the fathers' generation with age ranges from forty to fifty-nine years and the grandfathers' generation with age ranges from sixty to eighty years. There is one blood-related pair of father and son in this study. However, because participants are categorised into the three generations according to their age, as a result, the father is placed in the grandfathers' generation and the son in the son's generation. The way in which the participants are divided into the three generations is arbitrary. Additionally, when the participants are discussed, comments are given to the extent to which the change or a factor is represented by age of the three generations. Table 1 shows the size of the company, marital status and so on of each generation. There were thirteen participants in the grandfathers' generation, fifteen in the fathers' generation and eleven in the sons' generation. Participants in the grandfathers' generation were all married and had children. All participants in the fathers' generation except one were married and had children. Amongst eleven participants in the sons' generation, seven were married and four had

children. Salarymen interviewed in this research worked for companies varying in size from approximately 2,000 employees to more than 5,000 employees. The type of companies varies from heavy industries to service industries (see Table 1 below). Brief biographies of the thirty-nine men are provided in Appendix 1.

One interview was conducted in Perth, Australia, as a pilot interview in May 2004.<sup>47</sup> This interview material was used in this study. The remaining interviews were conducted in Japan from June to August 2004. More specifically, the interviews were held in Tokyo, Chiba, Saitama, Yokohama, Hyōgo (in Honshū) and in Fukuoka and Kagoshima (in Kyūshū). Participants were asked a range of questions as to how they performed their masculinities in school, how they developed their sense of themselves as boys and men in their relations in their family of origin (with mother, father and siblings) and how their idea of themselves as men changed, if it did, in their family of orientation (with their wives and children), at work and so on. In the process of discussing how these men balance work and family commitments, they were asked about how they met their partners and their expectations of their partner's role in marriage, parenting and contributing to the household activities and income (see Appendix 3 for interview themes). Each interview lasted from one to three hours. The interviews were recorded, except in four cases where the participants wished not to be tape-recorded and the researcher took notes instead. As the interviewee needs to feel comfortable, participants were asked where they would like to have the interview. Their workplace or a public space such as a quiet restaurant or café was chosen.

The tape-recorded narratives of the participants were transcribed by the researcher, retaining the original Japanese. All the quotations inserted throughout the thesis were translated from Japanese into English by the researcher. The analysis aimed at understanding how each participant performed his masculinities through his childhood, adolescence and adulthood in interactions with others, and at discovering consistent themes within and across generations, as well as differences within generations or ruptures across the three generations.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Any research that deals with personal information, such as my research, necessarily entails ethical issues. Participants as well as the researcher<sup>48</sup> must be protected. Prior to the commencement of interviews, this research was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of

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<sup>47</sup> The interviewee was fired from his job due to the restructuring of his company and was studying in Australia at the time of the interview.

<sup>48</sup> Following the requirements of the university's ethics committee, interviews were not held in any participant's home in consideration for the safety of the researcher.

Adelaide (see Appendix 4). In accordance with the committee's required procedures, prospective interviewees were given an information sheet (see Appendix 4) and information on the complaint procedure (see Appendix 4). The consent form (see Appendix 4) was completed by each participant at the interview stage. Participants were informed that they were able to withdraw their consent at any time within three months after the interview and that strict confidentiality was ensured. Willing participants signed the consent form and, at the same time, the researcher countersigned the form as a witness.

**TABLE 1**  
**Particulars of the Participants**

<b>Generation</b>	<b>The Grandfathers</b>	<b>The Fathers</b>	<b>The Sons</b>
<b>Total Number</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Company size (employees)</b>	1000-2000: 4 2000-5000: 4 Over 5000: 5	1000-2000: 0 2000-5000: 9 Over 5000: 6	1000-2000: 2 2000-5000: 6 Over 5000: 3
<b>Company type</b>	Heavy industry: 2 Oil: 0 Steel: 3 Manufacturing: 5 Construction material:1 Financial: 1 Securities: 0 Real-estate: 0 Transport (ship): 1 Electric power: 0 Information technology: 0 Consultancy: 0	Heavy industry: 0 Oil: 7 Steel: 0 Manufacturing: 5 Construction material:0 Financial: 0 Securities: 2 Real-estate: 0 Transport (ship): 0 Electric power: 1 Information technology: 0 Consultancy: 0	Heavy industry: 0 Oil: 3 Steel: 0 Manufacturing: 2 Construction material:0 Financial: 1 Securities: 1 Real-estate: 1 Transport (ship): 0 Electric power: 0 Information technology: 2 Consultancy: 1
<b>Location of interviewees</b>	Tokyo: 2 Chiba: 3 Saitama: 1 Yokohama: 1 Hyogo: 5 Fukuoka: 0 Kagoshima: 0	Tokyo: 2 Chiba: 2 Saitama: 0 Yokohama: 2 Hyogo: 1 Fukuoka: 1 Kagoshima: 7	Tokyo: 3 Chiba: 0 Saitama: 1 Yokohama: 0 Hyogo: 0 Fukuoka: 0 Kagoshima: 6 Australia: 1
<b>Marital status</b>	Married: 13 Never married: 0	Married: 14 Never married: 1	Married: 7 Never married: 4

### 1.3.2 Feminist Methodological Considerations

Feminist methodology encourages the establishment of egalitarian relationships between respondents and the researcher (Bloom 1998, p.18; DeVault 1999, p.31; Reinharz 1992, pp.20-21). The general notion that the researcher has exploitative power because the researcher usually 'studies down' and secures the interview material that she/he wants is not denied (Bloom 1998, pp.34-35). However, 'field relations are contextual and contingent, and intersubjective relationships are always in flux' as was the situation in my case (Bloom 1998, p.39). In Japanese society, appropriate social comportment entails particular language (different forms of politeness) and demeanour according to one's social status, age and gender. These change in accordance with the person to whom one talks. I am a female student who is younger than the majority of participants and whose focus is on men not women. Accordingly, my personal circumstances, rather than my circumstances as a researcher, affected the power dynamics between each interviewee and myself. Prior to the interviews, I was conscious of the possibility that there would be inescapable unequal power relations between my participants and myself, suspecting that many participants would not seriously acknowledge me as a researcher. Indeed, it was almost impossible for the researcher to create egalitarian relationships with the participants, especially with men in the grandfathers' and the fathers' generations.

On one occasion, one of the participants abruptly began our interview, saying "let me tell you something. I don't like the idea of gender equality. Are you possibly going to talk about it with me?" It was difficult enough for me as a woman, let alone as a feminist, to accept these comments. At another interview, a participant criticised some expressions on the consent form written in Japanese, saying that they were incomprehensible. He was almost shouting at me.<sup>49</sup> I, as Japanese, felt humiliated by his disapproval. I was daunted by such moments at the very beginning of the interviews and felt disempowered. I cannot remember how I regained my footing from the immediate shock and maintained my demeanour as if nothing had happened; however, I remember that these interviews ultimately became successful and satisfactory. On another occasion, when a participant and I finished our interview, the participant said 'I don't know what you're going to do with your study. But, you know, don't use your brain but use your heart'. I interpreted this statement to mean that he was suggesting that a woman does not need education but should marry. This was not the only comment which implied that I should marry. Despite my mental preparation for these sorts of remarks, I was not able to stop myself from becoming upset and revolted by their sheer insensitivity, which was perhaps a reflection on hegemonic Japanese masculinities and the security with which men uttered rude and humiliating comments to women in general.

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<sup>49</sup> The participant was a friend of my uncle and the interview was held at my uncle's house. Hearing the interviewee's loud and tense voice, my aunt became worried about me and asked me if I was all right after the interview.



In contrast to the above events, there were also positive and empowering interviews. For example, a participant in the fathers' generation kindly introduced me to one of his colleagues immediately after the interview. Although the potential participant had to return to his office to finish his task after a brief talk with me about my research, he came back to a café for an interview on the same day, as arranged. It was of course delightful for me to secure another participant. Moreover, this participant's honest story turned out to be one of the most significant life histories in my research. However, more importantly, despite the fact that the participant who introduced his colleague had refused a tape-recording, his active involvement in my research (he actually introduced a further colleague) made me feel empowered, thinking that the interview had some positive influence on him. On another occasion, a participant confessed his stressful circumstances at his workplace, despite the fact that some of his colleagues participated in my research, which made me feel that I had gained his trust. These negative and positive events that occurred during the interviews taught me that structurally unequal power relations cannot be eliminated but that the researcher's position in the power dynamics is not fixed, depending also on inter-personal factors. Power oscillates between the participant and the researcher throughout the interview process according to their subjective identity, their desires and their life circumstances.

In one strand of feminist research, feminist methodology fundamentally assumes researchers to be female and feminist and, therefore, the researchers are insiders in the researched communities of women<sup>50</sup> (Stanley and Wise 1990, p.21; 1993, p.30). Until recently, most feminist research explored women's experiences and voices. In this situation, the researchers' identification with their respondents functions as a positive tool in interpreting women's stories and in gaining an insight into the narratives (Bloom 1998, p.18; DeVault 1999, p.30; Reinharz 1992, p.23). Despite the adoption of feminist methodology, the focus of my research was men. I was, therefore, an outsider<sup>51</sup> in the community of my respondents.<sup>52</sup> This made me ponder, prior to the interviews, how to present myself to my participants. Dasgupta (2005a, p.54) discusses how the researcher's 'nonunitary subjectivity' (Bloom 1998, p.6) sometimes needs to be moulded into a certain representation in order to establish a good rapport with the interviewee. Firstly, I decided to transform myself from a student who wore casual clothes into someone who dressed in relatively formal clothes, which I speculated would be more agreeable to my participants' dress code standards. Secondly, I chose to use polite language or an honorific locution expressing the speaker's humility in order to show my respect for my participants

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<sup>50</sup> Other feminists acknowledge differences between women caused by class, race, ethnicity etc. See, for example, Ahmed (1998); Collins (1990); Harding (1998); Mohanty (1991a); Mohanty (1991b) and Smith (1999)

<sup>51</sup> Given that feminist researchers who focus on women are women or assumed to be women, 'outsiders' usually means researchers who are not members of the researched community, that is, male researchers (DeVault 1999, pp.29-30).

<sup>52</sup> Layland (1990, p.125), who is a feminist and in the middle of her research on gay men, finds her situation paradoxical. She even expresses her confusion as to whether she is a feminist or not. However, she suggests that it is important to be conscious of the situation and utilise 'the very feminist awareness' in her research (Layland 1990, p.132).

regardless of their social status and age. Nevertheless, my 'self' in the symbolic interactions was altered and adjusted according to the flow of the interviews. As the relationship between the interviewees and me rarely allowed for an egalitarian relationship, I would suggest that our relationship was close to what is called a 'professional interview' in which the researcher 'enters a person's life for a brief interview and then departs' (Plummer 1983, p.139). However, as is evident in the following chapters, participants' revealing or stark comments or their disclosure of intimate matters demonstrated that the interviews were not formal and superficial, which might be suggested by the term 'professional interview'.

While an outsider in terms of my age and gender, in a sociological or anthropological sense, I was an insider because I was a Japanese person who understood Japanese society, culture and language. This constitutes advantages for me over non-Japanese researchers who are not familiar with Japan. Moreover, as I used personal and family networks, those participants who knew my friends, my family or my relatives welcomed me. This often took the form of social activities outside the interviews. These events gave me wonderful opportunities for observation. For example, many of them offered their offices as a venue for the interview and, therefore, I had a chance to visit their workplace and to observe, not only my participants, but also their colleagues. On one occasion, I joined some participants for lunch in a canteen at their company where I observed differences in grooming between engineers and white-collar salarymen within the company.<sup>53</sup> On other occasions, I had lunch with my interviewees in a nearby restaurant, which gave me opportunities to gather additional contextual information. For example, it was interesting to note that, even though female workers were no longer required to serve tea to men in many companies in my study, every time I visited a company, a female worker served tea for me. This was even the case where companies had installed tea and coffee vending machines so women workers were no longer required to serve tea. Apparently unaware of the implications of their comments for my research, participants told me that it was still nicer to see a woman serving tea than to see a man doing it. However, the difference from past practice was that they had to ask a female worker in advance to serve tea, giving the date, time and the number of visitors (and in theory a woman worker can refuse to oblige).

Bloom (1998, pp.148-149) encourages researchers to undertake positive and sincere 'critical self-reflections' as part of their 'analytic data' as well as part of the entire research in the process of analysing their data, although she is not recommending 'mere self-indulgence on the part of the researcher'. In so doing, Bloom (1998, p.149) recommends that the researcher should take

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<sup>53</sup> According to my participants, in general, engineers are allowed to wear casual clothing while white-collar salarymen dress in a suit or the company uniform, if there is one. Highly skilled workers who do not usually deal with customers or clients in their work are less restricted by the company regulations in terms of grooming than those workers who meet customers and other business parties. Many participants who were taught that it was important for them to give a good impression by a well groomed appearance normally did not give their approval to casually dressed workers.

responsibility for her identity, social status and the outcomes of her personal views and behaviour, in my case as a Japanese woman. The disclosure of my subjectivity entails exposing myself to the reader's criticism. This is also an aspect of feminist methodology. With feminist theorists, I accept that what I know is definitely connected to who I am and that my grounds for generating knowledge are 'situated and historically contextual' (DeVault 1999, pp.38-39; Bloom 1998, p.148).

My difficulties in developing egalitarian relationships with my participants and my status as an outsider were by no means the total impediments to my research. As will become evident in the following three chapters, the participants' open discussion and self-disclosure produced valuable interview materials which were much more fruitful than one might assume would arise from the relationship between a young Japanese woman and usually older salarymen. They expressed not only a sheer sense of security in hegemonic masculinity but also vulnerability, confusion and regret. The next chapter looks at the participants' childhood in relation to the family, schooling and play, followed by an exploration of the participants' 'love and marriage' in Chapter 3 and, then, 'work' in Chapter 4.

## 2 GROWING UP: GENDERED EXPERIENCES IN FAMILY AND SCHOOL

Segawa-san was born in Tokyo. His mother was “*sengyō shufu*” (a professional housewife) and his father was “*gādoman*” (a security guard). He had a happy childhood until his brother was born. “Because I was an only child for five years until my brother was born, so, in that sense, I was lucky. For instance, especially my father used to buy me toys and take me to various places. I think I received affection and special treatment more than my brothers”. By the time he reached his teens, he sensed that there was something wrong with his family. As a matter of fact, his mother and father were antagonistic, although there were no hostile quarrels or domestic violence. “It’s a long story... I should be honest, shouldn’t I? My family, well, as a family, is a bit different from other families. My family is different. Everyone did whatever they liked including my father and mother. My mother didn’t do housework regularly. My father was a kind of the same. And they weren’t on good terms. So I don’t have happy family memories like going on a picnic together or going to an amusement park together”. “My father did his own shopping. So did my mother. My father ate what he bought for him. What my mother bought was hers. So, they never touched the other’s food”. There was no discipline at home. His parents left their children to care for themselves. “My parents didn’t teach me manners. So I had to find out. How to put it... For example, when I was in primary school, I didn’t know how to behave when I went to my friends’ houses. Because I didn’t know what to do, I observed what my friends were doing and, you know, I learned it”. He used to play with a girl next door when he was very small. “If you ask me who were my play mates, I would say that was a girl next door. What did we do? I think we stayed inside and often played house”. Presently, his family moved. He began to play with boys in the new place. He, however, was always comfortable with girls. He enjoyed having a chat with girls at school. The girls also seemed to be comfortable with him. When he completed primary school, he was left with one of his relatives in Kyūshū which was far away from Tokyo. He was still on good terms with girls as friends. “I don’t think that I was conscious that I was talking to girls. I never thought if it was a boys’ conversation or a girls’ conversation even during high school”. However, boys in his classroom made fun of him. He sometimes became a target of bullying. He was sexually abused by one of his classmates. “Ah, I wonder if that was homosexual love or something else. I was in junior high school. I had this friend. Well, I used to be bullied quite often at that time and this boy took me to the toilet and touched me, frankly...I was at his mercy. This is my bitter memory”. His adolescent homosexual encounter still puzzles him in terms of understanding human sexuality. His foster parents were very strict. “I didn’t play during high school. They didn’t let me go out. It was like school was the only place I could enjoy myself when there were school events like a cultural festival or something like that”. He did well at school. He entered a good academic high school and went on to university to study law, in a faculty full of male students and male lecturers. This was what his mother expected of

him. “My mother and my father had different expectations of me. For example, my father had only compulsory education. He wanted me to start working as soon as possible. He never encouraged me to study. My mother, because I did well at school when I was in primary school, she wanted to send me to a good school”. He gained freedom when he entered university. He enjoyed socialising with friends. He had opportunities to go out on dates. However, he had no idea how to approach his girlfriend. “I couldn’t have a relationship nor even, you know, things like a date between a boyfriend and a girlfriend. Even when I was in university, I wasn’t good at it. Well, I would go to a party and ask a girl to go for a drive on a weekend. But then, on the day, I just don’t know what to do... I was extremely nervous and had no idea what to talk”. He did not know how to move on to the next step from friendship to a relationship.

The above narrative is the growing-up story told by Segawa-san in the sons’ generation. It is an unexpected and atypical picture of a salaryman firstly because, as the present chapter reveals, the majority of participants spent their childhood in an unperturbed family that consisted of an employed father with authority and a self-effacing mother who respected her husband. Secondly, almost all participants were immersed in homo-social male friendship during their childhood. Thirdly, even participants in the grandfathers’ generation who were slow in developing relationships with women seemed to proceed to relationships (or marriage) without much difficulty (see Chapter 3). One might wonder whether or not Segawa-san’s parents’ matrimonial circumstances, his congenial attitude to girls and his sexual encounter affected his masculine identity. It is generally accepted by Anglophone sociological literature that the childhood family life, school life and adolescent experiences influence a man’s gender identity (e.g. see Askew and Ross 1988, ch.1; Connell 1995; Gilbert and Gilbert 1998; Pease 2002, ch.4). In fact, Segawa-san used to regard himself (and still occasionally does) as effeminate because of his good rapport with girls and he also felt that he was inappropriately frail for a man because of his magnetism as an easy target of harassment by his peers.

In this chapter, how childhood family relationships, schooling and adolescent experiences make an impact on the construction of the masculinities of the participants in my study is examined. The first section looks at the family life of the participants in connection with the influence of two pre-war government policies: the *ie*<sup>54</sup> system (the family system) and the state ideology of ‘*ryōsai kenbo*’ or ‘good wife wise mother’. The second section explores gendered school dynamics in the Japanese educational system. The last section discusses play and leisure.

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<sup>54</sup> The term *ie* is translated as household in English, although it is also understood as family, house and genealogy in accordance with the context (Hendry 1981, p.15; Kondo 1990, p.121). It is the fundamental social unit in Japan. The *ie* is a ‘corporate body’ which owns the material, cultural and social property of the household, runs and maintain a family business if there is one, and continue the family line (Kondo 1990, p.122; Ochiai 1996, pp.58-59; Vogel 1971, p.166).

## 2.1 FAMILY

The assertion that women's lives in Japan reflect the history of Japanese policies in relation to global politics and economy (Liddle and Nakajima 2000, p.17) also has much bearing on men's lives in Japan. It is clear that the life of Japanese women has changed over the last six decades since 1945. This has been demonstrated by examining, in particular, housewives (e.g. Hendry 1993; LeBlanc 1999; Lebra 1984; Vogel [1963] 1971; Vogel 1978; 1986; White 1987; 1992). By contrast, what is noticeable across the three generations of men in my research is that the influence of the pre-war government policies established in the Meiji period is still evident in their life-course to varying degrees. The *ie* system, codified in the old Civil Code (1898–1947), secured the dominant position of men in both the private and public spheres, while women were bound to be caretakers of their household and its members by the symbolic womanhood that was propagated through the government's 'good wife wise mother' educational policy. These seemingly obsolete family system and the antiquated Confucian morality, '*ryōsai kenbo*', overtly and covertly surface at various stages in the participants' lives, despite the facts that the current Civil Code no longer confers patriarchal authority on men and that the '*ryōsai kenbo*' educational policy no longer exists. This section, therefore, deals with the impact of the law and gender ideology advocated in the Meiji period on the men's lives of today, examining their historical backgrounds and their lingering as well as their waning ideological influences in contemporary Japan.

### 2.1.1 The *ie* System

The rigid ideas that the *ie* transcends family members and should continue in perpetuity and that the successor should be a man from the patrimonial lineage established the principle of the patriarchal household of the samurai class. The diffusion of the custom throughout this class occurred in the Edo period (1600-1868). Total authority was conferred on the successor to the headship of a house, who was remunerated by his lord in exchange for his faithful feudal duty. The continuation of the *ie* either by the patrimonial family line or succession through careful adoption of a man from another family, which had an equivalent reputation to (or even higher reputation than) that of the adopting family, became the fundamental rule of the continuation of the *ie* (Ōtake 1977, pp.219-220). The vertical relationship between the father and his son and between the head of the *ie* and his successor (normally the eldest son) was crucial for the succession. The wife was meaningful only as a bearer of a male successor. The status of the wife was peripheral until her mother-in-law retired from her position in the household and the wife became the new mother-in-law. However, this kind of servile life was the only way in which women of the samurai class lived because it was almost impossible for them to be economically independent (Amanuma 1997, p.225; Ōtake 1977, p.222).

The Meiji Restoration pursued the capitalist economy and its expansion by modernising the nation<sup>55</sup> in order to catch up with the West. Modernisation policies during the Meiji period (1868-1912) involved strengthening the *ie* practice of the samurai class in various ways. In 1970, aiming for the centralisation of administrative power, that is in order to have accurate knowledge of the population, the government allowed *heimin* (commoners) to use the family name, the exercise of which was formerly the privilege of *shizoku* (the former samurai class). In 1871, the *Koseki*<sup>56</sup> (family register) Law was enacted, stipulating the male headship and its sphere of power (Iwakami 2003, p.73; Mackie 1995, p.2). A written record of each family systematised by full names facilitated the government's control over the people (Yamanaka 1988, pp.31, 108). In 1898, this was stipulated in the Civil Code and became known as the *ie* system. The right of the head of a family was strengthened. For example, all the property of the *ie* belonged to the head. Women were, therefore, legal incompetents (Liddle and Nakajima 2000, p.43). Any acts that changed a family member's status – marriage, adoption and family registration – required the consent of the head of the *ie* (Cho and Yada 1994, p.10; Liddle and Nakajima 2000, p.43; Smith 1987, p.6; Yamanaka 1988, p.44). Although the head of a family had the right to choose his successor from his family members, it was very likely that the head chooses the first-born son. The *ie* system further produced customs and ideology. The hierarchy in a couple complied with vertical relationships based on Confucianism: that is, men and lineal forebears were superior to women and lineal descendants (Yamanaka 1988, p.42). A man is thus *shu* who dominates, while a woman is *jū* who is subordinate (Fujii 1975, p.16). The wife was expected to obey not only her husband but also her father-in-law. If her husband died, she had to obey her eldest son. This hardship for the wife is called *sanjū* (three obediences) and also comes from Confucian teachings (Amanuma 1997, p.224). This samurai tradition was applied not only to *shizoku* (the former samurai class) but also to *kōzoku* (the imperial family), *kazoku* (the peerage) and *heimin* (commoners). It entailed 'samuraization' not only of men but also of women of all classes (Liddle and Nakajima 2000, pp.41-43; White 1987, p.161). In other words, the authority of a man as the head of a household was guaranteed for all men regardless of class. The subordinate position of women to men in the samurai class was applied to women in the farmer and tradesman classes, women who had previously enjoyed a great deal of autonomy in their lives.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Policies such as *fukoku kyōhei* (enrich the nation, strengthen the army) and *shokusan kōgyō* (develop industry and business) were adopted (Beasley 1999, p.208, see also Beasley 2000; Fujii 1975, p.16).

<sup>56</sup> *Koseki* was an official document in which the head of the family, his family members, their relationships and the legal domicile were recorded (Iwakami 2003, pp.72-73). Today *koseki* registers a married couple (or a single parent) and their (her/his) single children of the same surname (Sakakibara 1992, p.131).

<sup>57</sup> Prior to the promulgation of the Civil Code, there were cases of the continuation of *ie* by the matrilineal line amongst the farmer and tradesman classes. Moreover, rates of divorce and re-marriage were very high among commoners (Ueno 1994, pp.70, 74).

Commentators argue that the 'samuraization' of all social classes was not a legacy of the feudal system. Rather, the concept of the *ie* was an invention of the modern period, representing the prototype of the modern family (Ueno 1994, p.69). Holding the emperor in reverence for his supreme sovereignty over the entire population and for his symbolic function as the father of the nation in *kazoku kokka* (the 'family-state'), the Japanese government was able to control the population by obscuring the boundary between the state and the household, thus requiring the entire populace to obey the government (Liddle and Nakajima 2000, p.40; Mackie 1995, p.3; Ueno 1994, p.71; Uno 1993a, p.297; Yamanaka 1988, p.6). From the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education in 1890, the government integrated the different concepts of the loyalty to the Emperor (*chūgi*) and the filial piety to the head of *ie* (*kōkō*) and formed one word (*chūkō*) (Saitō cited in Ueno 1994, pp.72-73). School children were obliged to learn the Imperial Rescript on Education by heart, which taught that 'filial piety should be second only to loyalty to the Emperor' (Hendry 1981, p.15; Mackie 1995, p.3). The ideology of family permeated the whole society and was further strengthened as Japan launched into the Pacific War.<sup>58</sup>

The official *ie* system lasted until 1947 when a new Civil Code was established with a new constitution. The *ie* system was abolished in the new Civil Code. Accordingly, under the new Civil Code, the husband and the wife is treated as equal. For example, while the husband and the wife share their property, each spouse can own separate property (Supreme Court of Japan 1959, p.142). The husband and the wife have equal parental power over their children (Supreme Court of Japan 1959, p.152). The spouse is dealt with as a successor in the same rank with the deceased spouse's children regardless of age and sex (Supreme Court of Japan 1959, pp.166-167). However, even after the war and these legal changes, researchers between the 1950s and the 1990s<sup>59</sup> witnessed their informants practising the *ie* system. Parents have great expectations for their first-born sons, although the expectation may shift on to other sons if the first-born son fails to meet the expectations (Hendry 1981, pp.97-99; Kondo 1990, p.125; Vogel 1971, p.166). A son who succeeds to the *ie* gains the privilege of authority but he often loses his freedom to chase his dream because he has to stay home in order to fulfil the responsibility of filial piety: ancestor worship and care of parents (Kondo 1990, p.122; Tsutsumi 2001, p.77; Vogel 1971, p.167). Other sons have to establish their own *ie*, receiving monetary support and/or education to do so. Some of them may set up a new (or junior) branch as an expansion of their family business (Kondo 1990, p.123; Vogel 1971, p.166). Daughters are expected to get married and enter their husbands' *ie* (Vogel 1971, p.166). Thus the new Civil Code did not completely change people's pre-war mentality (Cho and Yada 1994, p.10).

<sup>58</sup> Slogans, such as '*ie no michi*' (the order of *ie*) and '*kigyō ikka*' (the corporate family) were propagated in order to make the people have faith in the Emperor (Yamanaka 1988, p.6).

<sup>59</sup> See Hamabata (1990) pp.117-143; Hendry (1981) pp.80-113; Kondo (1990) pp.119-131; Tsutsumi (2001) and Vogel (1971) p.165 for practices of the *ie* system from the 1950s to the 1990s. See Hendry (1981) ch.1, Kondo (1990) ch.4 and Vogel (1971) ch.8 for further details of the *ie* system.



This research, conducted in the early twenty-first century, also revealed changing/waning practice of the *ie* system across the three generations (see Table 2 and discussion below). It is reasonable to suppose that the propagation of the family system, especially filial piety, through school education until the end of the war had an influence upon some participants of the grandfathers' generation who attended school under the old educational system. Moreover, across the three generations, the maintenance of the Family Register Law, in which the official document of the family register still retains an entry called the "head of a family", has preserved the system in contemporary Japan (Iwakami 2003, pp.75-76).<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, changes in and the decline of the *ie* system are not denied. Families in Japan have been evolving through a chain of events – radical constitutional changes soon after the Second World War, the following economic miracle, subsequent changes in the values of marriage and family and the ongoing infiltration of individualism (Kondo 1990, pp.140-141; Tsutsumi 2001, p.69; Vogel 1971, pp.172-174). In the following section, the changing practices of the *ie* system across the three generations in my study are discussed in relation to the authority of the head, the structure of the family and relationships amongst family members.

**TABLE 2**  
**Changing *ie* System amongst the Participants**

	<b>The Grandfathers</b>	<b>The fathers</b>	<b>The sons</b>
<b>Multi-generational households in their childhood</b>	<b>38 %</b>	<b>33 %</b>	<b>0 %</b>
<b>Eligible participants who succeeded to the <i>ie</i> or lived with their parents</b>	<b>67 %</b>	<b>50 %</b>	<b>0 %</b>
<b>Brothers of non-first-born participants who succeeded to the <i>ie</i> or lived with their parents</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>43 %</b>	<b>0 %</b>

### **Evidence of the wane of the *ie* system**

In old times, if you were *chōnan* (the first-born son), you had to succeed to *ie*. It doesn't matter if you have a noble family line or not. Definitely, [when I was small] I could sense the idea that the first-born son had to succeed. People and relatives implied it in a casual way. It was natural. We didn't even need to be told the idea. (Ishida-san, G<sup>61</sup>)

<sup>60</sup> Men accounted for more than ninety seven per cent of the entire register of the heads of a family in 1990 (Sakakibara 1992, pp.135-137), which has not changed to date. The fact that most women have to give up their maiden names at marriage has given rise to a debate over women's right to choose their own names (see Arichi 1999).

<sup>61</sup> G indicates the grandfathers' generation.

The tradition of the *ie* system – the continuation of the *ie* together with filial piety – was in operation when participants in the grandfathers' generation, who were born in the pre-war period, were growing up. This generation was notable for the widespread practice of the system. All the participants in this generation, who married in the 1950s and the 1960s, were aware of the basic rules of the *ie* system. In the eyes of the participants, it was obvious that someone had to succeed to the *ie*. Given that the parents of the participants were educated before the war, it was not surprising to find the traditional custom ubiquitous in the grandfathers' generation. Amongst thirteen participants of this generation, there were three first-born sons. One of them, Katagiri-san, was adopted when he was very small after his father died on the battlefield. He was adopted by a wealthy couple, who were his mother's sister and her husband, with no children. The fact that his sister remained with his biological mother implied that the couple intentionally chose Katagiri-san because he was a male. As he was the only child of his foster parents, he succeeded to their house and looked after them at home until they passed away. Another participant, Sonoda-san, always lived with his parents and looked after them even after the house where he was born was destroyed by the air raid of 1945.

The responsibility for fulfilling filial piety places a heavy burden on family members, especially on the women, i.e. wives.<sup>62</sup> Katagiri-san was grateful to his wife for services which she rendered to his bedridden mother. In contrast to Katagiri-san, Sonoda-san made efforts to attend his sick mother at home. He asked his company for permission to start work at nine o'clock, which was later than the normal starting time at workplaces. In addition, he came home to care for his mother during lunchtime. Only Hirose-san, among the first-born sons, did not follow the tradition of succeeding to the parental home and living with his parents; however, he lived close to his parents throughout his adult life.

The families into which the other ten participants were born, also followed the *ie* system. The oldest brothers of eight participants succeeded to their households. The parents of the other two participants, who were not blessed with healthy first-born sons, transferred their households to other sons. Thus the participants in the grandfathers' generation endorsed the common practice of the *ie* system.

My brother has a tacit understanding that he will look after our parents. He doesn't live with our parents but he lives only 100 meters away from our parents' house. (Hino-san, F<sup>63</sup>)

Amongst participants of the fathers' generation, who grew up in the high economic growth period, the *ie* system diminished somewhat. Although they were conscious of the system and they assumed that

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<sup>62</sup> See Long (1996) pp.167-170 for Japanese women's stressful experiences in caring for the old and Lebra (1984) pp.141-151, 253-255 for married women's relationships with mothers-in-law but see also Harris *et al.* (1998) for possible changes in the contemporary care-giving activities in which the involvement of husbands and sons in the care for their wives and parents might increase due to the combination of growing life expectancy and the lack of public care.

<sup>63</sup> F indicates the fathers' generation.

generally the first-born son succeeded to the *ie*, the participants of the fathers' generation were concerned mainly about the care of their ageing parents rather than the continuation of their *ie*. Out of fifteen participants, there were eight first-born sons. Amongst them, only Tachibana-san lived in the house where he was born. Tachibana-san's parents were adopted into a distinguished family, which was a descendant of a respected samurai family, but who had no son.<sup>64</sup> Tachibana-san, therefore, succeeded to the *ie* and inherited all the property. Two other participants, Sugiura-san and Toda-san, lived with their parents but they set up their own households and invited their parents to live with them.

Living with parents-in-law involved both advantages and disadvantages for wives in the fathers' generation. Sugiura-san's wife enjoyed full-time paid work as her mother-in-law looked after the household, while Toda-san's wife was bound to the care of her own bedridden mother as well as her in-laws. Toda-san's case was unusual because he lived with his own parents as well as his wife's mother, as his wife had no male siblings, indicating the shift in emphasis in this generation from inheritance of property to a focus on caring for ageing parents. It was generally the wives' responsibility to look after elderly parents-in-law at home. Indeed, Sugiura-san was determined to take care of his parents, which meant that his wife will have to look after her in-laws in the future, unless there is a significant increase in government support for care of the elderly (Long 1996, p.171).

Because of economic growth, five first-born sons have moved away from the locality of their parents' house in order to work for large companies in a big city. Even so, they accepted their responsibility for filial piety as the first-born son. Yoshino-san resigned his first job and returned to his hometown, not only because he wanted to go back to his birthplace but also because he was worried about his ageing parents. Matsuzaki-san was concerned about the care of his parents' grave when he died.<sup>65</sup> Ono-san, who had been transferred from place to place for work, asked his company to transfer him to his hometown when his retirement was approaching, in order also to care for his parents' grave. Likewise, other first-born sons, including the participants and the oldest brothers of other participants, lived close to their parents to help them in the event of an emergency. Their concern may have been generated either by parents who had frankly expressed their anticipation of living together with their son or by a sense of responsibility felt by first-born sons without any explicit claims having been made by their parents. As an example of the first situation, Toda-san's parents always expressed their expectation that they wanted him to look after them in their old age. On the other hand, Yoshino-san returned to his hometown to live close to his parents without being told to do so by his parents. In either case, the

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<sup>64</sup> There was another example of the adoption of a married couple. Ueno-san's parents were adopted at their marriage by one of their relatives who had a family business to continue but no children. It was important for Ueno-san's parents to continue their business. Accordingly, Ueno-san's older brother succeeded to the *ie* and to the business.

<sup>65</sup> Filial piety necessarily involves care of a grave, in which one's parents and their ancestors sleep. People visit their parents' graves to clean them, change flowers, burn incense etc. according to the ceremonies of Buddhism. For these reasons, the care of parents' grave is of importance. However, these customs have been commercialised and there are now private enterprises that take care of graves for busy people.

sons' concern was not the continuation of their *ie* but the fulfilment of filial piety. In the fathers' generation, the *ie* system has thus come to mean responsibility for filial piety.

The operation of the *ie* system further diminished in the sons' generation, who were men born in the stable economic period. It is reasonable to suppose that the parents of participants in the sons' generation currently enjoy good health; therefore, caring for their parents in their old age is not an imminent issue for participants of this generation. Nevertheless, the participants revealed lower expectations of filial piety on the part of their parents than did the parents of other generations. For example, Ebara-san mentioned that:

My father has never said anything about the succession. I guess his true feelings were that he wanted me to help him and succeed to his business. I wonder what his intention is now. I believe he's given up on me. (Ebara-san, S<sup>66</sup>)

As the above quotation indicates, Ebara-san's self-employed father seems to be resigned to the fact that his son will not succeed him. Likewise, Okano-san's father, who is also self-employed, never expected Okano-san to take over the thriving family business.

Furthermore, the participants were unconcerned about fulfilling their parents' expectations:

Actually, I'm sure my father wants to chase his dream of expanding his business and he wants this to be my dream because he doesn't like the idea that his business will end in his lifetime. But I, as well as my younger brother, am not going to succeed. (Kusuda-san, S)

Kusuda-san's father openly asked him to succeed to the family business. Even so, Kusuda-san does not feel any guilt towards his father for failing to meet his father's expectations. Additionally, Kusuda-san's mother supports Kusuda-san's position, implicitly opposing her husband. According to Kusuda-san, his mother appreciated the fact that working for a large company provides him with a regular salary, regular work time and work-based welfare benefits, which are better for him than succeeding to an arduous and strenuous family business. Indeed, one-third of participants in the sons' generation stated that, when they were small, their mothers encouraged them to become a salaryman of a decent company for a stable income and company welfare benefits.

Only one participant indicated a strong sense of filial piety. Another participant actually had the responsibility for looking after his wife's parents in their old age. Despite the fact that nine out of

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<sup>66</sup> S indicates the sons' generation.

eleven participants were first-born sons, none of them was concerned about the continuation of the *ie* or filial piety. Despite the wishes expressed by a handful of their parents, particularly fathers, no participant in the sons' generation has taken over family businesses. Part of the explanation lies in changes in the Japanese economy, as men in the fathers' and more particularly the sons' generation seek secure salaryman employment, which often means relocating to large cities. But much of the explanation lies in changing values. Thus the participants of the sons' generation tended to pursue their own aspirations with little consideration for the *ie* system, although, of course, it is uncertain whether or not their attitudes towards their parents will change as they grow older. The sons understood their parents to be resigned to their lack of filial piety, a resignation facilitated by their financial resources, which also enabled their sons to follow their desires.

### **Evidence for the survival of the *ie* system**

The difference between men and women is that, definitely, men have a higher position than women. Therefore, women, even if they are parents, can't go over men's heads. That was the rule at home. We were told women shouldn't go over men's heads but men can. Men take a bath first. But that has totally changed now. (Ueno-san, F)

While the intergenerational aspects of the *ie* system appear to be on the wane, patriarchal relations between the husband and wife have been more resistant to change. Almost all the participants remembered a childhood in which the authority of the father as the head of the family was clearly visible. It is probably the most influential aspect of the *ie* system that the system grants the father dominance over his family. The father's dominant position was expressed both in family rules and special treatment given to fathers. For example, the majority of fathers of the participants in every generation were given the seat of honour at the head of the family table:

My father sat at the top of the table. The TV was in that room and his seat was the best position to watch TV. It's like this. Boys sat on both sides close to him and next to them sat the girls. (Kusuda-san, S)

I don't know if it was the seat of honour but my father took a seat where you can watch TV best. (Katagiri-san, G)

As these respondents remember, the father's seat was often situated in the best position to watch television (the only exception being some families in the grandfathers' generation because television

only came into wide use in the middle of the 1960s: Nakamura 2004, p.49). In all three generations, sons generally occupied seats that were closest to their fathers. Daughters took seats next to their male siblings. Mothers sat in the seats that were the nearest to the kitchen.

Some participants indicated their fathers' authority manifested itself in other ways. Honda-san of the grandfathers' generation remembered that his family members were not allowed to start eating until his father began to eat. Uchida-san, of the grandfathers' generation, Ueno-san, of the fathers' generation and even Shimizu-san, of the sons' generation, said that their fathers had an additional dish at dinner, e.g. *sashimi* (raw fish). Furthermore, many fathers took a bath first.<sup>67</sup> In extended families, Hino-san's grandfather took a bath first, while Yoshino-san's grandmother took her bath first only because his father insisted that she do so, showing filial piety. The male siblings usually took their baths before their female siblings did. Not surprisingly, mothers were often the last to use the bath. These practices implied that the fathers were held in high esteem and that the mothers were placed in a servile position. There is a common term for a domineering father, *teishu-kanpaku*, which is how Shimizu-san in the sons' generation described his father (and a few other participants in the sons' generation used the term during the interviews, which did not occur in the older generations). That a special term is used to describe such a father suggests that a domineering father is unusual and seen as being less common in the sons' generation.

No participants in any generations expressed antipathy to their fathers' authority. However, the way in which they interpreted their closeness to (or distance from) their father varied. Participants of the grandfathers' generation, as the quotation below indicates, stood in awe of their fathers and respected them for their dignity as a father and as a man:

What parents say is as sacred as what god says. In the old days, we used to say 'earthquakes, thunder, fire and fathers'.<sup>68</sup> My father was the scariest person for me. (Shiga-san, G)

Much boastful talk concerning how interesting, intelligent and hard-working their fathers were came from participants of this generation. Compared with the younger generations, participants whose childhood occurred prior to the high economic growth period were relatively close to their fathers and had a good understanding of them (except for those participants whose fathers went to war).<sup>69</sup> They

<sup>67</sup> Hendry (1981, p.89) points out that taking a bath was one of privileges of the head of the family and that all men bathed first partly because of a concern that women were polluted.

<sup>68</sup> Shwalb *et al.* (1987, p.248) argue that this saying indicates that 'the traditional definition of the father was as an awe-inspiring authority figure', almost as fearsome as natural calamities such as earthquakes.

<sup>69</sup> According to Uno (1993b, p.51; 1991, p.25), fathers' involvement in housework and childcare in the Tokugawa and the Meiji periods was greater than that after industrialisation and, therefore, prior to Japanese industrialization, fathers were close to their children.

communicated with their fathers and shared activities in their daily lives. On the other hand, mothers of the participants were much less visible in the background.

Participants in the fathers' generation did not boast about their fathers. These fathers plunged into long hours as salarymen who delivered high economic growth but who grew distant from their sons. Sugiura-san's father, who worked for an iron-manufacturing company, was often absent from home. Tachibana-san's father came home later and later as his social drinking hours extended. Yoshino-san and Kuraoka-san saw their self-employed fathers working from early morning till late at night, often until eleven o'clock. As a result, participants in the fathers' generation indicated an emotional chasm between themselves and their fathers. They also criticised their fathers, although not for their long working hours, but for failures in their fathers' personalities, e.g., being narrow-minded. As the presence of fathers diminished, the presence of mothers in the memories of men in the fathers' generation increased slightly. As Sugiura-san remembers:

I was scared of my mother. She is gentle now, though. [She was strict] because my father was absent from home. She just kept beating me. I think she was stressed and tense because she and my father [who came from a small town] had to do everything all by themselves in a big city, like rearing children and buying a home. I think they were extremely tense. They were preoccupied with survival and bringing up their children. People who are now in their fifties and sixties lived in an age like that. That's how I see it. (Sugiura-san, F)

Likewise, Toda-san remembered his mother standing in front of the gate with a broom in her hand when his sister failed to come home by curfew. These mothers were strict moral disciplinarians on behalf of their absent fathers.

In the sons' generation, mothers again disappeared into the background, while fathers were represented as strict disciplinarians. As the quotation below indicates, as with the fathers' generation and unlike the grandfathers' generation, these sons were not totally accepting of their fathers' personality or practices:

My father is domineering... he is obstinate most of the time. Well, my mother is good. She is not dissatisfied. She just obeys my father. They are on very good terms with each other. But, you know, well, my mother thinks they are fine but I think my father should be a bit more cooperative because I don't think every father should be domineering, should they? Therefore, in this sense, he is *hanmenkyōshi* (a person who serves as an example of how not to behave). (Shimizu-san, S)

Shimizu-san finds fault with his father and takes sides with his submissive mother. Only in the sons' generation did any respondents express direct criticisms of their fathers' patriarchal attitudes. Okano-san also described his father as very sex-biased and an advocate of '*danshi chūbō ni tatsu bekarazu*'<sup>70</sup> [men shall not enter the kitchen]. Although Okano-san admitted that his father's influence on his view of gender was considerable,<sup>71</sup> he claimed that he no longer supports the traditional sex roles with which his father complied. The only exception was Kusuda-san who had a very close relationship with his self-employed father, with whom he spent a considerable amount of time communicating and sharing the traditional ideas about gender roles.

While fathers of all three generations maintained their authority as the head of their families, the sons' generation no longer accepted the validity of their fathers' dominance over their families. This indicates that, unlike the older generations, some participants in the sons' generation observed their parents through gender lenses, at least to the extent that they were consciously (or unconsciously) able to perceive and criticise the gender relations between their parents at home.

So far, the survival of the authority of the participants' fathers has been discussed. The following section deals with the different treatment meted out to siblings as a result of their order in the family and gender. The psychological pressure put on children by parents, which was caused by the practice of the *ie* system, differed among siblings. Expectations of parents regarding the first-born son were greater than those regarding the rest of their male children. While sons were expected to become the breadwinner regardless of their familial status, daughters were expected to leave home at their marriage and enter their husbands' *ie*. These presumptions generate inequalities between male and female siblings.

In the grandfathers' generation, people were not financially and materially affluent and parents endeavoured to leave as much property as possible to their first-born sons. Accordingly, other siblings generally did not receive any property. Daughters had to marry and leave their home to reduce their parents' burden. Because the idea that women did not need an education was prevalent,<sup>72</sup> women had much less access to education than men. According to the oldest participant, Kasuga-san, his siblings had a strong sense of hierarchy among themselves and his two younger brothers held the oldest brother in awe. Although Kasuga-san lived with another family during his schooling, he was

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<sup>70</sup> Japanese people tend to think that the phrase represents Japanese tradition; however, men in the Sengoku period (1392-1573) [the Age of Civil Wars] did the cooking. Even men in the upper class enjoyed cooking (Itō 2003, pp.25-26).

<sup>71</sup> He revealed that he used to behave like his father in front of his ex-girlfriends. However, he felt that his attitudes scared them. After a series of breakups in relationships, he decided to change his attitudes towards women.

<sup>72</sup> See Liddle and Nakajima (2000) pp.232-235 for parents' concerns about their daughters' marriage rather than education.



never envious of his other brothers who stayed at home. It was 'natural' for him to obey his father's decision.

In the fathers' generation, in addition to property, parents strove to give a better education to the first-born son but were less eager with regard to the other children. For example, Ueno-san of the fathers' generation mentioned that:

My parents wanted to give *chōnan* [the first-born son] as much as they could. *Jinan* [the second son] can do anything he likes because he leaves home. The first born son is treasured. There weren't so many differences in treatment between my brother and me but there were occasions where I could see the difference. My parents used to say to my brother 'Be responsible as you are *chōnan*'. They often said 'because you are *chōnan*'.  
(Ueno-san, F)

Ueno-san's parents cherished his brother most among his siblings because his brother was the successor. While Ueno-san gave up tertiary education because of financial difficulties, his older brother completed higher education. Fukuda-san (a second son) also expressed his envy because his parents were keen on giving his elder brother higher education, while they were happy with Fukuda-san's decision to go to a vocational high school.

However, the responsibility for the continuation of the *ie* places a burden on the first-born son. Many first-born sons amongst participants mentioned that it was not only their parents but also their relatives who frequently reminded them of the importance of their respectability as the first-born son. By contrast, the second sons and younger sons may consider their responsibility to leave home to be their freedom. For instance, Hino-san was glad that he was the second son and did not have to succeed to his parents' farm. Hence, fraternal inequalities exist amongst male siblings.

The disparity between male siblings and female siblings in regard to education was still great in the fathers' generation. For example, when Yoshino-san failed to enter a university, his father allowed him to take a year out to prepare for the next examination. However, his elder sister, who wanted to continue her education, met opposition from their father. Yoshino-san's father clearly felt that she did not need education because 'she was a woman', implying that a future housewife did not require tertiary education.<sup>73</sup> Likewise, Tachibana-san remembered a time when his sister expressed her mixed feelings that their parents expected more of him than of her in every aspect of life, such as academic achievement and occupational success.

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<sup>73</sup> In the early 1980s, many mothers also held this idea regarding their daughters' education (Buckley 1993, p.364).

In the sons' generation, the idea that "women do not need an education" was tempered according to the family's affluence. For example, Hirose-san's father expected him to go on to university but he never expected his sister to do so. Moreover, the view that "society is a man's world" still prevails. According to Miura-san, the youngest participant, his parents used to say to him:

A man should enter society and work, for example, in order to support his wife, and he should experience hardship in the process of self-realisation. My father used to say this to me but not to my sister.

(Miura-san, S)

The greater expectations of parents for sons than for daughters took a draconian shape in home discipline. For example, Shimizu-san and Okano-san of the sons' generation received many smacks from their fathers. Shimizu-san remembered that his father kept beating him until he stopped crying. "Boys don't cry" was a pet phrase used by fathers in all three generations. In addition to smacks, Amano-san of the fathers' generation was put in a straw bag and hung up for half a day. Hamada-san of the same generation was locked in a rice storehouse overnight as punishment. According to these participants, their mothers always tried to reduce their fathers' zealousness and the extent of the punishment. Notwithstanding, these participants indicated their acceptance of physical punishment implying a generalised idea that boys were incorrigible and, therefore, they needed severe punishment. Some participants made an introductory remark that 'people would take it as physical abuse today but...', indicating both a significant degree of violence and their acceptance of it as well as an understanding that these attitudes have changed. It was apparently easier for fathers to hit a boy, as only one respondent, Yoshino-san, reported that his rebellious sister was hit as punishment. Despite corporal punishment, participants felt that they were freer to do things than their protected sisters, who, for example, were required to obey a curfew. Moreover, parents were more unremitting in imposing feminine standards of language and demeanour on female siblings than in enforcing masculine standards upon the research participants.

The above examples demonstrate how the *ie* system lingers on in the minds of the participants across the three generations. The nature of the system has, however, been changing and has a waning impact on the actual behaviour of the respondents over time. The diminishing effect of the *ie* system on the evolving modern family is indicated in the more individualistic way of pursuing aspirations with little respect for the *ie* system amongst the sons' generation and their parents' acquiescence to their sons' desires. By contrast, the patriarchal ideology of the *ie* system abides in contemporary Japan. Participants internalised the concept that men were the head of a family and, therefore, men were superior to women. Moreover, the idea that men were the ones who support their families was

implanted in their minds. Conversely, their female siblings interiorised their subordinate status. It is to the participants' understanding of their mothers that the next section turns.

### **2.1.2. *Ryōsai Kenbo* (good wife wise mother)**

“*Ryōsai kenbo*” was a state ideology that controlled the direction of education for women and the behavioural pattern of women from the Meiji period until the end of the Second World War. *Ryōsai kenbo* was the integration of the ideal image of the Japanese woman as obedient, which was based on Confucianism,<sup>74</sup> with the ideal image of the Western woman who contributed to society (Fukaya 1998, p.145). The boundary between the public space and the private space was deliberately made indistinct by the state when the woman's sphere, the household, was connected with the interests of the nation (Fukaya 1998, p.13). That is, women's devotion to their husbands and to their children was given high praise and a national value, and considered to be equal to men's public social activities. While women's role was constrained to that of wife and mother, their domestic activities were valued from the nationalistic point of view as an equal contribution to the nation equal to that of men.<sup>75</sup> The good wife wise mother philosophy underwent transformation as the stress shifted from wifedom to motherhood.

The *ryōsai kenbo* (good wife wise mother) philosophy meant that women had two important duties in relation to their family and to the Japanese state. Firstly, they were obliged to serve their husbands and children and, secondly, they were required to contribute to economic development and, later, to military expansion. The diffusion of the good wife wise mother philosophy was launched by Kikuchi Dairoku, who was inaugurated as the Minister of Education in 1901 (Fukaya 1998, pp.156-157).<sup>76</sup> At its inception, ‘good wife wise mother’ emphasised being a good wife. Kikuchi stated in a speech in 1902 that it was a woman's life mission to become a wife and, therefore, education for women should instruct them in the knowledge required for their mission (Fukaya 1998, p.155). Japan's hunger for economic growth following the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) deployed women (the middle and upper classes) for this goal (Nolte and Hastings 1991, p.158). Women's moral responsibilities were taught in women's secondary schools in order to produce a loyal, obedient and diligent people (Amanuma 1997, p.86; Liddle and Nakajima 2000, p.40; McKinlay 2002, pp.1-2; Nolte and Hastings 1991, p.152; Uno

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<sup>74</sup> The government resorted to the Confucian teaching of the family in order to bolster the *ie* system because the precept exhorted women to absolute altruism with regard to their husbands, in-laws and children as well as in the disciplining of their children (Fujii 1975, pp.17-18).

<sup>75</sup> According to Ueno (2004, p.39), the ‘nationalisation of women’ was welcomed and regarded as an ‘innovation’ by most Japanese feminists and most women at that time also welcomed the idea.

<sup>76</sup> The phrase ‘*ryōsai kenbo*’ first appeared in the early 1890s in a magazine entitled *Jokan* (The model of a woman) (Fukaya 1998, p.156).

1993a, p.297; 1991, p.38).<sup>77</sup> More importantly, the concept served as the foundation of the whole social hierarchy in the family-state. The 'good wife, wise mother' philosophy meant that Japanese women were not only literally caretakers and nurturers in the private sphere but also 'public servants' who served the children of the emperor (the head of the family-state) in the interests of the nation (Liddle and Nakajima 2000, p.52).<sup>78</sup> The policy indoctrinated women into the idea of patriotism, dedication and obedience (Uno 1993a, p.299).

During the 1930s, the importance shifted from wifehood to motherhood (Liddle and Nakajima 2000, p.54; Tipton 1995, p.46; Uno 1993a, p.299). With the advent of aggressive militarism in the 1930s, the government became more concerned with military force than with the financial power of the nation. Consequently, the meaning of 'good wife wise mother' shifted from the efficient household manager to the bearer of the soldier (Liddle and Nakajima 2000, pp.54-55). With the slogan '*Umeyo, fuyaseyo*' (reproduce, multiply) the government encouraged women to have as many children as possible. One of the official policies announced in 1941 was to achieve 'a total of five children per family over the next ten years' (Liddle and Nakajima 2000, p.55; Tipton 1995, p.47). Hence, motherhood replaced wifehood as women's primary contribution to the nation.

Despite the radical and substantial transformation in Japan after the end of the Second World War, the concept of 'good wife wise mother' remained alive. Depriving women of other choices, the judicial, educational and industrial sectors put the ideology into practice in order to confine women to homemaking and nurturing (Long 1996, p.160; Uno 1993a, p.303). Uno (1993a, p.305) argues that the influence of the concept lasted at least until 1986 when the Equal Employment Opportunity Law came into effect (see Chapter 4). It was also during the 1980s that the proportion of married women with a full-time or part-time job outnumbered married women with no job (Ueno 1994, p.43). As a result of the above, '*senyō shufu*'<sup>79</sup> or the professional housewife became the modern version of good wife wise mother. Before 1945, women were channelled into good wife wise mother by the government's propaganda, most of them having no doubt that this was their duty. By contrast, at least until the end of the 1980s, some modern women opted to become *senyō shufu* and many single women desired to gain this status as a symbol of their husband's wealth (Imamura 1996, p.2; Ueno 1994, p.56). Indeed,

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<sup>77</sup> Women were also taught the 'latest scientific [housekeeping] methods' (Uno 1991, p.62).

<sup>78</sup> The government was also interested in saving liquid assets which would compensate for debts incurred in developing heavy industry and strengthening the military. Accordingly, married women were encouraged to put aside money and buy war bonds through economies in their household management and hard work. E.g. the sub-national (prefectural) government extolled and rewarded selected women – a powerful incentive for women to contribute to the nation (Liddle and Nakajima 2000, pp.52-53). Single women's contribution to light industry (e.g. the spinning industry), their cheap labour and hard work, were the foundation of industrial development in Japan.

<sup>79</sup> The word '*senyō shufu*' was first used in the early 1970s (Ueno 1994, p.56).

according to one study, happiness amongst housewives derived from their high living standard, which was secured by their husbands' large income and promotion prospects (Fukaya 1998, p.279).

As discussed in Chapter 1, wives, regardless of their occupational circumstances, overwhelmingly carry out housework. For example, a study conducted by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research (2000)<sup>80</sup> shows that more than 80 per cent of respondents (wives) do more than 80 per cent of the family's housework. Most wives aged in their forties do almost 90 per cent of housework. About one-third of husbands of respondents with a job do no housework. Another study indicates that even among couples who regard men and women as equal in family life, the wives carry out most housework (Gender Equality Bureau 2004, p.25). This tendency has not changed over the last three decades. For example, in 2001, the husband in a double income household expended 9 minutes on average per day on housework, an increase of 4 minutes from 1986, whereas in 2001, the husband in a single income household expended 7 minutes on average per day, an increase of 4 minutes from 1986 (Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Post and Telecommunications 2003; see also Ōno 1999, p.85<sup>81</sup>). In addition, Japanese men's participation in housework is very low in comparison with men in advanced Western countries (Gender Equality Bureau 2006, p.66; Saitō 1999, pp.206-207).

McKinlay (2002, p.2) maintains that the ideology of 'good wife wise mother' is associated with women's maternal instincts and Japanese women are still appraised in relation to their motherhood, especially their child-rearing skills, including nurturing and educating their children. In fact, mothers who are enthusiastic about their children's education and do anything that facilitates their children's educational progress are called '*kyōiku mama*' or an education mum<sup>82</sup> (Allison 2000, p.106; Fukuzawa and LeTendre 2001, p.102; White 1993, p.55).

However, the declining birth rate – '1.57 shock'<sup>83</sup> in 1989, 1.46 in 1993, 1.34 in 1999 and 1.29 in 2004 – indicates that Japanese women no longer willingly choose to become mothers, rather they reject 'the terms and conditions of motherhood' (Dales 2005, p.135; Jolivet 1997, p.1; Kelsky 2001, p.1; Roberts

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<sup>80</sup> This questionnaire survey involves 8,186 married women from different age groups. See URL: [http://www.ipss.go.jp/ps-katei/j/Nsfj2\\_index.html](http://www.ipss.go.jp/ps-katei/j/Nsfj2_index.html) for details.

<sup>81</sup> See also Gender Equality Bureau (2006) pp.11, 65; (2005) p.5; (2004) pp.21, 24 for evidence that husbands continue to do a small amount of housework.

<sup>82</sup> The term "education mum" appeared in the media in the latter half of the 1960s (Sakurai 2004, p.20).

<sup>83</sup> The lowest birth rate was 1.58 in 1966 when people avoided having a baby girl because, according to a horoscope based on the twelve horary signs, the year (*hinoeuma*) was believed to be an inauspicious one for women to be born in (Roberts 2002 p.55); however, the birth rate soared to about 3.3 in the following year. The rate 1.57, which was lower than 1.58, drew the attention of political leaders especially as they became seriously concerned about Japan's rapidly ageing society. The term '1.57 shock' was created by making a pun on the term 'oil shock' (oil crisis) in 1973.

2002, p.56; Sugawara 1999, p.48).<sup>84</sup> Because of this '*shōshika mondai*' or the 'problem of a low birth rate society', political leaders are trying to solve the dilemma of reducing the burden of a 'good wife wise mother', for example by supporting the woman's nurturing role through the Angel Plan from 1995 (Roberts 2002, p.54). The way in which participants referred to the 'good wife wise mother' ideology and associated it with their wives and future wives is discussed in Chapter 3 on love and marriage. The following section focuses on the extent to which the respondents applied the 'good wife wise mother' concept to their own mothers.

Mothers of the grandfathers' generation perhaps belonged to the last generation that was encouraged by the government to bear as many children as possible. For example, Shiga-san had ten siblings. When he was born in 1935, to be the youngest among them, his mother was forty-three years old; his oldest sibling was born when his mother was eighteen years old. In Shiga-san's family, his mother had, on average, a child every other year. Participants who were born in the 1930s and before had an average of five siblings, their mothers responding to the slogan 'reproduce, multiply' that accompanied the 'good wife wise mother' ideology.<sup>85</sup> The average number of siblings of participants who were born in the middle of the 1940s onwards was lower. Participants in the fathers' generation had 2.7 siblings on average. The average number of siblings of participants in the sons' generation was 2.5. The propaganda of 'good wife, wise mother' as a child-bearing machine vanished along with the major social and economic changes following the Second World War, when having few children with quality education became the ideal.

Following in the footsteps of their fathers, almost all the men in every generation in the research did little or no housework at home, although there was a slight trend towards mothers demanding more housework from sons in the fathers' and sons' generations (see Table 3). Those who recalled doing any housework as sons described exceptional situations in which they were forced to assist with domestic labour or compelling circumstances in which it was inevitable for them to do housework.

**TABLE 3**  
**Participants' Participation in Housework in Their Childhood**

	<b>No housework</b>	<b>Some housework</b>	<b>Farmwork when required</b>
<b>The grandfathers</b>	<b>10 (77 %)</b>	<b>3 (23 %)</b>	<b>2 (15 %)</b>
<b>The fathers</b>	<b>10 (67 %)</b>	<b>5 (33 %)</b>	<b>3 (20 %)</b>
<b>The sons</b>	<b>8 (73 %)</b>	<b>3 (27 %)</b>	<b>0</b>

<sup>84</sup> See also the web site of the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research for the declining number of newborn babies and the declining birth rate from the mid-1940s. URL: <http://www.ipss.go.jp/syoushika/seisaku/html/111b1.htm>

<sup>85</sup> It is also worth noting that the high birth rate might be resulted from little availability of birth control, the short life expectancy of children and the need for labour in a largely agricultural economy.

For example, in the grandfathers' generation, Kusuda-san, the oldest participant, became *shosē*<sup>86</sup> when he was thirteen years old. His job was cleaning the house, polishing his master's shoes and serving tea for the guests. Shiga-san, who was the youngest in his family, prepared breakfast for his family. He had been forced to do so from the age of eleven when his father's munitions factory was closed down just after the War and everyone in his family was busy working to survive. Yoshida-san helped his mother with cooking and cleaning because she had a heart problem. The majority of fathers of the participants in the grandfathers' generation had a paid job or were self-employed and their sons did no housework. Sasaki-san's family had a maid, which was not necessarily unusual for a wealthy family before the War. However, the majority of Japanese households at this time comprised farming families in which sons and daughters would normally contribute with either housework or farmwork. The fathers of only two participants (Uchida-san and Yanase-san) were farmers. These participants frequently helped their parents in the fields.

In the fathers' generation, out of fifteen participants, ten did no housework, though Amano-san, Hamada-san and Hino-san helped their parents with farmwork. Yoshino-san remembered his grandmother used to say that he did not have to do anything 'because you are a man'. Only Ono-san shared housework with his sister, and this was because his parents were farmers who worked long hours. Unlike the grandfathers' generation, four respondents in the fathers' generation did housework tasks when asked to do so. For example, Toda-san's mother allocated jobs to him and his sisters. Matsuzaki-san, Minami-san and Tachibana-san were most often asked to undertake physical labour tasks such as drawing water from a well and chopping firewood.

The sons' generation represents the worst group in terms of housework contribution. Amongst eleven participants, eight did no housework. The mothers of the three participants who did housework were employed (or self-employed) and the participants' housework included cleaning and cooking, rather than physical labour. Despite the contributions from their children, these participants' mothers ultimately managed the households. Moreover, their fathers scarcely did any housework. The concept of 'good wife wise mother' as a caretaker and nurturer remained intact in the childhoods of the participants across the three generations. This meant that mothers in paid work in the sons' generation experienced a double burden.<sup>87</sup> Despite the fact that some participants did a considerable amount of housework, they did not replicate this assistance when they married. The way in which participants of the three generations associated their wives with '*ryōsai kenbo*' is discussed in the next

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<sup>86</sup> *Shosē* is, in this context, a man who boards with a well-off family away from his own family in exchange for performing domestic duties during schooling. It was common for men to become *shosē* when there were many siblings and families were struggling to make ends meet.

<sup>87</sup> See Liddle and Nakajima (2000) pp.255-260, 269-276, 288-297 for employed women's struggles to balance work and family.

chapter on love and marriage. The next section explores a second key domain of growing up, the experience of schooling.

## 2.2 SCHOOLING

With the advent of feminism and the elimination of much sexual discrimination against girls in Australia, girls have begun to perform as well as, indeed better than, boys in secondary schooling and represent a slightly higher percentage of university students (Collins 1999, p.19; Connell 1996 p.207; Davies [1989] 2003, p.2; Healey 2005, pp.1-3). The media's alarm over 'boys' disadvantage' from the 1990s onwards often fails to compare boys and girls of the same socio-economic background, to note that middle class boys are doing about as well as middle class girls, that female graduates still earn less than male graduates in Australia, that many more boys than girls enrol in TAFE as an alternative educational pathway and so on (Askew and Ross 1988, p.1; Connell 1996, p.207; Foster *et al.* 2001, pp.1-2; Gilbert and Gilbert 1998, p.4). In Japan, there has been little press coverage of 'boys' disadvantage'. Although there is a discourse that boys are becoming intellectually and psychologically weak, the Japanese media has been more interested in the increase in the number of vicious crimes perpetrated by teenage boys (Itō 2003, pp.61-68). While scholars, feminists and lawyers have been paying attention to gender issues at school since the 1970s, there are still insufficient empirical studies on gender relations at school (Kimura 1999, p.5). This section illuminates what Connell (1996, p.213) calls the 'gender regime' of the school through the experience of the participants. Various aspects of schooling such as the structure of the school, the gender of the teachers, discipline and peer culture are examined.

### 2.2.1 Academic Trajectory

During the 1950s, while a little more than fifty per cent of male junior high school students enrolled in high school, forty per cent of female students went on to high school. Amongst these male high school students, only ten per cent entered university. It was not until the 1970s that the majority of both male and female students went on to high school (Ojima 2003, p.215).<sup>88</sup> In the 1980s, most of the students (ninety-five per cent) who completed compulsory education<sup>89</sup> went on to high school and nearly forty per cent of male students entered university (Fukuzawa and LeTendre 2001, p.22; Ojima 2003, p.215; Sakurai 2004, p.19; Yoneyama 1999, p.46). In the light of the media term 'education mom', which

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<sup>88</sup> In 1955, 13.1 per cent of boys and 2.4 per cent of girls of the relevant age cohort went on to university, while, in 2001, 32.7 per cent of girls and 46.9 per cent of boys went on to university (Sasagawa 2004, p.171).

<sup>89</sup> Since 1947, Japanese schooling has been divided into three phases: primary school (six years), junior high school (three years) and high school (three years). Primary and junior high school constitute compulsory education. Students who go on to high school normally take an entrance examination unless they belong to a private school that has an integrated educational system running from compulsory education to higher education.



gained currency in the latter half of the 1960s, it is interesting to note that the late 1960s was the turning point in the Japanese educational system, marking the advent of the Japanese meritocracy<sup>90</sup> in which almost all students were involved in the highly developed examination system. This also generated academic credentialism to the extent that people appraise others and themselves in accordance with their academic record (Yoneyama 1999, pp.45-48).

Participants in each generation were better educated than their counterparts in each cohort in general (see Table 4 below for educational achievement in each generation). In particular, participants in the grandfathers' generation represent well-educated men, compared with men in the same cohort. The participants attributed this to affluent parents and the encouragement of their fathers who had a better education than their counterparts.<sup>91</sup> Parents, who were not wealthy enough to give their sons higher education, simply demanded their sons work; however, parents strove to give their sons at least high school education, which was seen as a privilege in the grandfathers' generation. For example, Katagiri-san, Nishida-san and Sasaki-san who went on to university were all from relatively wealthy families. Katagiri-san's father, wanting his son to go to his famous *alma mater*, even assigned a private tutor for Katagiri-san when he was in primary school in order to ensure his son's success in the examination for a feeder junior high school of the *alma mater*. Nishida-san's father insisted on his entering university and allowed him to become *rōnin*,<sup>92</sup> which was rare at that time. Nishida-san remembered that the word 'examination hell' existed as early as 1955 when he went to the cram school that prepared him for the university examination. He studied hard because 'it was a question of the value of his existence', meaning that entering university nursed his pride, did his duty to his father and offered his future prospects. Sasaki-san's father was also very education-minded. He always wanted to send Sasaki-san to a famous academic school. Sasaki-san also became *rōnin*. According to Sasaki-san, there was a phrase '*yon-tō go-raku*' (literally four-pass five-fail) around 1958, which meant that 'if you sleep for four hours, you will pass the examination but if you sleep for five hours, you will fail'. Two other fathers had unusually high education levels themselves: Kasuga-san's father had a good command of English and Shiga-san's father studied in Germany in the Meiji period, which was very rare. Both fathers were keen on advancing their sons' education. Kasuga-san's father, unable to afford a good education for his son, left him with a wealthy couple as *shosē* (see p.65 above). Shiga-san's father used to say to Shiga-san that money that was earned by physical labour was precious but working people were not able to become the ruling people and, therefore, one must have education in

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<sup>90</sup> See Takeuchi (1995) for a discussion of Japanese meritocracy

<sup>91</sup> Ojima and Kondo (2000) (cited in Ojima 2003, p.217) demonstrated that the better the socio-economic circumstances of the family, the higher the level of education of the children. Moreover, socio-economic circumstances affect the educational achievement of women more than that of men (Kimura 1999, p.137).

<sup>92</sup> *Rōnin* refers to high school graduates who have failed to pass the entrance examination for university and prepare for the next year's examination studying at home or in a special cram school.

order to enter the ruling class. Unfortunately, Shiga-san had to give up high school because of financial difficulties; however, having faith in his father's words, when the financial difficulties were over, he repeated the final year of junior high school and went on to high school.

In the fathers' generation, the majority of the participants studied hard and did well at school, requiring no special support from their fathers. This did not mean that their parents had no interest in their sons' education. For example, three participants made a second attempt at entering university, suggesting their parents' strong support for a university degree. However, the school had the more significant role in urging participants towards tertiary education.<sup>93</sup> For example, Minami-san's and Yoshino-san's academic schools demanded students go on to university. Older participants in this generation were able to secure a position in a large corporation on completion of high school. Ueno-san claimed that there were still opportunities for vocational high school leavers to enter decent companies (discussed further in Chapter 4 on work). Fukuda-san and Matsuzaki-san began work after completing high school but they attended university evening classes while they worked, because they felt that it was simply "common sense" to do so. Matsuzaki-san went to a corporate school, a school operated by his company, which secured his position in the company. This form of school no longer exists, but indicates the expanding power of corporations at that time.

**TABLE 4**  
**Academic Achievement of the Participants**

	High School	Post-Secondary Institution	University	Total Number of Participants
<b>The Grandfathers' Generation</b>	<b>9</b> (69%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>4</b> (1) (31%)	<b>13</b> (100%)
<b>The Fathers' Generation</b>	<b>5</b> (23%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>10</b> (2) (67%)	<b>15</b> (100%)
<b>The Sons' Generation</b>	<b>1</b> (10%)	<b>3</b> (30%)	<b>7</b> (60%)	<b>11</b> (100%)

**Notes:**

- (1) One participant attended evening classes while he worked during the day.  
(2) Two participants attended evening classes while they worked during the day.

By the time of the sons' generation, it was common to go on to university or post-secondary institutions<sup>94</sup> after completing high school. Only one participant did not have tertiary education, and this was because his divorced mother raised him by herself and could not afford higher education for

<sup>93</sup> High schools are ranked and, therefore, students in a high school have a relatively similar level of academic competence (Yoneyama 1999, p.46). For this reason, academic high schools tend to focus on sending their students to well-known universities for the distinction of having students with academic excellence.

<sup>94</sup> In the Japanese context, post-secondary institutions refer to vocational, technical and academic schools which are private organisations.

him. Participants remember parents, mothers slightly more so than fathers, pressing them to study at home: “my parents nagged me” was heard from more than half the participants. Okano-san’s mother used to sit with him and do his homework with him during the mornings in the long school holidays when he was small. At his mother’s suggestion Nakama-san went to piano, swimming and calligraphy lessons. These stories implied the zealous involvement of ‘education mums’ in their sons’ education in accordance with Japan’s super-meritocracy. Indeed, participants did not question the competitive nature of the educational system. As Sugiura-san said, ‘people are born to compete and it is natural for us to be involved in competition because there is a hierarchy in everything’. Kusuda-san, of the sons’ generation, deplored the excessive latitude in schools today, causing a decline in academic ability and social disorder. Interestingly, the participants rather admired excellent female students. The fact that the intellectual excellence of girls did not threaten the participants’ masculinity suggests that the participants felt secure in their privileged social positions, which would not be undermined even by females who outperformed them at school.

### **2.2.2 The Gender Regime**

This section explores the gender regime in the participants’ school lives, involving two main aspects: symbolism and hierarchy. The former looks at gender differences in subjects that are learned and taught, teachers and school events and activities. The latter involves leadership positions in classroom and among peers. These aspects suggest that the education of males was more highly valued than that of females. Even the harsher punishment which the boys received exposes this point.

#### **Gender differences**

Schooling as a social institution has a hierarchical structure. Before 1947, the enactment of the Fundamental Law of Education, people had to go to a special training school to become a teacher and men from wealthy families generally had greater access to this training school than women, because many women did not even have access to junior high school (Sasahara 2003, p.85). Therefore, the majority of teachers were men in the post-war era. Despite the immense educational and social changes after the Second World War, the ‘gender regime’ of the school, which was inclined to be masculine and authoritarian, remained largely intact. Men still overwhelmingly occupy the positions of school principal and deputy principal in primary and junior high schools. Female teachers currently account for sixty per cent of the total number of teachers in primary schools, yet only one to two per cent of principals and deputies are female (Sasahara 2003, p.96). The proportion of female teachers is considerably lower in junior high school compared with primary school (Kimura 1999, p.33). Accordingly, the proportion of female teachers in managerial positions also diminishes as the level of

education escalates. While the disparity between the number of female teachers and male teachers in junior high and high school has been gradually diminishing, the number of female teachers is still less than that of male teachers (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2004a; 2004b). As a result, school children assume that women are suitable to be primary school teachers and that men are fit for junior high and high school teaching and for managerial positions (Kimura 1999, p.34). These assumptions are reflected in the narratives of my participants.

Formal schooling is based on equality of the sexes and egalitarianism. However, each subject is understood to be masculine or feminine to varying degrees. For example, literature, music and home economics are considered to be feminine subjects, while science, social science and PE are regarded as masculine subjects (Sasahara 2003, p.96).<sup>95</sup> This symbolism affects not only decisions made by students when they go on to the next stage of education, but also the division of labour amongst teachers. Although primary school teachers teach all the subjects in their classroom, teachers in junior high schools or higher teach their specialised subjects. Masculine subjects are overwhelmingly taught by male teachers, and vice versa (Kimura 1999, p.33). Moreover, the continued existence of sex-segregated subjects (i.e. home economics, technical skills and PE), despite educational reforms advancing gender equality, indicates that school education still subscribes, at least in part, to the traditional gender division of labour. When home economics entered school education as a new subject after the end of the Second World War, its guiding principle was based on the traditional division of labour, that is, housework was a women's job (Buckley 1993, pp.363-364; Horiuchi 2003, p.111). This policy was reformed in 1989 and home economics was incorporated into three elective subjects, i.e., 'general domestic science', 'life skills' and 'general living' from which both girls and boys chose one in high school (Horiuchi 2003, p.113). In junior high school, home economics was incorporated into four elective subjects, 'woodwork', 'electrical engineering', 'family life' and 'food', from which students chose one (Horiuchi 2003, p.113). The reform was put into operation in 1993 in junior high schools and in 1994 in high schools. However, the above subjects remain gendered subjects as long as they are elective because the process of selection is governed by the existing symbolism concerning them (Kimura 1999, p.32). That is, boys overwhelmingly choose general living and either woodwork or engineering, while girls overwhelmingly choose domestic science and family life or food, which reproduce the entrenched concept of the conventional division of labour.

The school lives of the participants of the three generations range from the early 1930s to the early 1990s. During these decades, all the participants experienced educational and social changes to varying degrees. In particular, many men in the grandfathers' generation went through enormous transformations because of the interruption of the Second World War during their early schooling. One

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<sup>95</sup> See Askew and Ross (1988) p.50 for the similar symbolism in subjects in the U.K, Connell (1996) p.217 and Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) pp.121-122 for the similar symbolism in subjects in Australia at school.

of the most significant modifications made to the old educational system was the adoption of co-education. All participants in this generation expressed discomfort in talking to female students, both those men who had no co-education (Kasuga-san, Shiga-san and Sonoda-san) and the participants who experienced transition from sex-segregated education to co-education. The men with no co-education were told that “boys and girls should not sit together from the time when they become seven years old”.<sup>96</sup> Kasuga-san remembered discomfort even in talking to his cousin when she suggested that they go to school together getting into the same train carriage (even though each train had carriages for male students and for female students at that time):

I was embarrassed. I just didn't know how to talk to her. It wasn't that I was afraid that someone would report us but I just didn't know how to talk to a woman. (Kasuga-san, G)

Sasaki-san avoided playing with girls in second grade, when his co-education commenced,<sup>97</sup> explaining this as due to his single sex education in first grade. However, even Yoshida-san, the youngest in the grandfathers' generation, who experienced co-education throughout his schooling remembered:

I never talked with girls in junior high and high school. You know, I was self-conscious. It's not that I liked someone or anything like that but it was just difficult to talk to someone of the opposite sex. But I did mischief. I pulled the hair of a girl who was sitting in front of me. I did things like that but when it came to conversation, I was just embarrassed. (Yoshino-san, G)

Likewise, for Hirose-san it was all he could do to look at girls at junior high school. Not until high school did he feel comfortable talking to a female student. In a sex-segregated society, parents sometimes reinforced the respondents' discomfort with the opposite sex. For example, every time Katagiri-san talked to a female classmate about their club activities on the phone, his father frowned at him.

Some participants in the fathers' generation indicated friendly contacts with female classmates at school, although others expressed their shyness and avoided attracting attention from their peers who would tease them. Tachibana-san and Ueno-san, who had been mischievous boys in primary school, remembered pulling a girl's plait or flipping up a girl's skirt. In these perverse expressions of their

<sup>96</sup> *Danjo nanasai ni shite seki o onajū sezu*. The phrase, which came from Confucianism, was an educational principle of the samurai class (Edwards W. 1989, p.54). A boy of a samurai family started his education when he was seven years old.

<sup>97</sup> This endorses arguments on gender-segregated play which are made by Askew and Ross (1988); Davies (1993); (2003); Thorne (1993); (1994). See also the section on embodiment: play and leisure in this chapter.

interest in girls, they avoided teasing from their peers by embarrassing girls. Looking back, Tachibana-san stated how shy he was:

I remember this. When I was in year six, we did a folk dance in the sports festival. Oh, I just couldn't grip girls' hands because I was embarrassed. I, like this, only touched their finger tips.

(Tachibana-san, F)

The fathers' generation was a transitional generation from societal endorsement of sex segregation to more acceptance of social mixing between the sexes. Younger participants in this generation felt relatively comfortable talking to girls at school. For example, Yoshino-san preferred talking to girls at high school because he did not like the boys, who were interested only in academic achievement. Tsutsumi-san had no problem with talking to girls, but he adapted his interaction by refraining from using the bad language and the physical horseplay that often occurred when he talked to his male friends.

Only in the sons' generation did respondents remember girls as actual friends, similar to their male friends. Kusuda-san said that he had many female "friends" and Segawa-san was on good terms with girls, while Hirose-san fondly remembers being invited by a female primary school classmate to visit her home, which he did, chaperoned by his mother. The youngest participant, Miura-san, stated:

I often took part in school events such as cultural festivals. I always enjoyed these occasions because it was fun to do things together with girls.

(Miura-san, S)

Across the three generations, participants were taught almost exclusively by male teachers. After the inauguration of co-education, among the grandfathers' generation, Ishihara-san and Sasaki-san had a female classroom teacher<sup>98</sup> in primary school but only Hirose-san had a female classroom teacher in junior high school. In the fathers' generation, all the participants had more than one female classroom teacher in primary school. More than one-half had at least one female classroom teacher in junior high school. Katagiri-san remembered that around the time democracy was established in Japan – the 1950s – an ideology of equality and equal rights between genders was widely advocated and there was an atmosphere of fairness at least in education. Interestingly, in the sons' generation five participants had a female classroom teacher only in primary school. Four participants were certain that they had a female classroom teacher some time during their schooling but they were not able to specify exactly when, so that 20 per cent had no female classroom teachers at all.

<sup>98</sup> In Japanese schools, students are allocated to a specific classroom in each grade. For most classes teachers come to the allocated classroom, students only going to other rooms for elective subjects such as music and arts. Principal and co-classroom teachers, in addition to their teaching jobs, are responsible for their students' everyday school life and for any school events, organising them, mobilising and chaperoning students.

Entrenched gendered symbolism was observed across the three generations. School based symbolism stemmed from the relationships between the subjects taught and their teachers' sex and from the connection between these subjects and their students' sex. According to the experiences of participants, for example, female teachers taught literature or music. Nurses in sick rooms were always women. On the other hand, teachers of physical education for male students and technical skills were men. However, the educational reforms aimed at gender equality (see p.74 above) did have an impact, in that by the sons' generation, only half experienced sex segregated domestic science and technical skills. The other participants did cooking and sewing with female students, while girls did woodwork with boys. This remodelling occurred mainly in schools in urban areas. Within each major grouping of subjects, humanities and science, female students dominated in the former and male students in the latter. Sugiura-san's comment below represents how profoundly the gender symbolism of subjects was internalised in the minds of participants:

When I was in primary school, I couldn't understand arithmetic. When I became a junior high school student, I began to understand maths. I thought "oh, I am a man", seriously.... I didn't study but I understood maths and I thought it happened because I was a man. People say men are good at science subjects, you know. I thought "that's it, I was a man".  
(Sugiura-san, F)

Parents of participants were another source of stereotypical ideas. Ashida-san of the fathers' generation strove to become a chemical engineer following his father's recommendation that science was a man's field of study and a man should become an engineer. Among the fields of study of participants in tertiary education, indeed, various types of engineering were the most popular in the fathers' generation (see Table 5 below). Even those participants who did not have tertiary education specialised in mechanical or electrical engineering in high school. Only Kuraoka-san majored in a so-called feminine subject, Russian. He was aware that majoring in languages was regarded as feminine, and justified his purpose to master Russian saying that he had a plan to work internationally. Kuraoka-san also emphasised that language was a man's field of study until the 1960s when the number of female university students began to increase.

Many participants claimed that both female and male teachers were very strict with students. However, male teachers tended to use corporal punishment more frequently than female teachers, whereas female teachers employed other methods of punishment such as increasing the amount of homework and giving a dictation of, for example, Chinese characters. As mentioned above, these differences generated the image of tough male teachers and of soft female teachers. Participants endorsed the practice because they thought that only male teachers were able to handle (incorrigible) male students, which simultaneously implied that female teachers were not tough enough to control the

male students.<sup>99</sup> Some participants used a term “*okāsan sense*” or a motherly teacher to describe a female teacher who invited students to her house and entertained them with her own home cooking (Fukuda-san) and who scolded students severely but in a motherly manner (Sugiura-san). Female teachers were described as warmhearted and close.

**TABLE 5**  
**Major fields of Study of University Graduates amongst Participants**

	Fields of Study				
	Engineering	Law	Business, Commerce and Economics	Science	Language
<b>The Grandfathers' Generation</b>	<b>1</b> <b>(25%)</b>	<b>2</b> <b>(50%)</b>	<b>1</b> <b>(25%)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>The Fathers' Generation</b>	<b>6</b> <b>(60%)</b>		<b>2</b> <b>(20%)</b>	<b>1</b> <b>(10%)</b>	<b>1</b> <b>(10%)</b>
<b>The Sons' Generation</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b> <b>(57%)</b>	<b>2</b> <b>(29%)</b>	<b>1</b> <b>(14%)</b>	<b>0</b>

Male teachers were, by contrast, strict disciplinarians who were distant from students; however, some were also considered to be playmates, e.g. playing sports with students during recess. Female teachers were comfortably associated with the image of the mother, although male teachers were not linked with that of the father, probably because the father, who was often absent from the students' lives, did not invoke a close affinity with a male teacher who took care of children. Additionally, participants pointed out that teachers treated boys and girls differently and the treatment changed as they proceeded to higher grades. For example, most of the participants across the three generations claimed that teachers, especially male teachers, had a soft spot for girls in relation to corporal punishment.<sup>100</sup> Participants remembered the pet phrases spoken by their teachers, including “be gentle to girls”, “be kind to girls” and “men should protect women”, reflecting the pampering of girls at school. This, however, also implied an exclusion of girls from the future job market and from adult responsibilities and tasks. Teachers paid more attention to boys and did their best for the excellent male students in higher grades because, according to participants, ‘teachers wanted to cultivate boys’ abilities’ (Kusuda-san) and because ‘society was male-centred’ (Ueno-san). Moreover, teachers frequently divided students into a boys’ group and a girls’ group and allocated different tasks to them.

<sup>99</sup> See Askew and Ross (1988) p.46 for the U.K. examples and Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) p.118 for Australian examples of gender differences in teachers’ control of students.

<sup>100</sup> According to a survey conducted in 1995 in a junior high school in Osaka, one-half of female students and 65 per cent of male students answered that teachers were soft on girls (Kimura 1999, p.35).



For example, in the cleaning tasks allocated to students in public schools, boys went outside and did the sweeping and girls stayed inside and did the dusting. In the annual sport festival, boys played a mock cavalry battle, whereas girls performed a dance. The gender division in students' tasks was also an expression of hierarchy:

Naturally, we, boys, were leaders in various school events. Most of the time boys exercised leadership. In my generation, girls only helped us. For three years at high school, I was always in a leading group. In that sense, at school as an organization, I confidently carried out events and I think I felt myself manly to some extent. Women were in the helping roles, and we used to ask them to bring tea or to prepare our lunch. (Ueno-san, F)

Yoshino-san was aware that dividing students into a boys' group and a girls' group in everyday aspects of school impacted upon boys (and girls) and, throughout schooling, boys (and girls) internalised gender roles in accordance with their gendered experiences at school. The internalisation of gender roles continued as long as the entire institution of school and teachers preserved the 'hidden (gender) curriculum'<sup>101</sup> (Kimura 1999, pp.36-39, 67-92; Sasahara 2003, pp.84-101; see also Connell 1989, p.300).

Japanese schools have a very authoritarian and autocratic teaching style (Fukuzawa and LeTendre 2001, p.14; Yoneyama 1999, p.22). Despite the prohibition of corporal punishment by the School Education Law since 1947, its widespread use is apparent (Yoneyama 1999, p.97). Connell (1996, p.215) argues that discipline is one of the 'masculinizing practices'. In particular, corporal punishment is a 'masculinity test' in which students (often boys) have to show their toughness in confronting pain (Connell 1996, p.217). Indeed, boys receive more frequent and more severe corporal punishment than girls do (Connell 1996, p.217; Kimura 1999, p.83). Therefore, corporal punishment as an outcome of friction between a teacher and a male student affects the formation of his masculinity (Connell 1996, p.217). Moreover, non-violent spurring by teachers such as admonitions to 'act like a girl/boy', 'take it easy as you are a girl' or 'boys don't get beaten by girls' instills a sense of gender difference in the minds of students (Kimura 1999, p.35; Sasahara 2003, p.95; see also Thomson 2002, p.168).

The experiences of participants indicated the extensive diffusion of corporal punishment at school across the three generations. Before 1945, in the overwhelmingly male-dominated school

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<sup>101</sup> Other parts of the hidden curriculum not discussed by participants include: the names of male students are listed first and, therefore, names of female students are listed after the boys' names, although there is now a movement to mix boys' and girls' names in the class list. The contents of textbooks convey stereotypical sex roles – men are the leading characters who are independent and women are supporting characters who are passive (Fujii 1975, pp.48-55; Kimura 1999, pp.48, 71-74; Sasahara 2003, pp.86-90). See also Jassey (1998) for her study of gender in primary school textbooks in Japan as well as other countries such as China, Greece, Mexico, Nigeria, Singapore, the former Soviet Union, the U.K., the U.S, and several Arab nations.

environment, militarism was prevalent in classrooms, as suggested by a song Uchida-san had to sing at primary school:

“I like soldiers very much. When I grow up, I will wear decorations and a sword, and ride astride a horse saying whoa there, whoa there.”  
(Uchida-san, G)

In such an environment, participants in the grandfathers' generation frequently received corporal punishment. According to Katagiri-san, many male teachers in primary school right after the end of the war were demobilized soldiers. These teachers inflicted violence on students as young as six. Across the three generations boys received corporal punishment more frequently and of a greater severity than did girls, although in the sons' generation, a comment such as 'girls were equally beaten up' was occasionally heard. More importantly, the participants approved of corporal punishment. For example, Tachibana-san said:

When I was in school, we didn't call it violence, though. When we were told off, we had so-called corporal punishment. I don't take it as physical punishment. Even if girls do the same wrong thing, men get more and severer punishment than girls. Girls get softer punishment/discipline. But I don't think that's discrimination. For example, if a man gets soft punishment like a girl gets, he doesn't obey you. Therefore, I think men who have more physical strength than women should receive hard punishment.  
(Tachibana-san, F)

Tsutsumi-san remembers a teacher at his boys' school in the 1970s who always carried a Japanese sword with him, a violation of the Firearms and Sword Possession Control Law. Every time students did something wrong in his class, the teacher patted the student's cheek with the sword:

He was extremely strict. He beat me dreadfully. It didn't matter if you had a nosebleed or whatever.  
(Tsutsumi-san, F)

Many participants, however, told of their experiences of corporal punishment, from minor to severe, boastfully as if the number of punishments was proof of their masculinity, thus endorsing the function of corporal punishment as a 'masculinity test' (Connell 1996, p.217).

### **Peer hierarchy**

The participants' heroes across the three generations had at least one of the following attributes in descending order from the most respected: all-around athletic ability, intelligence, good-natured

personality, good looks and popularity with girls. These “stars”, whether a super athlete or an extremely bright student, however, did not occupy the top position in the peer hierarchy at school. According to the participants in all the generations, the hierarchy in the classroom and in the entire grade was based on scuffling ability. In retrospect, Hirose-san of the grandfathers’ generation valued the old school hierarchy:

We had ‘*gaki-daishō*’ (king of the kids). Yeah, in primary and junior high school, there was the king of the school. If someone was fighting behind the scenes, the king would appear and say “don’t fight behind me but fight here in front of me and bring it to an end”. Then, he would become a referee and let them fight until one of them gave up. And then, when the fight was settled, the king would say “hey, you (the loser), don’t go against him (the winner) and you (the winner), don’t be cruel to him (the loser) because he will listen to you [from now on]”. We had this kind of king. I witnessed this many times.... He was the strongest in fighting. He also had, you know, humanity. He would say “don’t be hard on the weak”. (Hirose-san, G)

Hirose-san stated that if such a hierarchy were present in schools today they would not be characterised by the insidious bullying which has become a social problem in today’s schools.<sup>102</sup> Ueno-san in the fathers’ generation called himself the king:

We often fought. It wasn’t bullying. If bullying was going on between the weak and the powerful, someone would definitely break it up. For example, I came and said “what are you doing there?” and then, I would help the weak. I was a strong fighter and formed a group with my mates. We didn’t squabble or fight against other groups very often but if I saw bullying, I would say something. I am sorry for today’s students [because of bullying at school]. (Ueno-san, F)

Participants in the sons’ generation, unlike the older generations, considered physical fighting to be a sign of vulgar fellows, indicating that the heroic image of *gaki-daishō* was fading away. The target of bullying was mostly a male student who was quiet and in a weak position, implying that there was a certain standard of manliness which attributes and codes are clearly evident, whereas those of womanliness tend to be diffused, e.g. tomboys are accepted but effeminate boys are not (see the section on Embodiment below). Those male students who did not meet the standard thus became the target of bullying. This also indicates that subordinate masculinities are policed and punished (Connell 1995, p.83). The participants’ narratives suggest that the means of monitoring the peer hierarchy shifted from physical prowess to psychological power in the sons’ generation, which coincides with the

<sup>102</sup> Unlike bullying outside Japan, ‘contemporary *ijime* (bullying) in Japan occurs as the victimisation of a single individual by a group (often extended to the whole class or beyond)’ (Yoneyama 1999, p.165).

unprecedented increase in the number of suicides<sup>103</sup> caused by bullying at school in the 1980s (Yoneyama 1999, pp.157-159).

In summary, the perception of female students as the other, the male-dominated composition of teachers, widespread corporal punishment, the symbolic meaning of subjects and the different treatment of boys from girls inculcated in participants the understanding that the masculine gender is the powerful ruler. In fact, the participants had both a conscious and an unconscious understanding of their 'patriarchal dividend' in society (Connell 1995, p.79). Moreover, the peer culture of policing fights and leadership in school demonstrated their immersion in a hierarchical environment from an early age. Despite the educational ideology of equality and egalitarianism, schooling constituted training in male dominance for the participants.

## **2.3 EMBODIMENT: PLAY AND LEISURE**

Masculinity depends on the physical and psychological power that men embody (Connell 1983, p.18). Sports and play, which occupy an important part of the identity development of little boys into young men, provide us with an insight into male embodiment. In looking at participants' engagement in leisure activities, this section deals with two modes of internal relationships between the participants and their physical force and skills – performance – and between the participants and their mates – competition. In addition, the section is concerned with the impact of sports and play on the participants' subsequent masculinity.

### **2.3.1 Physical Education (PE)**

Athletic ability and skills are very important for adolescent and preadolescent boys. The formation of their personal and gender identity cannot evade the positive and negative impacts of involvement in sports (Humberstone 1990, p.202; Messner 1994b, p.103; Whitson 1990, p.19). Physical Education (PE) plays a significant role in reinforcing the existing popular assumptions about masculinity and femininity (Humberstone 1990, p.202; Paechter 2003, p.47). PE is a site in which dominant masculinity is exhibited and praised by students and teachers who intentionally (or unconsciously) want to maintain it, while subordinate masculinity is derogated (Humberstone 1990, p.203; Messner 1987, p.57). As Bramham (2003, p.60) argues, students are 'censorious' of those who are unfit for sport. Simultaneously, teachers who are in charge of sporting spaces, also tend to promote the notion that competent athletes express the performance of the ideal masculinity (Staurowsky 1990, p.163).

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<sup>103</sup> The number of boys who committed suicide in the 1980s (and the 1990s) was greater than that of girls (Itō 2003, p.9), Itō (2003, p.9) arguing that this stems partly from gendered teachings for boys such as 'boys do not show their weakness' and 'boys do not express their emotions'.

Students who are not good at sport, therefore, often attract the unwelcome attention of other students and teachers in PE. Since PE functions as a policing site of masculine hierarchy amongst boys and men, the strictures of peers and teachers affect their formation of gender identity by poor athletes (Paechter 2003, p.49), potentially leading to low self-esteem and negative self-image (Humberstone 1990, p.203; Messner 1987, p.57). Moreover, experiences in sport continue to influence the sense of self throughout men's lives (Messner 1987, p.65).

In Japan, PE is a compulsory subject at school.<sup>104</sup> Even in some universities, PE is compulsory in the first year.<sup>105</sup> According to participants across the three generations, while girls and boys had PE together in primary school, sex segregation in PE began in junior high school, despite the reform of the government curriculum guidelines.<sup>106</sup> School students have a standardised physical-strength-test every year. Therefore, they are exposed to the annual evaluation and ranking of their athletic ability in addition to their weekly PE lessons. Sasaki-san and Segawa-san remembered:

I was very poor in sport and I hated PE.... I believe there is something wrong with PE. When I had a test of physical strength at school, I couldn't do a chin-up. And my PE teacher said to me "are you a man?" I *am* a man and I got very angry with him. (Sasaki-san, G)

I hated PE because I was poor in sport.... Of course, I admired boys who ran fast, were good at the horizontal bar or boys who played soccer and baseball well. I wished I could play sport like others.... To be honest, I feel a little inferior. (Segawa-san, S)

Participants' awareness of their athletic competence/incompetence influenced their self-image. Sasaki-san and Segawa-san loathed physical education at school. Sasaki-san received derogatory comments from his PE teacher in front of the other students because of his inability to do chin-ups. Although Sasaki-san claimed that this incident did not weaken his identity as a man, he admitted that he became twisted and he revolted against anyone who evaluated him according to his physical ability. Segawa-san estimated his athletic ability to be far below average and he always had an inferiority complex as a man. Yoshino-san told an anecdote concerning a male friend. His friend could not swim a stroke. Because of that, at university, the friend had to participate in special PE involving swimming. Yoshino-san's friend felt it was all right that female students said 'no, I can't' in a feeble voice.

<sup>104</sup> See Fukuzawa and LeTendre (2001) p.12 for subjects taught in junior high school.

<sup>105</sup> See the web site of Japanese Association of University Physical Education and Sports, URL: <http://www.daitairen.or.jp/about/aisatsu.html>

<sup>106</sup> In 1989, the educational reform (see p.74) also aimed at flexible and gender-free physical education. Before the reform, it was compulsory for boys to do martial arts and for girls to do dance in both junior high school and high school. PE for boys carried eleven credits and PE for girls carried seven credits. From 1989, students can select either martial arts or a dance regardless of sex and PE carries at least nine credits for every student (Kumayasu 2003, p.122).

However, even though he was intimidated and humiliated, he felt that it was wrong for him as a man to whimper. Thus the negative gender identity of boys and men who are poor at PE is worse than that of girls and women who are likewise poor because the social and cultural expectation for men in relation to sport is higher. By contrast, Noda-san was a fast runner. As there was no sport club for track and field events, his PE teacher gave him special training to send him to a prefectural tournament of field and track events. The discovery of Noda-san's athletic talent certainly brought him high self-esteem. He thought of himself as looking "cool" when he was alone in the playground running. He was aware of others' eyes on him and wondered 'if girls think I'm cool'. There is no escaping PE for those men who failed in this physical domain. By contrast, sport, which is voluntary, offers a chance for boys who are good at it to express successful masculinity.

### **2.3.2 Sport**

Sport connotes the quintessential features of patriarchal institutions – hierarchy – which legitimise and reproduce dominant masculinity by means of subordinating women and marginalizing men who do not meet the criteria of the dominant masculinity (Bryson 1990, p.173; Humberstone 1990, p.202; Kidd 1990, p.32). Drawing on Anglophone literature on sport, this section looks at relationships between sport and masculinity in the Japanese sporting context.

In industrially and technologically advanced societies (e.g. the U.S., the U.K. and Australia), work for many men is no longer a demonstration of physical strength because of mechanization, automation, computerization and cybernation, although it is still an arena of competition and achievement. On the other hand, sport remains an optimal site where the physical prowess of men is extolled over that of women (Messner 1987, p.54; 1994c, p.96; Rowe and McKay 1998, p.118; Whitson 1990, p.19). Most sport is sex-segregated, with men's sport being seen as superior to women's (Bryson 1990, pp.175-180; Kidd 1990, p.36; Messner 1990, p.100; Whitson 1990, p.20). In addition, women have fewer opportunities and facilities for sport than men (Kidd 1990, p.36). For example, boys in general occupy the playground and gymnasium at school (Davies 2003, p.44; Humberstone 1990, p.203). Sabo (1994b, p.101) argues that the legitimation of male excellence in sport expresses male supremacy in society. Thus sport substantiates the existing gender relations between men and women (Rowe and McKay 1998, p.113; Staurowsky 1990, p.163; Whitson 1990, p.20).

Kimmel (1990, pp.61-62) argues that sport in the nineteenth century in the U.S. played a powerful role in reproducing essential qualities required by industrial capitalism such as 'docility and obedience to authority'. Baseball generated amenable and compliant men in a strictly superintended environment. In contemporary Japan and other countries, sport still develops endurance, obedience, discipline,

loyalty and acceptance of intransigent hierarchy in the homo-social world of men, which simultaneously represents the essential elements of dominant masculinity in corporations. Sabo (1994b, p.100) calls the justification of injuries and pain due to sport as the 'pain principle'. In the Japanese sports context, this is considered to be the 'spirit of *gaman*' (Light 2003, p.106). *Gaman* means endurance, toleration and tenacity. Under the guise of character building the pain principle or the spirit of *gaman* gives high praise to 'mental toughness' (Connell 1990, p.93). Additionally, the assumption that sport is all about competition and winning makes sense when the meaning of sport shifts from pleasure to a task (Messner 1990, p.100), especially in the case of boys with outstanding athletic ability and skills (Sabo 1994a, p.175). As Sabo (1994a, p.175) argues, the approach to sport is very similar to the work morality: the importance of competition and its outcomes.

The sports placed at the top of the pyramid of the symbolic masculinity hierarchy often involve violence, for example spectator contact sports in which athletes' bodies are 'weapons' (Messner 1994c, p.89; see also Bryson 1990; Burgess *et al.* 2003; Sabo 1994b for violence in sports).<sup>107</sup> Many former professional male athletes with whom Messner (1994c, p.90) had interviews described their violence in sport as 'natural'. This popular discourse on sport associated with violence and its expression of masculinity is so powerful that some athletic boys and young men 'perform' toughness and aggression by camouflaging their gentleness (Burgess *et al.* 2003, pp.204-206). In the Western sporting context, frequent violence inside and outside games is more or less accepted as the emblem of masculinity, for example, in rugby in Australia and New Zealand and in ice hockey in Canada (Burgess *et al.* 2003, p.202; Light 2003, p.110). By contrast, Light (2003, pp.110-111) suggests that while there are 'punch ups' in Japanese sports, they are rare. More importantly, violence used by the Japanese rugby players in his study was legitimate and within the rules, by contrast with the violence used by Australian Rules football players (Wedgwood 2003, p.180). According to him, Japanese sportsmen saw an uncontrolled explosion of violence as unmanly, a loss of masculine self-control (Light 2003, p.110).

### **Sport as the (re) production of male supremacy and the salaryman reserve**

You know, it amazes me to see a woman throw like that. I always thought there was something about the female arm that made it impossible for a woman to throw like a man.

(Cited in Messner 1994a, p.29)

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<sup>107</sup> See also Colman and Colman (2004) for an overview of articles concerning the sports and leisure activities of young Australian people, published in various Australian newspapers in March 2004.

When I was in high school I did *karate*. Girls did it too. I couldn't use my full strength with girls. I was conscious of their limited strength. I believe there is a huge gap between men and women in strength.

(Nakama-san, S)

Many participants in sports clubs, which were designated as extra-curricular activities at school,<sup>108</sup> remembered both girls and boys in all the sports clubs apart from baseball, soccer and rugby.<sup>109</sup> Strictly speaking, mixed sports clubs were, however, sex-segregated. Each sports club had a girls' team and a boys' team with their own training. Many participants mentioned that sport demonstrated perceptible differences between men and women in relation to strength, stamina and technique. When Tokuda-san had joint judo training with girls, which was unusual in high schools, he realized 'how weak girls were' and was convinced that 'men and women were different', men having 'more strength than girls'. Likewise, Shimizu-san, who joined a windsailing club at his university, mentioned that the majority of the members were men because women did not have enough physical strength. In line with Shimizu-san's logic, Kusuda-san, who joined a boating club, also said that 'in reality, as rowing a boat is strenuous, no women want to do it'. Other participants confirmed their beliefs that men were stronger than women, some linking this with the moral superiority of men. Reflecting on his tennis training in junior high school, which caused him ragged and peeling skin, Tachibana-san remembered his sense of superiority over girls. He thought that 'it is too hard for them' and 'only men can appreciate the sense of achievement after the hard training'. Shimizu-san and Kusuda-san also pointed to women's reluctance to get sunburned implying that women were not interested in building up their bodies but in making themselves look nice. Masculinity is, therefore, embodied in the strength and force of men's bodies and minds. Biological essentialism is used not only to extol the physical superiority of men but also to exclude women from sports, or to include them in a subordinate status – a hierarchy that is also seen in relation to women in Japanese workplaces as discussed in the chapter on work.

Every now and then there were difficult times. There were times I wanted to escape...The first year in uni was hard. I sort of wanted to escape or just wanted to have a break. I felt like crashing into a car and having an injury for two or three weeks in a hospital. I remember I actually tried to do it. It's not that I wanted to die, I just wanted to rest.

(Toda-san, F)

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<sup>108</sup> These activities are called '*bukatsudō*', literally club (*bu*) activities (*katsudō*). See Cave (2004) for *bukatsudō* (its history as well as the contemporary situation).

<sup>109</sup> Very recently some baseball and soccer clubs have allowed girls to join them.



Toda-san played baseball from a very young age, spending many hours in training at school. Being scouted for his talent in the sport he entered one of *Tokyo roku daigaku*<sup>110</sup> (Tokyo's six universities) to play baseball, which was his dream. He attended one or two lessons in the morning and he spent the rest of the day training. His company recruited him for his baseball talent and he played for the company, which was exactly what he had planned to do. He worked for two hours in the morning in his office and trained for the non-professional<sup>111</sup> baseball games in the afternoon.

As the aforementioned quote indicates, Toda-san's glorious status sometimes brought agony for him, just as the Australian iron man likened his training to 'being in jail' (see Connell 1990, p.85). Toda-san accepted the painful process as 'part of the game' (Messner 1994c, p.95; Sabo 1994a, p.175; 1994b, p.100). In retrospect, he concluded that baseball taught him perseverance. Similarly, Tsutsumi-san, who was also excellent enough to be scouted for his baseball talent, mentioned that he learned 'to be tenacious' through baseball.

Shimizu-san played baseball throughout his school life, remembering the high school training as the hardest,<sup>112</sup> both inside and outside the baseball field. The first year members had to go to the grounds at six o'clock in the morning and during the lunch break to keep it in good condition and they had to polish the spiked shoes of the senior members until the school lesson began. Moreover, there was a rule that they always had to dash from place to place, except in the corridors. If a senior member witnessed a junior member walking, all the senior members scolded him harshly. In addition, there were regular sermons during which junior members stood holding their hands up with their eyes shut for about half an hour. Their training lasted until eight or nine o'clock every night. Shimizu-san's experience was not uncommon. Other participants who belonged to a sport club in high school similarly remembered that considerable time and effort were spent on training. Shimizu-san's experiences revealed how *gaman* was demanded in organized team sport, as well as disciplined training and obedience to senior members.<sup>113</sup> As Tsutsumi-san said:

I don't know if sport is about masculinity but it's about the strict rank between the senior and the junior members. It still is, after 25 years or so from graduation. If my seniors came here right now, my back would immediately straighten. It's extraordinary. (Tsutsumi-san, F)

<sup>110</sup> They include Tokyo, Keiō Gijuku, Hōsei, Meiji, Rikkyō and Waseda universities. The annual baseball tournament held by these universities is a famous spectacle. Not only the university students but also the general public enjoy watching the game.

<sup>111</sup> In Japan, people who play sport for the corporate organised team are called '*non puro*' (non-professional) players. See Sakonjū (2001) for details concerning corporate sports sponsorship.

<sup>112</sup> Cave (2004, p.402) also argues that the feeling that '*bukatsudō* is "hard"' is shared by many respondents in his study.

<sup>113</sup> Cave (2004, pp.403-406, 411-412) similarly argues that school clubs play a role in teaching discipline and hierarchical relationships.

Hierarchy in Japanese organized team sport mirrors the seniority system in Japanese corporations. That is, being senior per se has an importance which means that senior athletes are given power over and responsibility for junior members, even if the latter are more talented and skilled. As noted previously, Shimizu-san's story, such as senior members' watchful eyes on junior members and the regular sermons, also conveys the rigid hierarchical relationship between the senior and the junior members. The current structure of organized sport subliminally persuades players of the value of hierarchy (Messner 1987, p.66).

Hirose-san stressed that the ultimate outcome of playing team sport was solidarity:

Because I was in a baseball team, I can empathize with other people. If someone makes an error or a mistake and someone else blames him for the error, I say 'you shouldn't do that because you make errors too'. So I got a sense of solidarity. If you play sport in a team, you can forgive your peers' errors as something like a collective responsibility. (Hirose-san, G)

Sport functioned as the inculcator of morality (Kimmel 1990, p.60), a fraternity, or as Hirose-san described it, a 'collective responsibility' which salarymen express in corporations. The collective solidarity is also important in the Western sporting context (Rowe and McKay 1998, p.115). However, in Japan, the shared sense of responsibility for performance prioritises the ultimate goal of the group over individual needs. In an environment where achievement as well as failure is regarded as the group responsibility, it is not surprising that 'intra-group surveillance', as indicated in Shimizu-san's story, that is junior members under tight surveillance by senior members, prevails in the Japanese sports club (Light 2003, p.112).<sup>114</sup> By contrast, it is worth noting that Ueno-san, who was the second best table tennis player among all the Japanese high school teams, and Yanase-san, who was a basketball team captain at high school, described sport as '*shōbu no seka*' (the world of victory or defeat), indicating an individualistic aspect of sport. The amount of training and exercise increases from primary to junior high school and it further intensifies in high school.<sup>115</sup> Table tennis was 'work' for Ueno-san and his only purpose was to win. To win was always Yanase-san's goal because of his responsibility as a captain and his own desire for victory. This internalised competitive desire also prepared respondents to strive for success in the workplace. Hence, sport provides players with the preliminary strategy required for corporations.

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<sup>114</sup> Connell and Wood (2005, p.353) also argue in their research that 'mutual scrutiny' prevails amongst corporate men.

<sup>115</sup> See Fukuzawa and LeTendre (2001) pp.57, 99-100 for examples of the busy club schedules of junior high school students and Light (2003) pp.108-109 for hard training in high school.

### Symbolism: hard and soft

If I have to choose one [place where I feel masculine], I felt masculine when I played soccer. When I ran against the opponents and I got flung away, when I got a kick from my coach, when I got a kick in my face from him. Well, I thought girls wouldn't get kicked. So, from my experience, soccer is sort of wild. I felt masculine when smashing against other players and the degree of contact matters. Definitely, I don't want girls to do this. I think if I had a daughter, I wouldn't let her play soccer.

(Amano-san, F)

Amano-san said that violence in sport made him feel masculine. However, far from being consistent with his statement, he currently acts as a soccer coach for a community team in which he does not encourage or practise violence and he accepted female players in his team long before other soccer teams began to take female players.

As a Japanese high school rugby player in Light's study states 'the best way to get revenge is to play well against them [his opponent]': playing well – skilled performance – is of paramount importance and violence is eschewed (Light 2003, p.111). Some of my participants in the fathers' and, in particular, the sons' generations explicitly opposed violence as an outlet for emotions and argued that physical prowess should be used to protect those who have little strength, that is, women.<sup>116</sup> The spirit of *gaman* means that, in proving one's masculinity, having self-control is more praiseworthy than exercising violence.<sup>117</sup>

I definitely didn't want to do any cultural club activities. They [the students who do cultural activities] look as if they have spent their lives wrapped in cotton wool. I don't like it. And they are pale. I am very opposed to it.

(Shimizu-san, S)

Tennis was seen as a soft sport. Probably, we had an image that tennis was a soft sport for women, rather than for men... Masculine sport was baseball or soccer and feminine sport was tennis or volleyball. We had that kind of image.

(Kusuda-san, S)

In addition to physical education, the marginalisation of substandard men occurs through the gendered symbolic meanings of sport, the above quotations suggesting that men in cultural clubs or involved in 'soft' sports were regarded as unmanly "nerds", while men in 'hard' sports clubs were considered to be

<sup>116</sup> Castro-Vázquez and Kishi (2003, p.27) similarly argue that high school sporting boys consider themselves obliged to use their physical power to protect the feminine gender.

<sup>117</sup> Cave (2004, p.412) argues that school clubs, especially sport clubs, are influenced by Zen or '*seishin kyōiku*' (spiritual education) – encouragement of discipline and hardship.

masculine and ‘tough’ or “cool”.<sup>118</sup> Sports such as baseball, soccer and rugby – associated with speed, force and competition – invest players with masculine prestige,<sup>119</sup> whereas sports such as tennis, volleyball and *kyūdō* (Japanese archery) gives a less masculine status to male players. Shimizu-san, a baseball player, always admired rugby players for their ‘masculinity, getting muddy but single-mindedly running towards the touchline’.<sup>120</sup> He added that these people had to be men – in his fantasy. Yoshino-san wondered why a male friend joined a *kyūdō* club, reflecting on his assumption that *kyūdō* is an unmanly sport. However, the lines between masculine sports and feminine sports have become blurred with the advent of female athletes and coaches<sup>121</sup> in male dominated sports. Sugiura-san was excited about the emergence of two female pitchers<sup>122</sup> in the *Roku daigaku* (six ‘best’ universities) baseball tournament. A famous female softball coach from his high school was superintending a baseball club in a high school at the time of the interview. He stated that ‘women do play sport’ and that ‘professional female athletes are great too, aren’t they? I don’t think sex matters in sport’. Even so, Sugiura-san was concerned about his small physique:

I joined a gymnastic club in junior high school because I was very short. I thought I can’t beat big guys if I join a baseball team. So I avoided baseball. I couldn’t win in baseball. It didn’t matter what I did because I was too small to do any sport. (Sugiura-san, F)

Gymnastics did not appear to be Sugiura-san’s first choice. However, he turned out to be a good gymnast who won city and prefectural tournaments. Gaining confidence in his athletic ability, he joined a baseball club in high school when his body developed into a more or less average physique. As Connell (1983, p.20) argues, Sugiura-san’s experience of his changing identity through his changes in emotions and physique indicates not only that the body plays a crucial role in developing male identity but also that learning how to enhance one’s dormant physicality has an impact on maturing masculine identity.

In conclusion, sport without doubt cultivated participants’ inclination towards competition, endurance, obedience, discipline and the acceptance of hierarchy. The spirit of *gaman* encapsulates these

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<sup>118</sup> See Castro-Vázquez and Kishi 2003, p.27 for a distinction between sporting boys and non-sporting boys (grinders) in relation to masculinity in a Japanese academic high school. See also Connell 1989 for a distinction among ‘cool guys’, ‘swots’ and ‘wimps’ in Australia, Mac an Ghaill 1994 for a distinction among ‘macho lads’, ‘academic achievers’, ‘new enterprisers’ and ‘real Englishmen’ in the U.K. and Messner 1994c for a distinction between tough sports men and elite modern men in the U.S.

<sup>119</sup> In the Australian context, in some schools, for some boys, soccer is considered to be soft (Burgess *et al.* 2003, p.202).

<sup>120</sup> Similarly, gaining a sense of being completely absorbed in sport is one of the attractions of sport amongst young Australian men (Gilbert and Gilbert 1998, p.60).

<sup>121</sup> See Staurowsky (1990) for female coaches in the U.S.

<sup>122</sup> One is Kobayashi Chihiro who belongs to Meiji University and pitched in a spring tournament for the first time in 2001 (see URL: <http://www.cnet-ta.ne.jp/jishu/089z-1.htm>). The other one is Takemoto Megumi of Tokyo University who first pitched in 2003 (Asahi Newspaper, 25 Jan. 2003).

tendencies. Masculinity formed through sport is a 'collective practice' (Connell 1990, p.87). Sport shapes and constructs gender relations beyond its arena, so that, for example, internalised male supremacy remains intact at work (see Chapter 4).

### **2.3.3 Gendered Play**

Although it is acknowledged that processes of gender socialization and construction amongst children are never simple, boys' play amongst participants across three generations in the research evinces a strong sex-segregated characteristic. Gender boundaries are rigidly policed in childhood, although this sex segregation can be moderated by age and location. In addition, the maintenance of hierarchy among boys is a significant aspect in boys' play. This tendency is more evident in neighbourhoods where playmates consist of different age groups than in the classroom at school. The following section looks at these facets of play in the participants' childhood supplementing this with a study of electronic games, which differentiates the sons' generation from other older generations.

The world of children consists of a very rigid dichotomy between the dominant male and masculinity, and the subordinate female and femininity, suggesting to children that there is no alternative to the gendered binary structure (Davies 1993, p.30; 2003, p.xi, 20; Thorne 1993, p.86). Their world is more intransigent than that of adults. While girls are empowered to control the private space – inside the building - boys are authorized to be in charge of the public space – the playground (Davies 2003, p.44). Boys have to demonstrate their masculine supremacy and dominance over girls and their femininity (Davies 2003, p.92). Boys, therefore, position themselves as both hero and villain, whereas girls are situated in positions to be rescued and to be harmed. As an example, boys like to play the heroes who appear on television or in films (Askew and Ross 1988, p.6; Gilbert and Gilbert 1998, p.58).

Most children come to conform to the existing gender order as early as pre-school (Askew and Ross 1988, p.7; Davies 1993; 2003; Thorne 1993; 1994, p.61). Children generally play in a group or groups of their own sex. Moreover, they readily play the role of gatekeeper in preserving the gender order (Davies 2003, p.20), teasing being the habitual method used by children (and sometimes adults also) in both pre-schools and schools to guard the gender borders (Thorne 1993, pp.52-54). A child who plays with a friend or a group of the opposite sex is at risk of being teased by words which are associated with heterosexual relationships such as "who likes whom", "who has a crush on whom" or "who goes with whom", discouraging the child from further interaction with the group of the opposite sex (Thorne 1994, pp.64, 68). Davies (1993, p.19) maintains that teasing is understood as an individual and collective endeavour in which members of the feminine group or masculine group make

efforts to perform as 'knowable individuals within a predictable knowable collective reality' (Davies 1993, p.19). Two kinds of children cross the gender border at school. A child who has both 'persistence' and 'skill' is serious about participating in a particular form of play engaged in by the opposite sex (Thorne 1993, p.131). She/he is well equipped, familiar with the rules and competent in playing the game. The other kind is a child – presumably, it is usually a boy – who has 'extensive social resources' (Thorne 1993, p.123): his charismatic presence and his impeccable masculinity prevent him from being teased. Rather, he is respected by other children for his audacity. While it is difficult for most children to make cross-gender friendships at school, in a less crowded space such as the neighbourhood, children may well play in a mixed group of girls and boys, although they hide their friendships at school to avoid teasing (Thorne 1994, p.70). Thorne (1993, p.54) calls this the 'phenomenon of underground friendship'.

### **A dangerous men's world**

Sex segregation was characteristic of childhood leisure activities for all the generations, while boys' play was coded by the respondents as either 'dangerous' or 'competitive' and so not suitable for girls. Men in all the generations took pleasure in outdoor activities. The fathers' generation and, in particular, the grandfathers' generation enjoyed nature. They went to the rivers to catch fish, to the hills to catch birds and to the fields to catch insects. As if transported back into their childhoods, Honda-san and Tachibana-san explained in great detail the methods and materials for a trap with which to catch birds. As many participants in these older generations did not have manufactured toys, they made their own:

We did handiwork a lot...Children today can't even sharpen a pencil with a knife, can they? If a child has a *higonokami* (a pocket knife), that'll be a huge problem. Everyone had one. We made anything with it ...and definitely we played outside, that is, we did dangerous things. I wouldn't let my children do such things. (Katagiri-san, G)

Katagiri-san described playing outside and using pocket-knives as dangerous, something that neither boys nor girls would be allowed to do today. He also told of his childhood adventures. For example, defying his parents' prohibition,<sup>123</sup> Katagiri-san and his male friends secretly went to swim in a river where people drowned every year. He also used to go to an air-raid shelter, which he treated as a maze, but where no one would be allowed entry today.

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<sup>123</sup> Resistance against authority is an expression of masculinity. See Mac An Ghail (1994) p.56 for the example of the Macho Lads.

In the fathers' generation, playing *menko*<sup>124</sup> and marbles was understood as 'a matter of victory or defeat', Ono-san noting that 'a world of victory or defeat is a man's world':

A matter of victory or defeat, this (*menko*) is a match, I'm sure girls didn't play *menko*, not one.

(Yoshino-san, F)

I still keep *menko* and marbles with care because they are booty... Playing marbles or *menko* is a matter of victory or defeat. It isn't play. It's a matter of victory or defeat. You, by competing, get other boys' *menko* or marbles or lose your *menko* and marbles. I still have lots of booty. They are forty something years old.

(Tachibana-san, F)

### **Resourceful boys and tomboyish girls**

Although most participants in the three generations always played with boys, some participants occasionally played with girls. Amano-san, Kusuda-san, Yoshida-san and Yoshino-san have sisters. When they joined their sisters, they played girls' games. Interestingly, all the participants who mentioned playing with sisters did so with older sisters. It is likely that older sisters had some control over their younger brothers, age hierarchy compensating to some extent for the reverse gender hierarchy. On the other hand, participants who have younger sisters did not play with them. Rather, the participants decided whether or not to allow their sisters to join them. Sugiura-san avoided his sister, assuming her to be a nuisance to his friends. Unlike Sugiura-san, Tachibana-san sometimes took his younger sister out with him. However, they played something that was not defined as boy's play or girl's play:

I played with girls but we didn't play boys' games with them, we played something different with girls. I had a sister and I felt bad when I didn't play with her. So, I sometimes took her with me and asked other boys' sisters to join us. So, I played in a mixed group of boys and girls. This was fun. We pretended to be detectives. We sat on the roadside of a national highway and wrote down the numberplates of passing cars. We did it for a week. Everyone wrote down the numbers with no ulterior intention.

(Tachibana-san, F)

As the above quotation indicates, Tachibana-san invented a form of play under his leadership that did not require a complicated hierarchy. Tachibana-san was the kind of charismatic boy whom no one would have disobeyed. Amano-san remembers a girl of extraordinary physical strength that was her passport to joining the boys:

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<sup>124</sup> *Menko* is a game whereby the contestant slaps a pasteboard card down on the ground in order to turn over that of one's opponent.

My playmates were all boys for sure. But there was this very active girl. She sometimes joined us. She had equal combat strength to us or greater, she was really strong. (Amano-san, F)

Many participants mentioned that they did not play with girls because they would be teased by their peers at school but the gender division was indistinct in the neighbourhood:

There were girls in my neighbourhood. So boys did jump-roping and played hopscotch with girls. If you play with girls at school, you will be teased. But it was O.K. to play with girls of the neighbourhood. (Ishihara-san, G)

Participants played with boys of their own age at school, whereas they played in a mixed gender and age group in their neighbourhood, revealing that the 'phenomenon of underground friendship' at school was also the case with Japanese children.

### Hierarchy

You know what, in my neighbourhood, I was the No.1 organizer. It's true, trust me. My old friends say they learnt many games thanks to me. When I was small, three or four, there was *senpai* (a boy senior to him) in my neighbourhood. Things used to be like this. There was *senpai* and he taught younger boys how to play. And as he moved up to the higher grades, he disappeared. And, when I got to the top, I taught younger boys how to play. We followed the tradition. (Tachibana-san, F)

A bird caught in our trap was eaten by a marten. The bird was ripped apart. When I saw it, I felt really bad and I made a decision and I said to my mates 'our group stops catching birds from today'. I felt sorry for the bird when I saw it. ...We did bad things too at that time. I knew what grew and when (fruit and vegetables) in which houses in my town. You can't become a leader if you don't know those things. (Tachibana-san, F)

Primary school boys in the first, second and third year, are like apprentices. They play with other older boys but they are kind of underlings because there is a leader of the neighbourhood urchins. Other boys try to go up in the pecking order. Let's say, the leader has got over a wall and you can't do it. You are an underling. Boys in the second and third year try hard to get over the wall but they can't do it. And then the leader says 'you guys go round to the back!' See, they are underlings. In a way, they have privilege. It's OK if they lose in games. Also, they are never *oni*.<sup>125</sup> But they can't

<sup>125</sup> The Japanese term *oni* literally means an ogre or monster in English. In this context, *oni* refers to a person who chases and catches other people who run away from *oni* in a game called '*onigokko*'. The role of *oni* is similar to that of a tagger in hide and seek.



join in a match. The leader lets you join in games but not in matches. In that kind of environment, I learnt rules like an apprentice. (Yoshino-san, F)

The above quotations reveal an age-based hierarchy among the neighbourhood boys' play groups. The leader had absolute power over followers and underlings as if the boys lived in a microcosm of their future salarymen lives. The leader was usually the oldest boy who met the conditions of a leader, which included knowledge of and skill in games and knowledge about the neighbourhood. Underlings joined games such as tag and hide-and-seek but they were not allowed to join matches, including *menko* and marbles. Moreover, a leader had to pass any knowledge on to his juniors in his group. Whatever one's position in the group, boys learn about social hierarchy and acquire a way of behaving properly in it according to their status.

### **Computer games: boys' congregation in the bedroom**

When sociologists commenced studying girls' subcultures in the 1970s, they argued that girls played at home, particularly in the bedroom, for example talking in a small group, while boys' play involved the outdoors: 'hanging around together' and 'doing things' (McRobbie and Garber 1976, pp.220-221; White 1993, p.146). This spatial polarity between girls' and boys' play has been challenged by the invention of electronic games (Gilbert and Gilbert 1998, p.58). This does not mean that boys' play has been feminised. On the contrary, electronic games represent a masculine sphere through the promotion of competition. According to a survey conducted by the Computer Entertainment Software Association in 2002 in Japan (cited in Morohashi 2003, p.70), one-third of the respondent males, aged from three to eighteen years, liked role-playing games best – e.g. *Final Fantasy* and *Dragon Quest*. Their second favourite was sport games. Only seven per cent of the men liked fighting games best – e.g. *Street Fighter*. Electronic games, according to this writer, affirm attainment and success (Morohashi 2003, p.74). Moreover, Morohashi (2003, p.75) argues that intelligence is rewarded at school as well as in computer games, as well as being an important attribute of white collar/corporate masculinity.

Computer games distinguish the sons' generation from other generations, eight of the eleven participants remembering playing them:

*Famikon* was popular. Family computer.<sup>126</sup> That is an early game of Nintendo. Well, my parents bought me that. I swapped games with friends. I used to go to a friend's house to play games.

(Shimizu-san, S)

<sup>126</sup> Nintendo's family computer for TV video games first went on the market in 1983 (Morohashi 2003, p.64).

My generation enjoyed *famikon*. We got together indoors and played games. That increased.

(Tokuda-san, S)

As with playing sport, the major purpose in playing games was to win:

I didn't play games very often but my friends did. I remember the computer game came when I was in the second or third grade in primary school. That's why we are called the game generation. We talked about strategy books and how to master games.

(Kusuda-san, S)

Participants read strategy books and talked about tactics with friends. Ebara-san, who loved playing games, distinguished girls' idle chatter from boys' meaningful conversations concerning games. The competition involved in electronic games requires individual and collective efforts to master electronic skills, the same attributes required in a school education and also of men's bonding at the workplace.

To conclude, even as boys' play moved from the countryside into the bedroom, the sex-segregated use of space and the emphasis on competition and hierarchy still remained. While dangerous adventures in nature or competition in games that were played outside in the grandfathers' and fathers' generations were expressed in physical abilities and skills, winning cerebral computer games in the sons' generation was achieved mainly by mental power. In either case, from early childhood, participants were involved in a hierarchical environment and they internalised competition and ranking in their homo-social world of men.

## Conclusion

According to the evaluations of the grandfathers' and fathers' generations, computer games represent the non-sporting activities pursued in unmanly cultural clubs that require mental faculties rather than physical prowess. However, aiming for a large score in competition with other rivals by using skills and intellectual power proves the correlation between the game and school education. In other words, the values instilled in male students at school, who are assumed will adopt social responsibilities in the future, are also promoted in electronic games. Connell (1995, pp.164-165; see also Connell and Wood 2005, pp.350-351) argues that hegemonic masculinity includes the 'power of reason' – white-collar corporate knowledge that society needs – and not just physical prowess. In this context, intelligence, one of the ideal Chinese masculinities which Louie (2002, p.14; 2003, pp.4-5) calls '*wen-wu*' (scholarly attributes and military strength), is deployed by Japanese boys as the intellectual and cultural expression of power in computer games. Additionally, as Connell (1995) and Connell and Wood (2005) argue, capitalism needs *wen* masculinity more than *wu* masculinity in contemporary society and

thus enhances the shift in the prerequisites for corporate masculinity from physical prowess to intellectual power.

Nevertheless, there is a source of friction between physical prowess and intelligence. This represents what Cockburn (1983, pp.10-11) calls the 'mechanism of contradiction' that brings about a fissure and, in time, a 'synthesis', a solution. People who are aware of contradiction between their ideas and practices feel uncomfortable and, therefore, they change either their ideas or practices in order to feel right. For example, in Cockburn's (1983) study, as the compositors' labour process in the printing industry shifted from physical labour to an intellectual (computerised) process, the compositors were forced to negotiate and compromise with the new idea of skill as an expression of manliness. My examination of changes in the expression of masculinity across the three generations reveals both the fluidity of masculinity as well as some unchanging features, in particular, hierarchy. In the familial, school and leisure spaces, there was always a hierarchy that was grounded in age, gender and peer ranking. The following chapter explores the participants' personal aspects of life, ranging from the development of sexual identity to their conjugal relationships in their family lives.

### 3 LOVE AND MARRIAGE

The previous chapter was concerned with the childhood of the participants in this study. A tenacious theme is that gender and age hierarchy persisted across the three generations. Beginning with their memories of adolescence, this chapter explores the participants' intimate sphere including the development of their sexual identity, love and marriage. The current chapter reveals that marriage is the "natural" destiny for all the participants in my study, whereas parenthood is no longer seen as fate in the sons' generation. There is a continuity of gender segregation throughout the participants' lives. Despite the fact that many participants lacked experience of intimate, casual or even friendly relations with the opposite sex, this gender chasm was (and still is) resolved by the *miai* (the arranged marriage) and the company marriage (see below). However, such an outcome suggests recurrence of gender segregation in the household. The first section of this chapter looks at the participants' development of sexual identity in conjunction with adolescence and dating. The next section explores the patterns of and social and personal meanings of marriage. The last section examines parenting.

#### 3.1 Development of Sexual Identity

Until the mid-1980s at least, popular discussions of adolescence and youth studies did not discuss masculinities. Accordingly, discussions did not focus on gender differences between boys and girls. Because popular discourses concerning adolescence were based on masculine attributes, boys' attitudes and behaviour were the presumed norm, and gender differences were not scrutinised (Hudson 1984, p.35; Pecora and Mazarella 1999, p.1). Regarding Anglophone adolescents' sexuality within heterosexuality, Holland and others (1998, pp.108, 113; 1996, p.240; 1994, p.127) also argue that young male sexual identity (as well as young female sexual identity) is a male-centred construction, young men being defined as active and 'knowing' actors who act upon women to satisfy their desire and, therefore, perform 'embodied masculinity'.<sup>127</sup> This male power over women is seen in the participants' objectification of women. However, unlike their Western male counterparts, the participants in this study appear to have been inhibited from developing their sexual identity. This section looks at the participants' own accounts and experiences of the development of their sexual identity. White (1993, p.4) states in her comparative study of adolescents between the U.S. and Japan that 'the combination of conformity and diversity' in search of identity is considerably influenced by peer pressure.<sup>128</sup> This subject is dealt with here.

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<sup>127</sup> Holland *et al.* (1994, p.127) argue that young women are considered to be 'unknowing' and acted upon, subordinating their bodies for men's pleasure. That is, 'the young women were under pressure to construct their sexuality in response to what we have called the 'male in the head' – the surveillance power of male-dominated heterosexuality', producing their femininity as disembodied (Holland *et al.* 1996, p.240).

<sup>128</sup> Holland *et al.* (1998, p.3) also assert in their study of young boys' and girls' sexuality in the U.K. that young people struggle with 'conformity', agency and resistance.

### 3.1.1 From Adolescence to Maturity

Physical maturation at puberty is a significant factor in adolescence, although sociologists argue that attention should be paid to cultural and societal interpretations of physical changes. Moreover, the cultural and social meanings given to the changes embody gender relations (Thorne 1993, p.138). Girls and boys are aware of their own bodily changes, as well as those of the opposite sex. Because of the earlier development of female bodies than that of male bodies and the visible development of breasts and hips, physically mature girls often become targets for gossiping by both girls and boys, entailing a disadvantage for them (Thorne 1993, pp.137, 139).<sup>129</sup> However, irrespective of the degree of female physical development, boys tend to objectify girls' bodies and assess their appearance (Wood 1984, p.58), thereby securing and reinforcing masculine dominance (Collins 1999, p.19). On the other hand, boys' conspicuous bodily development – tall and muscular bodies – attracts admiration because these features give a high masculine status to the boys (Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli 2001, pp.25-40; Thorne 1993, p.139). Given that, boys tend to experience their vulnerability regarding physical changes on their own, whereas girls are likely to share their private concerns, such as menstruation and physical development, with other girls (Thorne 1993, pp.141-143).<sup>130</sup>

For heterosexual young men, sexual responses to the opposite sex increase markedly during adolescence. In the 1960s, the majority of American male and female adolescents were already in steady dating relationships. Functioning as sexual experimentation, dating was one way of gaining a sense of self and a sense of intimacy (McDonald and McKinney 1999, p.284). By contrast, the second sexual maturation of young Japanese men and women advanced at a slow pace, at least until the mid-1990s, compared with other developed countries (Hatano and Shimazaki 1996, p.794). According to Hatano and Shimazaki (1996, p.803), in 1974 and 1981, the average young Japanese man usually experienced dating at the age of seventeen and, in 1987 and 1993, at the age of eighteen. Those young men who dated frequently accounted for less than fifty per cent of young men from the 1970s to the 1990s (Hatano and Shimazaki 1996, p.794). In 1993 in Japan, by the time male students completed their high school education, a minority (some twenty per cent) had experienced intercourse and in 1998, the proportion increased to twenty-seven per cent (Hatano and Shimazaki 1996, p.797; Kashiwagi 2003, p.82). Nevertheless, the mid-1990s' sudden mushrooming of *enjo kōsai*<sup>131</sup> (compensated dating), a euphemistic expression for schoolgirl prostitution, made a sharp contrast with

<sup>129</sup> To be sure, some girls have the desire to develop more quickly. Bowles-Reyer (1999, p.28) calls the coexistence of this desire and the stigmatised mature body among young girls the 'fractured adolescent female sexual identity'.

<sup>130</sup> E.g. Looking back, Xander said that his experience of discussing puberty with other boys when he was fourteen years old was unusual (see Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli 2001, p.38).

<sup>131</sup> *Enjo kōsai* refers to dating with junior high and high school girls, frequently involving sex, which is purchased by adults through an organised medium including telephone and the Internet. See McCoy (2004) for *enjo kōsai* and Miyadai (1996) for its development from the mid-1980s before the term, *enjo kōsai*, was coined. It was not until 1999 that the Japanese government passed the Child Prostitution and Pornography Prohibition Law. Prior to that, *enjo kōsai* was not considered to be prostitution by many Japanese people because of its voluntary nature (Chan-Tiberghien 2004, p.66).

schoolboys. To those who held images of innocent children, ordinary young girls exchanging sex for money was an alarming phenomenon (Miyadai 1996, p.162). Apart from schoolgirls who sell their sex, in the heterosexual context, boys' interest in girls and girls' interest in boys took different forms. Despite the fact that psychologically girls become interested in the opposite sex earlier than boys (Hatano and Shimazaki 1996, pp.797-798), girls tend to indulge themselves in a world of romance, while boys are interested in gaining sexual experiences with women or are engaged in obtaining and/or exchanging information on sex (McRobbie 1981, pp.118-119; White 1993, p.172). Friends are, for both boys and girls, important sources of information about sex, although boys trust their peers less than girls do (Holland *et al.* 1998, p.68). In Japan, an experience of actual coitus rarely occurs among boys, in particular, those young men who are from the middle-class and are pursuing a university education, being busy preparing for the entrance examinations (White 1993, p.184). White (1993, p.186) discusses Kazuyuki, a male high school student, who regards male friendships as more important than dating. For him, dating means going home together after school and talking either in person or on the phone, which he actually considers to be 'a real nuisance'. Kazuyuki does not associate dating with any sexual overtones. Thus, despite their interest in the opposite sex, adolescent boys, particularly young men from the middle-class and the academic schools, refrain from sexual escapades.

A longstanding binary opposition classifies men as either *kōha*<sup>132</sup> or *nanpa*.<sup>133</sup> According to Buruma (1984a; 1984b, pp.143, 147), the *kōha* (the hard school) is characterised by 'stoicism' in which men of *kōha* prove their masculinity by their physical prowess in fights, aggressive personalities and practice of misogyny, whereas men of *nanpa* hate fights and enjoy keeping women company.<sup>134</sup> Itō (1993, p.14) argues that asceticism is a key attribute of masculinity in Japan. Therefore, the man of *kōha* embodies the ideal masculinity. His asceticism stems from *seishinshugi*,<sup>135</sup> a 'suppression of reason and personal feelings, a blind devotion to direct action and an infinite capacity for hardship and pain', which is peculiar to Zen training (Buruma 1984a; 1984b, p.139). Miyamoto Musashi,<sup>136</sup> a master swordsman of the early Edo period, represents the *kōha* school (Buruma 1984a; 1984b, pp.136-140).

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<sup>132</sup> The Japanese word '*kōha*' literally means a hard school. The term refers to one of the following: 1) a group of hard-liners, 2) young men who easily retreat to violence, 3) men who are conservative about relationships and 4) journalists who write about politics and economy.

<sup>133</sup> The Japanese word '*nanpa*' literally means a soft school. The term refers to one of the following: 1) a group of moderate-liners, 2) erotic literature, 3) journalists who write about local news, literature and gossip and 4) men who seduce women.

<sup>134</sup> See also Pflugfelder (1999) p.215-225 for the *kōha* and *nanpa* type in the Meiji period.

<sup>135</sup> See Rohlen (1996) for 'spiritual training' as an important aspect of character building in Japan.

<sup>136</sup> A story concerning Miyamoto Musashi (of the early Edo period) appeared in the Asahi newspaper in 1935 and the novel written by Yoshikawa Eiji has been capturing male readers' hearts in Japan ever since (Itō 1993, p.15).

Castro-Vázquez and Kishi (2003), in their study of masculinity and sexuality in a Japanese high-ranking academic high school, differentiate male high school students into four groups: *gariben* (grinders), lifestylers, sporting boys and confident heterosexuals. The *gariben* refers to male students whose masculinity is formed through hard work, social class and sexual continence. The lifestylers represent those students who, being critical of the whole educational system, pursue their personal purposes in life. The sporting boys construct their masculinity by means of physical prowess in sport. The confident heterosexuals form their masculine selves through their confidence and assertiveness in heterosexual relations (Castro-Vázquez and Kishi 2003, p.24). These categorisations are not, as the researchers claim, invariable pure forms. Drawing on both the *kōha/nanpa* dualism and the above four typologies, the attitudes of the participants towards dating are explored below. Before moving on to dating, the following section is concerned with the participants' consciousness of their bodies and of awakening to their sexuality.

### **Pubescence: the body and fantasy**

The majority of the participants said that they did not pay much attention to changes in their own bodies. Even if they were aware of them, they expressed no concern about the changes, claiming that they were going through the same process as everyone else. However, there was one participant from each generation who expressed anxieties about his physical growth during adolescence. Their concern was due to their progress in growth being either slower or faster than that of other boys. Their worries often came to a head in school activities such as school trips:

In a place like a school camp, we took a bath. I didn't have pubic hair, only me. I hated that. Therefore, I took a bath earlier than the other boys. (Katagiri-san, G)

We took a bath with other classmates for the first time on a school trip, and at that time, I thought 'oh, everyone is different'. For example, some students have pubic hair and others don't, those kind of differences. So, ah, 'everyone is different' was my impression as far as I remember.

(Ashida-san, F)

Katagiri-san was a small boy of slight build, worried by his lack of body hair and high-pitched voice. In the first year of junior high school when the voices of boys around him were breaking, Katagiri-san remembered being very anxious.<sup>137</sup> By contrast, Shimizu-san's physical change began earlier than other boys, when he was in primary school. Initially he was proud and boasted of his bodily hair to his parents. However, he suddenly felt embarrassed when he took a bath with his friends on a school trip,

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<sup>137</sup> Connell (1983, p.19) points out the similar anxiety of an Australian teenage boy. One of the respondents in a study of salaryman masculinity conducted by Dasgupta (2005, p.148) also talks of his anxiety about his high pitched voice.

too sensitive and self-conscious to be proud of being different from others. These reminiscences indicate that the socially constructed idea of the young boy's/man's appropriate body – what Connell (1983, p.20) calls 'the cult of physicality' – affects their self-perception.

The participants in the grandfathers' generation spoke little about awakening to their sexuality, either because they had limited access to pornographic materials and did not discuss sexual matters with their peers or were reluctant to discuss such matters with a younger female researcher (or they may not remembered their experiences of anxiety from several decades earlier). The objectification of women was very evident among the participants in the fathers' and the sons' generations who had conversations about their sexual interest in women with their close friends:

Probably from the first or second year in junior high school, definitely, about differences between men's and women's bodies. That kind of topic always comes up in talk with friends. For example, about girls, we say her breasts are getting bigger or not or her body is getting round.

(Kusuda-san, S)

When I was in junior high school, well, in the second year, ah, what happened often was, someone had indecent videotapes or magazines and we went 'let's watch them, let's watch them'.... I wonder if only men do this kind of thing.... I suppose that's the same today. But you know, everybody has a computer and he can watch indecent stuff by himself, so maybe that is different from our time.

(Segawa-san, S)

As the above quotation indicates, Segawa-san and his friends congregated in someone's house and studied pornographic magazines or videotapes. Ueno-san and Yoshino-san of the fathers' generation also mentioned that pornographic magazines satisfied their sexual fantasies. However, Noda-san in the sons' generation was suddenly exposed to pornographic materials and sexual knowledge when he moved from a small southern island to the main island of Kyushu to attend high school. He was overwhelmed by the fact that he was ignorant of sexual matters. By contrast with some of the research on young Australian and the U.K. males whose pornographic fantasies revolved around female domination (Bulbeck 2005, p.76; Holland *et al.* 1998, pp.108, 113), my respondents expressed a more hesitant longing for a woman's body in their fantasy world. Comments such as 'I thought women (female bodies) were great' (Ueno-san) and 'I thought if I were a woman, I wouldn't have to buy these magazines' (Yoshino-san) implied their curiosity about the female body, which also suggested that they had not yet experienced much actual physical intimacy with girls.



Watching pornographic videos together represents men's collective activities in the homosocial world of heterosexual men. Segawa-san in the sons' generation was the only respondent to mention a homosexual incident:

I was in junior high school. I had this friend. Well, I used to be bullied quite often at that time and this boy took me to the toilet and touched me, frankly...it was like I was at his mercy. This is my bitter memory. He said this was practice, you know, for that act. I must have thought 'oh, O.K. we need to practise'. It happened in the first year in junior high school. It's horrible. (Segawa-san, S)

Although Segawa-san described the experience as a bitter and horrible one, he stated that he has never understood why he did not resist his friend. As Segawa-san said, he was 'at the mercy' of his friend. His friend placed him in a powerless position, to which Segawa-san acceded. He thought that there was no point in crying over his impuissance because he used to see himself as slightly effeminate. At the time of the interview, Segawa-san was a heterosexual and married man, declaring that he has never been attracted to a man since the incident. However, he has been intrigued by the homosexual attachment of gay men. He also stated that he did not disavow the homosexual relationships of other people, an attitude very different from that of the other participants who all expressed sheer antipathy against homosexuality.<sup>138</sup> Segawa-san's honest confession of his homosexual encounter indicates the complex nature of sexuality, both in practice and thought.

### **Dating: *kōha* or *nanpa***

Dating was taboo in the grandfathers' generation. There was almost no dating until boys finished high school. In the fathers' generation, it was still considered to be a deviant activity. By the sons' generation, the social stigma attached to dating had disappeared. In stark contrast to their Western counterparts who regard dating as a way of sexual experimentation, dating was, however, a friendly activity even amongst the youngest generation in this study. More importantly, there was a tendency for participants to deny that they were women chasers. The present section begins with accounts of some participants' bittersweet first love prior to dating.

Many participants across the three generations remembered their emotional attachment towards a particular female classmate as the most special memory in their early school lives, although 'nothing happened' from the viewpoint of romance, according to participants. Participants of all the generations

<sup>138</sup> Their antipathy is different from the Western notion of homophobia. For example, some participants who met Western homosexual men (who were also their business partners) during their overseas business trips to overseas accepted them without objection. However, it is unimaginable for these participants that Japanese men can be homosexual. Other participants, particularly in older generations, find homosexuality simply unthinkable and they often expressed that homosexuality is *kimochiwarui* (eerie or creepy). The author speculates that it is likely that their image of homosexual men comes from effeminate homosexual men in the entertainment world, and this is the source of their antipathy.

became conscious of the opposite sex from year five or six in primary school and they were very interested in girls by the time they became junior high school students. As seen in the discussion of classroom dynamics in the previous chapter, the attitudes of the participants towards their heroines were reserved and not expressed, and their first love was, in most cases, unrequited love. Only a few participants revealed stories concerning their childhood sweetheart. For most of them, although cherishing the dream of talking to their heroines, they never put the idea into practice. In retrospect, Hirose-san in the grandfathers' generation felt nostalgia for his heroine:

I was in charge of school broadcasting [the school public address system]. We were all boys and I decided to recruit girls. We selected one girl from each class. There was this lovely girl. I still remember her name. She had nothing to do with the broadcasting. I almost forced her to join us.... You know, it was all I could do to call her. It was sort of an adventure. She would be just there but we didn't talk about anything complicated. I was just looking on her with favour. Therefore, it was rather devious of me. I just wanted to have her around and watch her without saying anything.

(Hirose-san, G)

Hirose-san's story conveys his apparent awkwardness with the girl and, at the same time, implies the girl's submissive attitude. While Hirose-san did not express his feelings for her, the following participants put their feelings into words. Ono-san in the fathers' generation liked a new student with long hair, who soon moved to another school. Missing her, Ono-san wrote a letter to her. Likewise, Noda-san in the sons' generation, realising that he liked a new student who changed to another school after five years, started to write her letters; however, the correspondence lapsed after two years. Shimizu-san in the sons' generation, by contrast, received no reply to his letter from a girl who used to be a classmate but went to a different high school from his. Instead, he was hurt when he realised that a female student in his high school knew of his conduct. The above letters did not represent explicit love letters. However, in contrast to Hirose-san, these participants showed their tenderness, which contradicted the stereotypical idea that men were not emotionally expressive.<sup>139</sup>

In the grandfathers' generation, dating was rare in both junior high and high school. The majority of participants stated that 'I was interested in girls but just couldn't do it' (Shiga-san), that 'there wasn't an atmosphere [that allowed dating]' (Nishida-san) and that 'I didn't have the nerve and dating was totally uncommon' (Sasaki-san). For the three men who remembered having a 'date', they discussed going to school together or going home together with a girl. According to Katagiri-san, even during university, only 'advanced' men had a girlfriend.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>139</sup> According to Teo (2005, p.358), Australian men in the nineteenth and twentieth century also expressed love and tenderness in their love letters, contradicting the representation of Australian masculinities in Bush Legend and the Anzac myth.

<sup>140</sup> See also Vogel (1978) p.21

In the fathers' generation, one participant had a date when he was in junior high school and seven participants had a date during high school. For Tachibana-san, dating meant 'strolling in the park together and drinking juice while taking a rest'. Minami-san corroborated the belief that a young couple having a cup of coffee in a coffee shop was considered to be deviant. Therefore, walking together in public was the most adventurous thing that people in this generation could do. Similar to the grandfathers' generation, the other participants implied that dating usually occurred after school. Sport clubs kept Amano-san and Ono-san, and probably some other participants as well, so busy that dating did not occur frequently – only once every few months. Interestingly, Tachibana-san, who was popular with girls when he was in junior high school, refused to accept love letters from them. He explained that this was 'because I was a sporting man', implying that he was "*kōha*" (the hard school). His masculinity, which was constructed by his devotion to sport, entailed asceticism, self-discipline and self-control which were of paramount importance to him. Toda-san's comments supported Tachibana-san:

Boys who looked like [popular] musicians or wanted to be them were hanging about with girls. They looked happy. I thought 'oh well we are after all men of the sport clubs'. (Toda-san, F)

The boys in the above quotation were *nanpa* (men of seduction) or '*karui*' (sexually unrestrained) (Castro-Vázquez and Kishi 2003, p.29). Tachibana-san and Toda-san differentiated themselves from these womanisers. These participants may represent the 'sporting boys' and the boys mimicking musicians may stand in for the 'lifestylers', according to the categorisation by Castro-Vázquez and Kishi (2003). As mentioned earlier, it is clear that the participants in my research cannot be classified precisely into the four categories because some participants belong to more than one group, e.g. an outstanding athlete with an excellent academic record – a 'sporting boy' *cum* 'grinder'. Because the Japanese term '*gariben*' (grinder) is a derogatory word meaning an unsociable academic-oriented person, sporting participants who overlap with the '*gariben*' group tend to emphasise their athletic ability without ceasing completely to indicate their sagacity. It was more important for participants of the sporting boy-*cum*-grinder type to stress their excellent athletic performance than to give the impression of a grinder. The majority of the above participants, regardless of the frequency of dating, emphasised their unconcern for dating and its infrequency. In other words, they did not like to be represented as a member of the '*nanpa*' or '*karui*' group.

In the sons' generation, in contrast to the older generations, participants did not indicate any social restrictions on dating. Moreover, they did not exhibit bashful responses to the question about dating. Nevertheless, dating still generally meant going home together after school. There were four participants who never went on a date until they entered university. These men met their girlfriends

through 'gōkon' (a joint drinking party organised by students from different universities) or through club activities organised by their universities. The publication of (young) men's fashion magazines coincided with the social acceptance of dating in the sons' generation. For example, magazines to which some participants referred, *Popeye* and *Men's Non-No*, were launched in 1976 and 1987 respectively (Tanaka 2003, pp.225-226).<sup>141</sup> While these magazines deal with fashion, beauty and techniques that make girlfriends happy, shaping the male reader into desirable men for women (Tanaka 2003, pp.230-233),<sup>142</sup> none of the participants was serious about adorning himself with fashionable clothes or about instruction in dating. The above men's magazines probably appeal to men in the lifestyler or the *nanpa* group. The participants did not intentionally curry favour with women, implying that the men in the sons' generation were descended from the school of *koha*.

In conclusion, while the connotation of dating as a societal taboo had faded away by the sons' generation, there was very little change in the attitudes of the participants towards dating during schooling over the half-century covered by my research. Some sporting participants chose asceticism and self-control in accordance with the importance of discipline in sport. Given that participants were slow to make friends with girls, let alone to have girlfriends, how did they manage to marry without difficulty? The following section explores the participants' patterns of marriage, their reasons for marriage and its necessary outcome for them.

### 3.2 Marriage

In recent generations, marriage and parenthood were the presumed destination of every Japanese person (Lunsing 2001). Together with socio-economic and demographic changes and a changing pattern of marriage, issues of delayed marriage, non-marriage, a declining birth rate and divorce have attracted a number of researchers (e.g. Dales 2005; Harald 2004; Jolivet 1997; Lunsing 2001; Roberts 2002). However, the majority of participants in this research, except for the young single ones, seem to be comfortably ensconced as "*daikokubashira*"<sup>143</sup> in their conventional and patriarchal family milieus. This section looks at their matrimonial partnerships with their wives.

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<sup>141</sup> In the fathers' generation, only Tsutsumi-san regularly bought a fashion magazine called '*Men's Club*' which was first published in 1954 (Tanaka 2003, p.226); however, he was not able to afford the trendy fashions until he became economically independent. In the grandfathers' generation, according to Katagiri-san, people in general adopted the latest vogue from popular culture, especially from films. For example, Ishihara Yūjirō, the symbol of '*Taiyō-zoku*' (the sun tribe) who was not bound by conventional ideas and practices, was a model of fashion at that time. He was also the embodiment of an American 'tough guy' (Itō 1993, p.22; 2003, p.30).

<sup>142</sup> See also Miller (2003) for young Japanese men who consider themselves fashion targets and sexual objects (of the female gaze), adorning themselves with trendy clothes and working on their bodily surface (skin care and hair removal) to create an appearance desirable to women.

<sup>143</sup> *Daikokubashira* is an architectural term and means a central pillar, which has become a metaphor for a person (in many cases, a man) who is the centre of the family and supports the family.

### 3.2.1 Patterns: *ren'ai*, *miai* and *shanai/shokuba kekkon*

Marriage in Japan is classified into two categories. There are principally two types of courtship in selecting a spouse: *miai* (an arranged meeting/date) and *ren'ai* (love) (Lunsing 2001, p.90), these patterns resulting in *miai kekkon* (the arranged marriage) and *ren'ai kekkon* (the love marriage). Strictly speaking, however, there is a third pattern: *shanai/shokuba kekkon* (the intra-company marriage<sup>144</sup>), which is usually included in the love marriage category (Jolivet 1997, p.47; Rohlen 1974, p.236). It is nothing unusual for a person to marry someone in the same workplace; however, the existence of the term '*shanai/shokuba kekkon*' suggests its widespread practice in Japan.

Arranged marriage begins when a young man's or woman's parents start inquiring amongst their relatives and friends if they know of a suitable candidate for the son's or daughter's future spouse. When a potential spouse is nominated, it is often the case that the son or daughter hands his/her photograph and a copy of personal history to the candidate and to his/her family (Edwards, W 1989, pp.58-59; Hendry 1981, p.122). As soon as both families consent to hold *miai* (literally, to look at each other) after examining each other's backgrounds, *nakōdo* (a go-between<sup>145</sup>), who organizes the arranged meeting/date, is selected. After the first meeting, the go-between sounds out the view of each side and decides whether they should proceed to the next meeting (Edwards, W 1989 pp.62-63).<sup>146</sup> More importantly, with the aid of the go-between, each family inspects not only the education, occupation, health and social status of the future in-law but also her/his family lineage and the family members' personal history before a prospective couple reaches the final agreement to marry (Applbaum 1995, pp.37-38; Vogel 1961, p.116).

Companies furnish employees with an opportunity for either the love marriage or the arranged marriage. People who believe in love but do not have many occasions to meet people of the opposite sex outside the workplace often expect to find a future spouse amongst their colleagues (McLendon 1983, p.159; Rohlen 1974, p.236). In fact, the workplace has always been the most prominent place for people to meet partners, although there has been some fluctuation in popularity (Kashiwagi 2003, p.87). In this company-*cum*-love marriage, the courtship involves concealment of the relationship between the two people at work until they decide to marry. The reason for disguising the relationship is that companies believe that a man who is in love cannot fulfil the commitment of giving the highest priority to his work (Rohlen 1974, pp.237-238). Despite the concept of the incompatibility between love

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<sup>144</sup> *Shanai* means inside the company and *shokuba* refers to the workplace.

<sup>145</sup> There are still occasions in which a go-between initiates the finding of a prospective wife or husband for a son or daughter of a family. The go-between usually has a higher social status than the couple with marriage prospects (Applbaum 1995, p.37). He also has a close relationship with both families who are in search of a daughter/son-in-law (Edwards, W 1989, p.58). See Vogel (1961) for the roles of the go-between.

<sup>146</sup> The go-between normally considers that the feelings of the person who has initiated a search for a spouse are more important than that of the other potential spouse.

and work, there are, however, cases of the company-*cum*-arranged marriage, in which a female or male worker is introduced to a prospective candidate in the same workplace by her/his superior or senior colleague (Rohlen 1974, p.240). Regardless of the pattern of the company marriage, whether love or an arrangement, a couple usually chooses their go-between<sup>147</sup> from among the groom's superiors, implying a convenient reciprocal relationship at work, the groom expecting the assistance of the superior and the superior expecting the loyalty of the groom to him at work (Rohlen 1974, p.241; Vogel 1961, p.119).

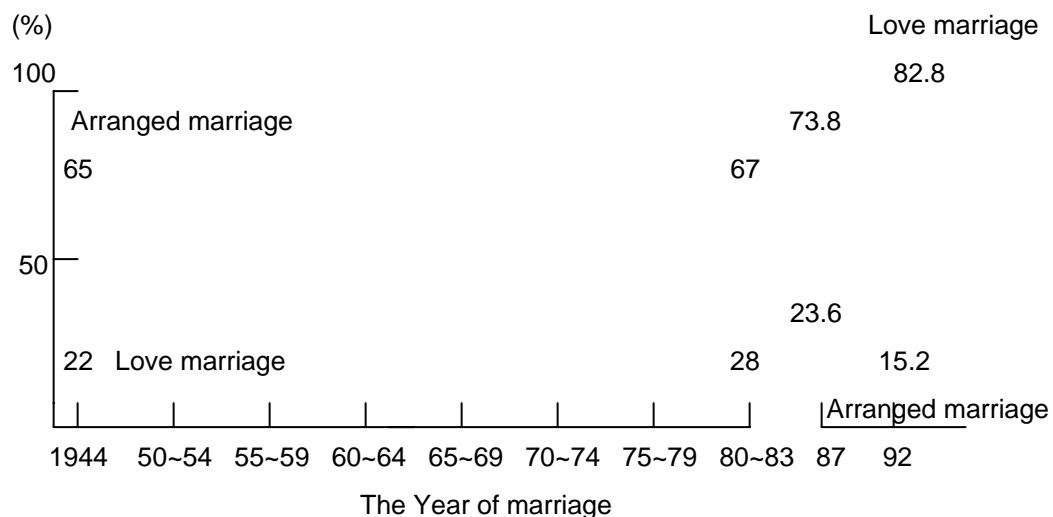
The love marriage is based on so-called Western romantic love, which is formed by the emotional and physical feelings of attraction between a man and a woman. While the arranged marriage involves significant control by both parents of the couple, the love marriage symbolises the freedom of two individuals in their decision-making which is based on the information that a couple receives from each other through their courtship rather than the objective evaluation of each family's background (Appelbaum 1995, pp.37-38; Edwards, W 1989, p.67). However, the love marriage often requires persuasion of both parents to give their consent for the relationship and eventual marriage. In the past, it was not easy for parents to agree with their children's own decision to marry for love<sup>148</sup> because the parents saw the unification of two "ie" as more important and settling than the union of two individuals (Hendry 1981, pp.117-118). As Figure 2 indicates, the love marriage became more popular than the arranged marriage only in the 1970s. Ueno (1994, p.89), however, points out that, despite the wide appeal of the love marriage, 'class endogamy' characterised love marriages in the 1970s and 1980s. Whether love marriage or arranged marriage, couples tend to come from the same socio-economic and educational background, indicating a close affinity between the traditional wisdom and the modern strategy in selecting a spouse (Ueno 1994, p.89). Additionally, the company marriage is exactly the site where the phenomenon of 'class endogamy' is facilitated because it presupposes the similar social and economic background of the couple. As a result of the Japanese competitive meritocracy, even the love marriage in younger generations, which grows out of university life, has the same effect of 'class endogamy' because universities, particularly elite ones, generally accommodate students from a similar family background.

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<sup>147</sup> The go-between is indispensable for the Japanese traditional wedding ceremony. He counsels the couple if they should have difficulties in their marriage after the ceremony. Because the go-between usually has a high social status, this, however, functions as a constraint on the couple that they should not mortify or embarrass him by discord between them (Rohlen 1974, p.241). See also Edwards, W (1989) pp.74-75 and Vogel (1961) pp.118-119 for the ceremonial role of the go-between.

<sup>148</sup> Hendry (1981, p.117) argues that the reason why Japanese parents do not agree with the love marriage is that they do not have the concept of love as seen in the Western and Christian ideals and consider that the love marriage is mainly based on sexual attraction.

**FIGURE 2**  
**Changing Marriage Patterns**



(Kashiwagi 2003, Figure 2-2-1, p.85)

The concept of romantic love in Western marriages or partnerships was subordinated to the arranged marriage in Japan. Indeed, the Western concept of love was hardly observable in the existing literature on Japanese women and housewives (e.g. Atsumi 1997; Imamura 1987; Lebra 1984; Leblanc 1999; Saitō 1982; Vogel 1971; Vogel 1978). In addition, this body of research rarely discusses the emotional relations between wives and their husbands, with the exception of Saitō (1982) and Lebra (1987).

Saitō (1982) reveals salarymen's wives to be living in an abyss of sorrow produced by their husband's absence from home. The discourse on the absence of the husband from home has a long history in Japan, indicating various marital and familial problems. Saitō (1982) focuses on housewives who become alcoholics in their desolate marriages. They try to distract their minds from the sense that there is no purpose to their lives because husbands devote their time and energy to their work to such an extent that they have no time to communicate with their wives who, nevertheless, perform the role of submissive wife (Saitō 1982, pp.104-106, 246). Indeed, *Kateinai rikon* (an unofficial divorce in which a couple keep living together with no emotional or sexual attachment) has been increasing insidiously (Amanuma 1997, p.260).

The idea of sex for procreation is still emphasised by contemporary self-improvement publications for salarymen (Coleman 1983, p.193). These books encourage men to consider sexual relations with their wives to be solely for the creation of a proper family (Dasgupta 2000, p.197; 2003, p.124; 2005a,

p.106). Husbands are isolated from their families, whereas wives develop strong connections with their children. Likewise, Lebra (1987, p.122) suggests that sexual and emotional closeness between a married couple is of little importance in marriage in Japan. While most of her interviewees avoid explicitly discussing sexual matters and relating the concept of love to their emotional attachment to their husbands, many of them imply that they directed their love completely to their children from the time of their birth. Lebra (1987, pp.123-124) argues that marriage in Japan, whether of the arranged or love type, is represented by 'suppressed intimacy' and 'estrangement'.

In the grandfathers' generation, those who married in the early and mid-high economic growth period (1955-1973), the arranged marriage and the company marriage were the dominant forms (see Table 6). Amongst participants of company-*cum*-arranged marriages, comments like 'it is sort of on the side of love marriage' (Hirose-san), 'I think it is close to love marriage' (Ishida-san) and 'half love marriage and half company marriage' (Honda-san) suggest that they preferred the image of the love marriage. As previously mentioned, the participants of company marriage kept their work-based relationship concealed. Yoshida-san explained that he did not want to make any trouble, implying that he was concerned about his colleagues' watchful eyes. It was not surprising that men in the grandfathers' generation, who had few female friends, found their spouses among their colleagues. Moreover, plunging into the high economic growth period, work occupied their lives and thus the workplace provided the only opportunity for some participants to socialise with women.

**TABLE 6**  
**Marriage Pattern of the Participants**

	<b>Arranged marriage</b>	<b>Company marriage</b>	<b>Love marriage</b>	<b>Single (never married)</b>	<b>The total number of Participants</b>
<b>The grandfathers' generation</b>	<b>5</b> (39%)	<b>6</b> (46%)	<b>2</b> (15%)	<b>0</b>	13 (100 %)
<b>The fathers' generation</b>	<b>1</b> (7%)	<b>13</b> (86%)		<b>1</b> (7%)	15 (100%)
<b>The sons' generation</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b> (64%)	<b>4</b> (36%)	11 (100%)

There were only two cases of love marriage. One of them, Shiga-san, told the researcher of his strenuous efforts to win the heart and mind of his wife. According to Shiga-san, in the early 1950s, which was around the time when the U.S. occupation ended (1952), there was an atmosphere of liberalism in which people talked freely about love.<sup>149</sup> He openly talked with his friends and colleagues

<sup>149</sup> In 1959, as a sensational event, Crown Prince Akihito fell in love and married Shōda Michiko who was a commoner. This made a sharp contrast with the Emperor who had married a woman from a noble family by arrangement (Bardsley 2004, p.353).



about his love, for example, asking a friend to write a love-letter for him, which was torn into pieces by the woman when she received it. He put the pieces together and sent the letter to her once again. He asked his female colleague for advice as to where he should take his girlfriend on a date when he finally gained her hand. While it was the love marriage for Shiga-san, it was questionable whether or not it was based on mutual love. His wife's decision to go out with Shiga-san was almost equivalent to marrying him without knowing him very well, because the mores of the 1950s and 1960s meant that agreeing to courting was agreeing to the marriage (Yamada 1994, p.7). Shiga-san actually commented that the meaning of dating changed during the 1970s, to allow for more than one date or meeting before marriage.

In the fathers' generation, there was only one case of the arranged marriage amongst fifteen participants. Matsuzaki-san explained: 'I just couldn't be bothered with finding a wife'. Accordingly, his parents found a suitable woman for him, as he had no female colleagues in his workplace.<sup>150</sup> Moreover, he went to an all boys *kigyō gakkō* (a corporate school). One participant never married and all the others described their marriage as a love marriage. However, half of these appear to be company marriages, although participants did not distinguish the company marriage from the love marriage. According to Fukuda-san and Toda-san, who worked in the personnel section, in the 1970s it was typical for people to meet their future spouses in the workplace. In addition, finding a spouse among colleagues in a large company meant that one could feel secure concerning the person's personal background because large companies checked their employees' backgrounds.<sup>151</sup>

Among eleven participants in the sons' generation, seven were married and four were single. Only one of the married men, Hirose-san, met his spouse at work; however, he did not regard his marriage as a company marriage because his wife was a temporary worker. The other men met their spouses during schooling or higher education. Thus all the seven married participants indicated that theirs was a love marriage. The fact that Hirose-san's company offered the status of a full-time employee to his wife after their marriage<sup>152</sup> indicates the disappearing custom of women's resignation at marriage. Moreover, all the single participants confidently stated that they had a girlfriend and that the arranged marriage was not an option for them in the future.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> In some companies female workers can only be found in the personnel and accounting departments.

<sup>151</sup> According to Fukuda-san and Toda-san, large companies looked into employees' backgrounds in order to avoid recruiting people from minority groups such as *burakumin* who were discriminated against because of their birth in those locations where the dominant occupation was killing animals and tanning hides in the Edo period.

<sup>152</sup> Hirose-san's company was one of the most progressive companies in the research, e.g. it does not have a hierarchy based on age, which is still rare in Japanese companies and it has implemented a flexi-time system relatively earlier than other companies.

<sup>153</sup> One of the young respondents in Dasgupta's study married through the in-company marriage because of his 'lack of free time to meet a prospective partner', despite the fact that he never expected to use the in-company marriage system (Dasgupta 2005b, p.176).

The changing pattern of marriage across the three generations corresponded with the society-wide shift in the preferred pattern of marriage from the arranged to the love marriage. The implication of this shift is simply that the concept of romantic love became dominant. The fact that no single participants in this study indicated their intention of staying unmarried is evidence of the great importance of marriage in the participants' lives. Why do Japanese men marry? Why were their parents enthusiastic about their sons' marriages? In the next section, the meaning of marriage – or rather the intentions behind marriage – is examined.

### 3.2.2 Meaning of Marriage

For men in Japan, the total meaning of marriage is, perhaps, condensed in the word '*atarimae*' or '*jōshiki*' ('natural' or 'common sense') (Lunsing 2001, pp.81, 91). Marriage is something that everyone does when he/she reaches marriageable age (*tekireiki*).<sup>154</sup> However, motives and intentions underlying the meaning of marriage as 'natural' are varied. Firstly, before the Second World War, marriage meant the continuation of the *ie*. Even after the war, marriage meant an alliance between two *ie* (Hamabata 1990, pp.161-162; Hendry 1981, pp.148-149; 2003, p.30; Kondo 1990, pp.140-141; McLelland 2001, p.121). In fact, traditionally there is a display at receptions which indicated that this was the banquet held for the marriage between A '*ke*'<sup>155</sup> (family) and B '*ke*' (family), although this customary practice has been waning. Secondly, marriage is an expedient that promotes men's occupational prospects (Coleman 1983, p.187). Men marry because marriage gives a man social credence and presumed reliability, so that being married is an advantage for men in promotion at work (Coleman 1983, p.187; Tsuya 2000, p.326), whereas a single man is considered incapable of the responsibility of married life, and so is simultaneously regarded as incompetent for work (Edwards, W 1989, p.124).<sup>156</sup> Men marry because it facilitates their everyday lives (Atsumi 1997, pp.282-283; Coleman 1983, p.188). As a consequence of the clear division of labour in Japan, wives' commitment to housework is nothing but an allure for men to marry, allowing them to commit themselves to their work. Thirdly, marriage is one of the requirements for becoming a fully fledged adult or '*ichininmae*' (Dasgupta 2005b, p.172; Edwards, W 1989, p.124; Kashiwagi 2003, pp.64-66; Lunsing 2001, p.74). W. Edwards (1989, p.8) frames marriage in Japan as a rite of passage that signifies the transformation of the social status of an individual. An underlying reason stems from the biological and functionalistic notion of gender as 'a complementarity of incompetence' (Edwards, W 1989, p.123; Smith 1987, p.3).

<sup>154</sup> Women who were over twenty-five years old used to be called '*kurisumasu kēki*' or Christmas cakes, which implied that they were no good for marriage; however, Christmas cakes have been replaced by '*toshikoshi soba*' (noodles to see out the year on the thirty first of December) for men, which suggests that men who are over thirty-one years old should be worried about getting married (Hendry 2003, p.151 and Jolivet 1997, p.148).

<sup>155</sup> The Chinese character '*ie*' is read '*ke*' when a surname comes before it.

<sup>156</sup> According to Coleman (1983, p.188), employers' encouragement to marry before the age of thirty is greater than that by one's family and relatives.

In other words, masculinity and femininity have their own roles in society and, therefore, an incomplete male and female marry in order to achieve the oneness of a unification of two individuals (Edwards, W 1989, p.123; Lunsing 2001, p.75). Additionally, from the viewpoint of spiritualism, marriage stands for 'a bond between two spirits' (McLelland 2000, p.243). The idea of a self-sufficient single individual does not have legitimacy in Japan (Lunsing 2001, p.85).

In the 1970s and the 1980s, public opinion endorsed marriage for women. People thought that it is natural to marry and that women should marry because marriage brought happiness and emotional and financial security to them (Kashiwagi 2003, p.76). In Japanese, to become happy (*shiawaseninaru*) means not only literally to become happy but also lyrically to marry. It was almost predestined for the majority of Japanese women to marry when economic independence was granted mainly to men (Coleman 1983, p.188; Tsuya 2000, p.338). In fact, women's marriage used to be called '*eikyū shūshoku*' (permanent employment or a lifetime career) (Kashiwagi 2003, p.67; Vogel 1978, p.16). At the end of the 1980s, when the majority of women wanted to marry, a media term '*san kō*'<sup>157</sup> (three highs: high income, highly educated and tall) captured the presumed ideal man to marry (Jolivet 1997, p.142). Ueno (1994, p.58) suggests that being a *senjyō shufu* or professional housewife, meaning having no need to work, places such women in a privileged status especially when many housewives work, not because they want to, but in order to support the family financially (Ueno 1994, p.51). More importantly, marriage is understood to mean becoming a mother because marriage is a synonym for childbearing (Atsumi 1997, p.274; Coleman 1983, p.197; Jolivet 1997, p.40). The majority of married women give birth to the first child within two years of their marriages.<sup>158</sup> While a man achieves the status of a fully fledged 'adult' at marriage, a woman is only accepted as '*ichininmae*' and gains the status of a fully fledged 'woman' when she gives birth (Coleman 1983, p.190; Kashiwagi 2003, p.304).

Under these circumstances marriage represents a utilitarian union of two people and the satisfaction of social expectations. It is not surprising that marriage for some people involves arrangements by a third party and, therefore, a newly-married life begins without emotional attachment between two people. Such marriage is considered to be the ideal one in which each partner develops intimacy and tenderness – emotional attachment – throughout the course of their married lives by mutually fulfilling their duties (Hamabata 1990, p.161; Kondo 1990, pp.140-141). To be sure, expediency also occurs in love marriages because, as mentioned earlier, they involve 'calculations' (Lunsing 2001, p.91). Additionally, it should be emphasized that, although the law does not forbid homosexual relationships,

<sup>157</sup> The term was coined by a matchmaking company, the Altman Marriage Bureau, and was based on its clients' demands (Jolivet 1997, p.220). The company no longer exists.

<sup>158</sup> In the 1970s, 40 per cent of married women had the first baby in the first year of their marriage and another 40 per cent did so in the second year (Coleman 1983, p.199). In the 1990s, 71.3 per cent of married women gave birth to the first baby within two years (Jolivet 1997, p.40).

it ignores the existence of same-sex partnerships (Maree 2004, p.543). More importantly, because of the stigma attached to single people, some homosexual men wish to marry a woman in order to fulfil social expectations (Lunsing 2001, p.88).<sup>159</sup>

In the late 1980s, public opinion about the meaning of marriage for women changed. Although it is still felt that it is natural to marry, two new opinions have appeared. One of them is that marriage is an individual choice and the other is that one marries only when she/he meets the right person (Kashiwagi 2003, p.76). The number of unmarried men and women has been slowly but steadily increasing.<sup>160</sup> While marrying later or staying single is an expression of women's resistance against their disadvantages in marriage, the increasing number of single men signifies their inability to satisfy the demands of women (Kashiwagi 2003, p.78).<sup>161</sup> Ironically, in the time of the love marriage, '*hanamuko gakkō*' (literally a groom school) with the intention of reforming men who wanted to marry but did not know how to establish a good relationship, was launched (Lunsing 2001, p.93). Higuchi Keiko, a feminist commentator, founded the first one in the late 1980s (Jolivet 1997, p.165). Ōhashi Kiyoharu opened the most recent one in 2004 (*Asahi* Newspaper 24 June 2004, p.15). Playing on brides' apparently rising expectations, the media term '*san kō*' (three highs representing the ideal attributes of a man) was transformed into '*san tē*' or 'three lows' in which an ideal man was a man of modesty (or ladies first) with a low occupational risk (i.e. public servants or those who were qualified for a particular occupation) and a low dependence on his partner (i.e. no restrictions on and respect for his partner) (Ishida 2004). Although occupational security is still important to the majority of prospective brides, those women who cohabit outside the institution of marriage do not consider their partners' income to be a key precondition for the partnership. Instead, they expect to have respect for their lifestyle, trust, gender equity, understanding etc. from their partners (Kashiwagi 2003, p.147).

### **The rationale behind marriage**

While the participants in my study offered diverse reasons for marriage (see Table 7), expediency and convenience in marriage (e.g. gaining trust and facilitating household chores) were, nevertheless, ubiquitous across the three generations. The cultural and social incentives were dominant amongst

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<sup>159</sup> According to Lunsing (2001, pp.1, 122-124), most gay respondents in his research, conducted in 1988, wanted to marry in a heterosexual way and 30 per cent of young gay men in a survey conducted in 1992 also wished for the heterosexual marriage. However, the number of marriages between a homosexual man and a heterosexual woman is declining because of expanding networks and support groups for gay people.

<sup>160</sup> For example, in 1950, men who remained single all their lives accounted for 1.46 per cent of the total population of marriageable men of the same cohort, while their single female counterparts comprised 1.35 per cent. By 2000, the proportion of single people had increased to 12.25 per cent for men and 5.75 per cent for women. It is expected that some 23 per cent of men and some 16 per cent of women who were born between 1975 and 1980 will remain single throughout their lives (Dales 2005, p.148; Kashiwagi 2003, p.64).

<sup>161</sup> See also Murata (2000) for single men aged between 35 and 64, who feel alienated because of changing gender roles and expectations.

participants in the grandfathers' and fathers' generations, while, in the sons' generation, personal inducements rather than social ones encouraged participants to marry. More importantly marriage meant the path to becoming a “*daikokubashira*” or breadwinner. As will be seen from their comments, this unchanging outcome of marriage across the three generations invested married participants with masculine self-confidence.

**TABLE 7**  
**Participants' Reasons for Marriage**

	<b>The Grandfathers' Generation</b>	<b>The Fathers' Generation</b>	<b>The Sons' Generation</b>
<b>Family Reasons</b> – Parental influence/pressure – Continuing the <i>ie</i> /looking after parents in old age	<b>6 (46%)</b>	<b>4 (29%)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Work Related Reasons</b> – Gaining occupational advancement – Someone to be professional housewife	<b>2 (15%)</b>	<b>1 (7%)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Personal Reasons</b> – Falling in love – Personal fulfilment/development	<b>5 (39%)</b>	<b>9 (64%)</b>	<b>7 (100%)</b>
<b>Total Number of Married Participants</b>	<b>13 (100%)</b>	<b>14 (100%)</b>	<b>7 (100%)</b>

The previously mentioned notion of gender as the ‘complementarity of incompetence’ was conveyed by respondents in the grandfathers' generation, metaphorically noting that men and women had different roles in society and, that marriage was the way to maximize the two contrasting functions:

You know, we should admit men's duty and women's duty. Men and women complement each other and then we become *ichininmae* (a fully fledged adult). They call a spouse *betā hāfu* (a better-half). We ought to be *betā hāfu*, don't you think so? One is good because one is a unity of two halves.... [Two] *Betā hāfu*, rather *kappuru* (a couple), is better because they bring their abilities into full play. *Betā hāfu and betā hāfu* become a single whole. (Kasuga-san, G)

Kasuga-san's ideal form of husband and wife was the union of two better-halves. For Shiga-san, being slightly different from Kasuga-san, a couple meant the unity of two complete individuals:

Men have their own field and women have their own field. Human society is the union of the two. It's no good if society lacks either of them. Nothing can be done by men alone. That's the same

with women. I feel that when a man and a woman cooperate, the whole human being is formed.  
Neither of the two can be left out. (Shiga-san, G)

The concept that men and women have their own duties was thus prevalent in the grandfathers' generation. Marriage was a "must" because it was the only means that channelled two complementary functions into full integration.

Marriage represented more than a personal matter. According to Katagiri-san, his parents urged him to marry when he was twenty-five years old. His parents' demands were briefly interrupted when Katagiri-san was sent overseas by his company. As soon as he returned Katagiri-san's parents organized a *miai*, an arranged meeting. Katagiri-san remembered that his parents presented him with a pile of photographs of *miai* candidates. Uchida-san was almost forced to marry a woman whom his parents chose for him. Uchida-san had been told by his parents that he must marry by the time he was thirty years old. As he had promised to be married by thirty years old and was not, he agreed to marry the woman his parents found for him, but it was not his choice to do so. These stories indicated that parental apprehension about their sons' marital status was often stronger than the will of the participants.

As a family matter, marriage also involved the issue of the continuation of the *ie*.

Because I am the first-born son and I had mother [to look after], I used to think that I have to have a woman as wife and have a child who can succeed me. (Sonoda-san, G)

Unfortunately, Sonoda-san's wife died of a disease when he was forty-four years old; however, he married again two years after her death, partly because he needed someone to look after the household and reduce his mother's burden and partly because he still wanted a son since his only child from the first marriage was a daughter. Similarly, caring for his ageing parents was a great concern for Yoshida-san because of the uncertainty amongst his male siblings as to who would take on this responsibility. For these participants, marriage was a means of fulfilling the obligations of the family system and filial piety. Nishida-san's comment that marriage was '*seken ippan no koto*' (a common thing to do) expressed the idea that it was 'natural'. Furthermore, respondents commented on how marriage improved their social credence and reputation for reliability as Shiga-san noted of his work at a bank:

You have to marry to do a responsible task and gain trust, I mean, social trust. Because I dealt with money, I had to gain credit with customers. This [trust which ensued from marriage] entirely affected my achievement at work. (Shiga-san, G)

Furthermore, the equating of marriage with childbirth was clearly seen in this generation.

Of course I thought that we had to have a healthy child. It was not what I necessarily wanted. It is inevitable [to have a child], isn't it? Once you marry, it is natural to have a child unless you or your spouse has a serious health problem. (Kasuga-san, F)

Likewise, Ishihara-san also thought that 'it's only natural that I would have a child after marriage'. In commonsense understandings, marriage accomplished its purpose with childbirth. Therefore, there was no concept of choice in having or not having a child. Childbirth was an inevitable outcome of marriage in the grandfathers' generation.

The above rationales for marriage were still powerful in the fathers' generation. For example, the importance of *ie* was operating as an incentive. It was only a logical consequence for Tachibana-san, who was the first-born son in a prominent family of samurai descent, to marry and succeed to the family. Likewise, Fukuda-san, who left match-making to a third party, and Toda-san understood marriage as a bond between two families (*ie*). The existence of social pressure was also apparent. Toda-san also believed that a man must marry when he reached marriageable age. Hino-san who married relatively late compared with other participants accounted for the pressure of the times:

I was doing very well at work, well, because I was already thirty at that time. But for some reason I thought I've got to have a family. People generally, I know this is wrong but I felt, had a prejudice against single people. I think they shouldn't. Marriage has nothing to do with the company you work for because it is you who do the job. But well I still felt a strong sense of duty to marry.

(Hino-san, F)

Hino-san obviously decided to marry in order to fulfil social expectations and avoid the negative connotations of the single status. The preconceived idea that people should marry and the prejudice that single people carried were so overwhelming that he was not able to disregard them, despite his success at work. Hino-san's 'strong sense of duty to marry' came from the notion of '*ichininmae*' or a fully fledged adult. A successful working life was not good enough to make him a complete man in accordance with social appraisal. Likewise, Amano-san clearly stated that he believed that marriage would make him "socially" '*ichininmae*'. In this sense, marriage was, indeed, a rite of passage. The idea of marriage as the means of facilitating everyday life was detected from statements made by

some of the participants. For instance, Tsutsumi-san asserted unequivocally that he married because 'I can have meals without trouble' implying that his wife prepared every meal for him. Likewise, Kuraoka-san noted that 'there is always something to eat' at home. While these two participants claimed that they married for love, it was, however, apparent that they were also lured into marriage by the traditional division of labour in which these men committed themselves to their work and their wives took care of the entire household. The fact that all the married participants in the fathers' generation had children suggested that marriage was still understood as establishing a family that consisted of parents and their children. Nevertheless, their apparent division of labour based on the traditional allocations of tasks implied the prevalence of the functionalist idea of gender amongst participants in the fathers' generation.

With regard to the sons' generation, married participants did not specifically indicate that marriage was a 'must' or the fulfilment of an unavoidable social expectation. Instead, many of them emphasised that they simply wanted to live together with their wives, stressing their emotional attachment as the powerful incentive to marry. As a result, according to them, their married lives were enriched. Marriage was a site where two individuals enhanced each other, which was different from the grandfathers' generation who assumed that the husband and the wife were complementing each other. This indication of a change was also discovered in their attitudes towards reproduction: having a child became a choice for a couple. Moreover, the period between the wedding and childbirth became longer than that in the other generations. Out of seven married men, while four participants still equated marriage with creating a family composed of parents and children, the other three participants did not see marriage in the same manner. For example, having no intention of having a child, Take-san asked his wife whether she wanted to or not, at the time of the marriage. Since she was also uninterested in having a child, they agreed to discuss the issue and decide what to do if the situation changed. Segawa-san was ambivalent concerning whether he wanted a baby or not because he simply enjoyed communication with his wife and, therefore, wanted to retain the current situation. Nakama-san's concern was the timing of childbirth, saying that if he and his wife decided to have a baby, they should do so before her physical burden or risk became too great. The attitudes of these participants suggested that, unlike the other older generations, marriage did not necessarily entail childbirth or, at the least, they chose to delay childbirth and enjoy a period together as a couple. Moreover, these participants had a good relationship with their wives to the extent that they discussed this issue freely with their wives. Yet, the implication of marriage as expedient still survived in the sons' generation:

I think that to establish a family means to be accepted by society as a person. Of course, I would love to have my own family and children in the future. (Kusuda-san, S)



A rite of passage – the marriage rite – is still a means of removing the prejudice against single people, as suggested by Okano-san:

As far as I am concerned, even while I enjoy my single life to the full, I want to marry if I find someone for me, as I believe that it is necessary for me to marry in order to make my life better.

(Okano-san, S)

While Okano-san claimed that a man should be able to do housework, he was looking for a woman who would agree with his ideal division of labour, i.e., the patriarchal division of labour. For Okano-san, marriage is necessary because it facilitates both his working life and his private life. While Okano-san is clearly eager to marry, the statistics indicate that he may have more difficulty than men in previous generations. The question then arises as to how men negotiate their masculinity both through marriage and in the face of failure to marry. Shimizu-san felt a strong sense of responsibility when he married, describing himself as *'ichininmae no "otoko"* or a fully fledged "man". Marriage made him a "man" rather than a socially acceptable adult. The following section explores how participants saw marriage as making men of them.

### **Daikokubashira: an ideal man**

As noted above, *daikokubashira* generally refers to a man, the mainstay who supports the family in the same manner as the central pillar supports the roof of the house. The term is a metaphoric expression of the ideal man as breadwinner, which has maintained an unshakable ideological status in Japan<sup>162</sup> (Gill 2003, p.144, 156; Roberson 2003, p.129). While this status involves a heavy responsibility (Gill 2003, p.157), it is also through the role of breadwinner that men gain prestige and feel masculine and virile. The powerful cultural and social ideology and the prosperous economic circumstances in the middle of the twentieth century in Japan granted participants in the grandfathers' and fathers' generations the privilege of *daikokubashira*. The prolonged economic stagnation from the early 1990s, however, no longer guarantees that every man will be a sole breadwinner, although large corporations continue to protect the ideology of *daikokubashira* (Gill 1999, p.17).

Among the grandfathers' generation, becoming the sole breadwinner, *daikokubashira*, was considered to be a matter of course:

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<sup>162</sup> According to Winchester (1999, p.91), in Australia, more than one-half of divorced fathers in her study considered the breadwinner role to be their contribution as a father. However, the latest proposals are that single parents (largely women) with children over the age of eight must now look for work. This is a further challenge to the Australian male as breadwinner.

I agree with the idea that a man should be *daikokubashira*. I thought that I must be firm and bring in a decent income because if I fail to do so, I thought that my wife and children wouldn't be able to have a socially proper life. Therefore, [I thought] I've got to be firm. (Kasuga-san, G)

Likewise, Ishihara-san also said that:

I think so [a man should be *daikokubashira*]. I married with that idea in my mind. Therefore, I was determined to support my family on my own and that my wife didn't have to work.

(Nishihara-san, G)

While being relied upon by their families, respondents in the grandfathers' generation nurtured the masculine spirit in themselves. However, they owed their virile sense of self to the social milieu, especially the economic circumstances, as recognised by Honda-san:

I think my days were good. My income increased at a great rate year after year. Therefore, if you buy a house or a car or whatever, the increase in your income offsets your payment in a few years, although your mortgage doesn't end. The mortgage takes some decades for sure but in the present time when you don't get a raise in salary, your life remains the same. When I was working, my pay rise covered my payment for a loan within a year. I got about thirty-six *man* [A\$4200] raise per year. Every year! I worked in such a time. You can't believe it, can you? That's why I say my days were good. (Honda-san, G)

Most participants in the grandfathers' generation started their working lives in the high economic growth period and many echoed Honda-san's phrase: 'my days were good'. These corporate warriors were a source of economic power in society and a source of financial power in the household. Participants' self-esteem as a man and as the breadwinner was, therefore, not easily shaken in the grandfathers' generation.

In the fathers' generation, their role as economic provider was still understood as a man's duty. Ashida-san stated that 'I think it's about *otoko rashisa* (masculinity) because I have a strong feeling that I have to bring home money for my family'. His sense of his masculinity came from his responsibility as a sole breadwinner. Ueno-san, by contrast, stated that the ideology was sustained by women's understanding of masculinity rather than men's:

Women see a man of *daikokubashira* as *otoko rashii* (manly). Men don't stress it as *otoko rashii*. My wife thinks that *otoko rashisa* (masculinity) is reliability. That's what I feel. (Ueno-san, F)

Salarymen's wives in this generation belonged to the last cohort who were content with their monetary dependency. In fact, comments such as 'my wife didn't want to work [after marriage]' (Hino-san) and 'she didn't have the intention of working [after marriage] and, therefore, we chose the traditional division of labour' (Kuraoka-san) implied, on the one hand, their wives' presumed economic dependence on their husbands as well as, on the other hand, the diffusion of *daikokubashira* ideology among the minds of their wives. All the participants in this generation confidently saw themselves as *daikokubashira*, even those who had wives working part-time. Even as respondents mentioned their wives' part-time jobs, they never indicated that these made a significant financial contribution to the family. These respondents had no intention of abdicating their sense of sole financial responsibility and, despite the continuing economic downturn, their status as economic providers was protected by their large companies.

Two single participants in the sons' generation indicated their strong endorsement of the ideology of *daikokubashira*. While they did not necessarily oppose their future wives working, they felt that they should be the principal breadwinners:

I think that men should be *daikokubashira*.... I would say to my wife "please go and work" but I don't want her to work for our living. I would support her desire to work but only if it is not for our living.

(Miura-san, S)

Believing men's superiority to women in the workplace, Miura-san's tenacious confidence as a male worker indicated his strong desire to be a *daikokubashira*. Kusuda-san echoes this close connection of the role of economic provider with masculinity, even in a situation where he imagines his wife in paid employment, the ideology demonstrating its persistent force across the three generations.

I want to be *daikokubashira* for sure because I believe that protecting something is relevant to *otoko rashii* (masculinity). For example, to support my family or something like that is related to masculinity. Therefore, conversely, if my wife supports my family, it hurts my pride. (Kusuda-san, S)

Marriage was the path to *daikokubashira*, which made (or would make) the participants feel virile. While the current economic circumstances are not as favourable for the sons' generation as they had been for the grandfathers' generation, five out of seven married participants in the sons' generation have professional housewives. Tokuda-san also remarked that his spouse, who was looking forward to becoming a housewife, used to say to him, before they were married, 'I want to quit my job soon'.

Pigeonholing their own situations, more than one-half of participants in the fathers' generation and the majority of participants in the sons' generation comfortably said that they did not support the conventional family pattern. Their ostensible reasons were, for example, that 'there are various household patterns' (Tachibana-san), 'it is each family's choice' (Kuraoka-san), 'it is up to the individuals concerned' (Sugiura-san) and 'it is good for a wife to have a link with society' (Yoshino-san). They paid lip service at least to the official norms of gender equity but they also expressed comfort with the traditional situation – at least in their own family. Thus Tachibana-san and Kuraoka-san are saying that each family should choose, but their choice is to work.

Indeed, they were satisfied with the current situation, i.e. being *daikokubashira*, and they had no intention of changing their family patterns:

In my case, it's good that I work and my wife does housework because she is a good cook, good at cleaning, washing, and child rearing. Moreover, I have my mother [who lives with us]. My wife is getting along well with her. She also has good relationships with the neighbours. I'm happy with the current pattern. (Tachibana-san, F)

I think that each family should decide what to do. I don't mind a family that has a husband who does housework and a wife who makes money. You just need to think which way is effective because each man is useful in his own way. There are many men who are good at cooking. I don't mind [an unconventional family pattern]... I can't do it. I'm not made to be a househusband. I can't. (Kuraoka-san, F)

Sugiura-san whose wife had a full-time job, by contrast, expressed a sense of conflict between his ideal and his reality.

I don't think that a man should be *daikokubashira* but it would be better if it were possible, I suppose. But again, our time is different. I don't care. It's up to my wife. I'm easy. (Sugiura-san, F)

In fact, Sugiura-san was the main breadwinner in his family, but he wanted to be the sole economic provider (it was his wife's wish to work full-time). In the final analysis, it is a question of who earns the most that sustains (or undermines) a sense of masculinity. Should any of the participants fail to be the main breadwinner then it appears that their masculinity would be threatened. Thus being *daikokubashira* is significant hallmark of masculinity for most of the participants of all generations.

The following quotation represented an exception among participants:

I like to go to school, I mean, I used to attend general meetings of the PTA (the Parent Teacher Association). Mothers were rude. They often asked me “what’s the matter with your wife?” “Is she unwell?” [I thought] ‘are they suggesting that I am not supposed to come here?’ There were almost no men but I was there anyway. I didn’t feel uncomfortable at all because it was after my attendance at lectures on men’s issues. (Yoshino-san, F)

Yoshino-san had experienced an identity crisis as *daikokubashira* when his daughter stopped going to her primary school and, as a consequence, his wife had a nervous breakdown. Under the circumstances, Yoshino-san was anxious for unity in his family but he was impatient with himself because he was incapable of improving the situation as the head of the family. While the family problems were eventually solved, his uneasiness drove him to a public lecture on men’s issues which he saw advertised. He remembered that his dignity as a man totally disintegrated after attending the lecture; however, it did have a positive effect upon him. He described his transformation as attaining gender enlightenment, and he stopped confining himself to stereotypical ideas of masculinity. While Yoshino-san began to participate in a discussion group concerning men’s issues, it is a long way for this ‘therapeutic practice’ to generate a change in gender politics at a macro-level (Connell 1995, p.159). Nevertheless, he participated in school events which mothers usually attended; it was such a rare event that other mothers criticised him or his wife. However, his further participation in school events presented an alternative to other mothers. Moreover, Yoshino-san’s awareness of gender issues made an impact on his wife and she began to question her everyday performance of gender, thus changing the micro-politics in his household. The following section is concerned with the female counterpart of *daikokubashira*, *ryōsai kenbo* (good wife wise mother).

### ***Ryōsai kenbo*: an ideal woman**

The section on *ryōsai kenbo* in Chapter 2 dealt with its influence on the mothers of participants in this study and its relevance to their internalised traditional concept of gender. The transformation of the mothers of the grandfathers’ generation from child bearers to ‘*kyōiku mama*’ (education mum) by the time of the sons’ generation was outlined. As a result, most participants were not required to do housework in their childhood. This present section explores the way in which participants in the three generations associated their wives with ‘*ryōsai kenbo*’. Even though this term is considered anachronistic in contemporary Japan, it was decided to ask participants in all generations what this term meant to them. This gave them an opportunity to respond in terms of social change – for example describing their mothers but not their wives in this way, or locating the term as applicable to

historical but not contemporary gender relations. In fact many participants across three generations said that the saying '*ryōsai kenbo*' was a 'good word', a 'ringing phrase' and 'nice'. Furthermore, all the participants associated the word with their wives or future wives. None of them talked about their mothers in relation to the phrase, except for Nishida-san of the grandfathers' generation.<sup>163</sup> Nevertheless, the way in which participants in each generation related the concept to their wives suggested changing matrimonial relationships between them and their wives across the generations. For two of the grandfathers:

Well, this is one of my boasts. I have a good wife. If a man wants to succeed in his life, definitely, he has to have a good wife. That's the same as Toyotomi Hideyoshi.<sup>164</sup> He had a good *okaka* (wife). We don't need a man who doesn't have a good wife. You know why? I can easily tell a man's future if I see his wife at their home. Figuratively speaking, a woman is a knight. A man is a horse. It's all up to the knight to win by taking the reins skilfully. This is true in our society, isn't it? It is problematic if a woman works outside the house. She should manage her household, look after her family and manoeuvre her husband. She should make him work willingly by seeing him off to work. Then, he will happily come home. This is the proper work (for women). Society accepts a family that has achieved this. Moreover, a man of such a family can do a job that contributes to people, not to his family but to society. (Shiga-san, G)

Husbands shouldn't keep money. It's best to leave all the money in their wives' care but they have to be reliable, that is, *ryōsai kenbo*. Women don't waste money. If your wife is *ryōsai kenbo*, it's best for you to leave money matters to her. I give my income to my wife and have no money except some for necessary expenses. (Hirose-san, G)

For many participants (the older ones) in the grandfathers' generation, the concept of 'good wife wise mother' meant the ideal woman. Moreover, these participants quite confidently associated their wives with a 'good wife wise mother'. That is, the wives were ideal because they respected their husbands as the breadwinner and provided the participants with an environment in which they were able to focus on their work. This indicated an obvious division of labour at home and the well-established matrimonial hierarchy, i.e. the dominant husband and the subordinate wife. Furthermore, participants focused on wifehood rather than motherhood in relation to '*ryōsai kenbo*'. Out of thirteen participants in the grandfathers' generation, eight men had 'professional housewives' (see Table 8). These participants indicated a strong sense of responsibility for providing financial security, as mentioned in

<sup>163</sup> Nishida-san was born in 1937 as the youngest of seven siblings. He mentioned that his mother raised him and his siblings according to the 'good wife, wise mother' policy while his father was away fighting for the nation.

<sup>164</sup> Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598) is a popular historical person who was a military commander in the Age of Civil Wars (1428-1600).

the previous section, as if it were shameful for a man to have a wife with a job. Given that, their sense of authority appeared to be perfectly secure:

I clearly said to my wife that, “just because I was getting important at work, it doesn’t mean that you are becoming socially important”. I said to her that “you are only the wife of a chief of a factory and, therefore, don’t misinterpret yourself as important”.  
(Kasuga-san, G)

The above quotation implied Kasuga-san’s control over his wife. Nishida-san reflected similar thoughts, saying that ‘it was good to be a husband because a wife had to give way to him’. There were no wives in this generation who had part-time jobs, although three wives had piecework that was done at home. The husbands of these wives emphasised that their wives never worked outside the home and that their wives’ jobs were insignificant in supplementing the family budget. As unusual cases, the wives of Shiga-san and Yanase-san owned their own businesses. However, it is important to note that they had no say in the matter, the businesses being set up at their husbands’ behest. These two participants proudly indicated their authority by saying “I empowered my wife to run a business”.

**TABLE 8**  
**Occupation of Wives of the Participants**

	<b>Professional Housewife</b>	<b>Part-time work</b>	<b>Full-time</b>
<b>The Grandfathers’ Generation</b>	<b>8 (69%) (3 wives - piecework)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3 (full-time) 2 (self-employed) (31%)</b>
<b>The Fathers’ Generation</b>	<b>6 (43%)</b>	<b>6 (43%)</b>	<b>2 (14%)</b>
<b>The Sons’ Generation work</b>	<b>5 (72%)</b>	<b>1 (14%)</b>	<b>1 (14%)</b>

My favourite words (for the ideal woman) are expressed in a poem of four lines. ‘*Tsuma o metoraba, sai takete, mime uruwashiku, nasake arī* [I will take an intelligent, beautiful and compassionate woman to be my wife]. That’s it. I can’t say more than that. A woman like that automatically becomes ‘*ryōsai kenbo*’.  
(Katagiri-san, G)

This poem was a high school dormitory song in use under the old educational system (Iwakami 2003, p.64). Elite young men like Katagiri-san must have chanted it envisaging their future wives. Katagiri-san did not explicitly claim his authority over his wife but implied it with the comment that ‘my wife is very old-fashioned’. Wives of three of the participants in the grandfathers’ generation had a full time job; however, only one couple, Yoshida-san and his wife, left their two-year-old child at the crèche.

Two other wives went back to paid work when their children became old enough to be left home alone. These three participants did not indicate a strong sense of authority in determining their wives' decision to go back to work, although it was apparent that they, as well as other participants, did almost no housework. Comments such as 'my wife does things inside the house and I do things outside' (Kasuga-san) and 'I'm old-fashioned but I think that women have, to some extent, a desire to serve so I feel that it's not a good idea to disturb their territory' (Shiga-san) indicated a clear division of labour in the households in the grandfathers' generation.

I think it's (*ryōsai kenbo*) a good word. But if you ask me about my wife, I don't think she is. Well, she is very reliable. I can leave the entire management of the house to her. But her attitude to children, in terms of a wise mother, her attitude to them sometimes gets hysterical. This makes me think that she is very reliable but she is not a wise mother. As far as *ryōsai kenbo* is concerned, therefore, I would like my wife to deal with the children wisely. If you ask me if she is a good wife, she is a good wife most of the time. But, because there are times when I think 'who do you think you are?', she is not a 100 per cent good wife.

(Ashida-san, F)

The majority of participants in the fathers' generation lived with their dependent children. They, therefore, tended to link their wives to motherhood in relation to *ryōsai kenbo*. Hamada-san and Tachibana-san were the only participants who were proud of their wives and clearly associated their wives with *ryōsai kenbo*. Their responses implied their appreciation of traditional patriarchal family structures. Other participants, while they viewed the concept of 'good wife wise mother' as ideal, claimed that there was a gap between the ideal and the reality. They reflected a less patriarchal, marital hierarchy of which they did not always approve. For example, Amano-san had never met any opposition from his wife during their courtship; however, as the children grew older, he received conflicting views from his wife. He expressed some dissatisfaction, saying 'I know it's being rude to her to say she talks back but she tells me her opinions without minding what I think'. Men in the fathers' generation commonly spoke of women's behaviour changing once they were married and complained that their wives were less submissive to their husbands than wives were in the grandfathers' generation. As mentioned earlier, Shiga-san in the grandfathers' generation likened the idea of two halves that makes one to the oneness that consists of the wife as a rider and the husband as a horse. The above Amano-san's as well as Ashida-san's dissatisfaction suggest that the harmony of two halves can be maintained if the female half has her way with persuasion and manipulation but not outright criticism and nagging. Alternatively, men saw their wives as 'wise' 'education mothers'. The majority of participants were happy to leave most decisions concerning the education of their children to their wives, explaining that their wives were involved in various school events and knew their children better than their husbands did. A few participants, however, were critical of their wives, over-



zealous 'education mums', several, like Sugiura-san, seeing themselves as 'a buffer between my wife and daughter'.

Six wives in the fathers' generation had part-time jobs, and this caused their husbands no embarrassment. As long as they were the primary earner, men in the fathers' generation were secure in their sense of manhood. They supported their wives, more or less enthusiastically, in their decision to work, offering various reasons for the positive effects this had on their marital relationship. Tsutsumi-san said that his wife became cheerful because she had extra money to spend freely, the couple treating each other with their spare income. Hamada-san, by contrast, only reluctantly allowed his wife to work. Staying at home without friends, she came close to having a nervous breakdown and, therefore, he considered his wife's part-time job to be a psychological comfort for her. Apart from Hamada-san, the husbands of these working wives made some contribution to housework, but their wives still complained that their contribution was unsatisfactory.

The idea that children should be looked after by their mothers was the main cause that confined wives to the home and these wives only began to work when their children grew old enough to be left alone at home. Indeed, younger participants in the fathers' generation were concerned about their young children and they wanted their wives to look after their children at home without participating in any work outside. Amano-san did not like the idea of his small children coming home to an empty house. Every time his wife indicated her desire to work, Ashida-san convinced her to postpone the decision for a few years.<sup>165</sup> In conclusion, in the fathers' generation it was acceptable for wives to work and some men did a little housework as a result.

I haven't heard [the term] *ryōsai kenbo* ['good wife, wise mother'] for ages. I can write that in *kanji* [Chinese characters] but I wonder what that really means. I don't hear the word very often. But, I like that. I mean, I like a good wife who respects her husband and looks after her family. And because she is wise, she can manage the family budget well. 'Good wife, wise mother' is the ideal for a woman. (Kusuda-san, S)

Unlike the grandfathers' and fathers' generations, the first reaction of many participants in the sons' generation to the phrase '*ryōsai kenbo*' indicated that it no longer had a colloquial currency. The phrase, however, still represented the ideal woman for some of these participants, such as Noda-san who said that his wife embodied a 'good wife wise mother'. His wife, who was pregnant with their third child, was a professional housewife who respected him. Noda-san believed that his children

<sup>165</sup> According to two different surveys conducted in 1987 and 1994, the majority of mothers who are caring for toddlers wished to work (Nakatani 1999, p.47). Although Nakatani argues that the increasing proportion of mothers in this situation who want to work reflects the weakening myth of motherhood, my study indicates that one reason why they give up their desires and stay home may stem from their husbands' opposition to their wish to work.

understood that he worked hard to give his family all their creature comforts because his wife told their children every payday and bonus-day that ‘your father made money again for us this month’.<sup>166</sup> Noda-san explained that his wife happily followed in her mother’s footsteps, her mother dutifully serving her father. Noda-san confessed that his wife’s attitude was convenient for him. Tokuda-san stated that one of the ‘goals’ in his life was to have a wife who was a ‘good wife wise mother’. However, although his wife was a professional housewife with two small children at the time of the interview, he admitted that he would not mind if his wife worked when the children became old enough to look after themselves because he would appreciate his wife’s contribution to the family budget. While he wanted to be the breadwinner, he was conscious of the fact that it was no longer easy for him to secure the family finances all by himself, which he attributed to the long stagnant economy and the changing corporate culture of employment (see Chapter 4).

Several single participants, such as Kusuda-san, quoted above, and Okano-san were looking for a *ryōsai kenbo*. However, Okano-san implied, despite his strong desire to marry, that he was having difficulty finding the perfect woman who would be happy with the conventional role of a housewife. Despite his desire for a *ryōsai kenbo*, Kusuda-san admitted that he might do housework if necessary, acknowledging that women today do not follow the traditional mode of household management. Likewise, Ebara-san revealed that his desire for a *ryōsai kenbo* was wishful thinking because he was certain that his girlfriend would pursue her career and he would have to do some housework if they married. These single participants remain fascinated by the patriarchal family structure but they are aware of the demands made by prospective wives. Some even speculated about how they should or could meet their girlfriends’ expectations.

My wife is like a husband who just opts to help with the housework. I am something of a househusband but I don’t manage housework perfectly like John Lennon. (Take-san, S)

Two participants had already been drawn into the vortex of their wives’ influence, one describing his wife as ‘manly’ (Take-san) and the other describing his desire for an egalitarian relationship (Hirose-san). According to Take-san, his wife did not possess the femininity which he had seen in his ex-girlfriends. He did most of the housework, including cooking, cleaning and shopping. Take-san stated that he and his wife were not concerned about each other’s masculinity and femininity. He, however, was not an advocate of egalitarian matrimonial partnerships. He did housework out of necessity: only because his wife was not a very good housekeeper. While he was not ashamed of his situation, he

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<sup>166</sup> Ashida-san in the fathers’ generation also said that his wife sometimes told their children that they had all the comforts thanks to his hard work.

was aware that the circumstances did not represent the mainstream and justified it by saying that his marriage was just 'odd'.<sup>167</sup>

Hirose-san was the only participant who indicated that '*ryōsai kenbo*' was not the ideal. He actually thought about staying at home as a househusband and discussed this idea with his wife when they had a baby, the couple rejecting the idea because of the financial inconvenience. Although Hirose-san admitted that he was not good at housework at all because his mother did everything for him at home before his marriage, when he wanted a household task done he did it rather than expecting his wife to do it. Hirose-san has also been looking after his baby as much as possible. He was surprised to see people's astonishment when he changed nappies. Hirose-san's wife did not strive to be a *ryōsai kenbo*, expressing her extreme anxiety at the beginning of their marriage that Hirose-san would do no housework and that all the responsibility for it would be placed upon her shoulders. While Hirose-san adapted himself to his wife's wishes, like Take-san, he did not explain this in terms of gender equality but, rather, as a result of adapting himself to his partnership. In conclusion, while the sons' generation knew the term 'good wife, wise mother' and some endorsed it, some also saw it as old-fashioned. Moreover, changing expectations among young women and their reluctance to marry has created two unconventional matrimonial relationships in the sons' generation. Turning now to '*kenbo*' (wise mother), the next section explores parenting.

### 3.3 Parenting

In the 1970s in the United States, the concept of the 'new fatherhood' drew both academic and popular attention (Lamb 1987, pp.3-6). An article entitled 'Fathers: Forgotten Contributors to Child Development' by Michael E. Lamb in 1975, cast a new light on paternal childcare, given that prior to this publication developmental psychology concentrated its 'parent-child' relationship research overwhelmingly on the mother-child relationship. In Japan, in 1981, a group called 'Thunderous Fathers' (*Kaminari oyaji no kai*)<sup>168</sup> was established by a group of prominent people (Shwalb *et al.* 1987, p.247).<sup>169</sup> The group deplored the powerlessness of fathers following the Second World War and urged the resurgence of patriarchal and authoritarian fathers, deploying the argument that social problems concerning youth were a result of weakened fathers.<sup>170</sup> However, motherhood was (and still

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<sup>167</sup> Take-san did not follow any of the conventional ceremonial aspects of marriage, e.g. no exchange of betrothal gifts, no wedding ceremony and no wedding reception. He and his wife lived separately, although, at the time of the interview, they were looking for a place to live together.

<sup>168</sup> *Kaminari oyaji* refers to an irascible old man who roars at people.

<sup>169</sup> Including an actor (Sugawara Bunta), a boxer (Gattsu Ishimatsu), a cartoonist, a member of the National Diet, a sumo wrestler and an explorer.

<sup>170</sup> Dominant mothers, youth violence, school refusal, apathy and rebellion were often associated with weakened fathers (Shwalb *et al.* 1987, pp.259-260).

is) so rigidly defined as an irreproachable norm that, despite the interventions of groups such as 'Thunderous Fathers', a meaningful definition of fatherhood was not established and fatherhood remained 'in a state of flux' in the early 1980s (Shwalb *et al.* 1987, p.247). As a well known phrase – 'it is good that husbands are healthy and away from home' – which appeared in a television commercial in 1987 indicated, the dominant position appeared to endorse the father's absence from the home. Despite the increasing number of studies on the father-child relationship in the United States from the 1970s, in Japan, it was not until the 1990s that much research on fatherhood began to appear (Kaizuma 2004, p.23; Kashiwagi 2003, p.235).<sup>171</sup> The so-called 'controversy concerning the restoration of fatherhood' emerged in the late 1990s, the point at issue being whether or not the absence of a father or the lack of distinct paternity in child rearing arrests the healthy growth of children, in particular, that of boys (Kaizuma 2004, pp.30-31; Ōno 1999, pp.88-89). As mentioned in the Introduction, Hayashi (1996), one of the major proposers of the restoration of fatherhood, stirred up academic discussion as well as public opinion concerning fatherhood. Hayashi's advocacy of the need for dignified and disciplinarian paternity with leadership, which is distinguished from comforting maternity, in order for children's psyches to develop in a healthy manner (Hayashi 1996, p.122) continues to meet with counterarguments by feminists and pro-feminists. Their criticism is that advocates of the restoration of fatherhood do not promote active paternal childcare but aim to restore or strengthen the father's patriarchal status in the home (Kaizuma 2004, p.30; Ōno 1999, p.88).

Although the number of married women who enter the workforce has been increasing since the 1980s in Japan (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications 2006a), there was (and probably still is) a strong belief in '*sansaiji shinwa*' (myth of the three-year-old) among the Japanese population in the latter half of the twentieth century in middle-class households (Roberts 2002, p.71). The slogan – *sansai made haha no tede* (up to the age of three, in mother's hands) (Kashiwagi 2003, p.200) – which was based on an old saying '*mitsugo no tamashii hyaku made*', literally means that the soul of a three-year old child persists until a person is one hundred years old. The essence of the slogan is that it is vital for a baby and young child to be taken good care of by the mother. Not only women but also the male-dominated psychological profession tended to endorse this myth (Kashiwagi 2003, p.236; Taga 2005a, p.55). Indeed, until quite recently, government childcare policies were explicitly based on it (Roberts 2002, p.71). In this section, an analytic framework, explaining the factors correlated with the degree of paternal childcare developed in the United States, is applied to the Japanese situation in the same manner as Ishii-Kuntz (1994) and Ishii-Kuntz and others (2004) have done. The participants' pattern of engagement in childcare across the three generations in the research is compared with the findings of other studies of Japanese fathers' involvement in childcare.

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<sup>171</sup> According to Kaizuma (2004, p.29), various publications targeted at the general public since the 1960s have dealt with the topic of fatherhood from the viewpoint of developmental psychology.

### 3.3.1 Studies of fatherhood in Japan

Although maternal childcare was held by the mainstream to be the key to child development, there has been some piecemeal research on fatherhood in Japan. According to Sawayama (cited in Kaizuma 2005, pp.52-53), active paternal childcare that was a feature of the samurai class disappeared in the 1910s. This was because fathers as educators were replaced by school education, because the natural sciences promoted breast-feeding of infants, and because the emergence of the new middle class due to capitalism reduced the meaning of the father to that of the economic provider. Fathers became secondary in childcare, resulting in the current gendered division of childcare. In 2001, the husband in the double income family spent only 5 minutes a day on average in childcare, an increase from 1 minute per day in 1986, while the husband in the single income family spent 13 minutes a day on average in childcare, an increase from 2 minutes per day in 1986 (Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Post and Telecommunications 2003).<sup>172</sup> The Family Life Education International Survey, conducted in 1994, found that Japanese men were in the company of their children for an average of 3.3 hours each day. The survey also revealed that 18.8 per cent of the sample never spent time with their children on weekdays, in marked contrast to their US counterparts, of whom only 0.9 per cent spent no time with their children on weekdays (Ishii-Kuntz *et al.* 2004, p.780). Another report found that fathers are severe disciplinarians, whereas mothers are soft soothers (Kashiwagi 2003, p.246). Other studies showed that fathers were often involved in 'fun' activities with their children; mothers, however, were occupied by everyday physical and emotional care for their children (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2000; Ishii-Kuntz *et al.* 2004, p.780; Ōno 1999, p.87). Another report found that active paternal childcare increases a sense of well-being in children. Children who have substantial interaction with their fathers set a high value on their fathers, while children with little interaction with their fathers placed little trust in their fathers (Kashiwagi 2003, pp.258-259). While one study found that young fathers identify themselves as the father rather than the breadwinner, cross-cultural studies demonstrate that Japanese fathers' participation in childcare is limited and consistently the lowest (Gender Equity bureau 2006, p.66; Kashiwagi 2003, p.255; Taga 2005a, p.52).

### 3.3.2 Analytical Insights

Paternal childcare is often assessed by the amount of time which fathers devote to childcare. It is, however, also important to look at factors that influence the degree of the fathers' involvement in childcare so as to understand the causal relationship between the factors and the level of paternal childcare. The analytical framework developed by Pleck (1997) is based on comprehensive reviews of various studies concerning paternal childcare in the United States. The control variables include the

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<sup>172</sup> Measuring the care for pre-school children under 6 years old.

fathers' motivation, relative and absolute resources, the gender ideology of each spouse, the time availability of each spouse, family size, childcare demands, the degree of the father's satisfaction with his job and workplace policies, thus involving the fathers' subjective understanding of their circumstances relating to childcare (Pleck 1997, pp.75-95). Few Japanese studies have sought to establish the causal relationship between factors contributing to paternal childcare by using data collected from fathers (Ishii-Kuntz *et al.* 2004, pp.779-780). Pleck's analytical insights are, therefore, used to explore the fathers' 'parenting voices' in my study<sup>173</sup> (Stueve and Pleck 2001, p.692). Before moving on to a discussion of the fathers' narratives in my sample, the following section firstly explains the analytical framework and secondly examines the Japanese studies on patterns of fathering by salarymen.

The father's motivation for childcare is influenced by the quality of paternal childcare which the fathers received in their own childhood, although one argument claims that fathers are inclined to follow a similar pattern to that of their fathers (whether low or high involvement), while the other claims that fathers compensate for their own fathers' lack of childcare (Pleck 1997, p.80). Relative and absolute resources include the occupational status of both the husband and the wife, income differences between them, educational achievements and differences between them and their relative ages (Pleck 1997, pp.85, 88). Fathers who have wives who are employed participate in childcare to a greater extent than fathers whose wives are unemployed. Fathers who wish to encourage their wives who have a good career potential are more likely to take part in childcare. The impact of the wives' career prospects on the father's childcare involvement is stronger than that of the wives' income. The higher the mother's education the more likely the father is to take part in childcare. Fathers who have older wives tend to be more involved in childcare than fathers with younger wives (Pleck 1997, pp.85, 88). Egalitarian gender ideologies held by both husband and wife encourage fathers to participate in childcare (Pleck 1997, pp.85, 89). Concerning time availability, fathers who spend long hours at work obviously share little time with their children. However, if the wives have little time available for childcare, this promotes their husbands' involvement in it. Childcare support from outside the marital relationship discourages paternal childcare (Pleck 1997, p.90). The demands for childcare are determined by the number of children and the age of the youngest; childcare demands increase when a couple has an infant or many young children. A higher demand encourages fathers to share childcare. While job satisfaction does not impact directly on childcare, it is correlated with reduced time availability on the part of the father and thus reduced paternal childcare. Finally, a family-friendly environment at work increases the time available for fathers to participate in childcare (Pleck 1997, pp.91-95). The following section applies Pleck's framework concerning the influences on paternal childcare to the findings from Japanese studies, drawing a comparison with the findings from my study.

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<sup>173</sup> Ishii-Kuntz *et al.* (2004) applied Pleck's analytical framework to their study of Japanese fathers and their involvement in childcare.

In the Japanese context, parenting is understood to consist of two stages. The first stage is called *ikuji*, or infant-care, and the second stage is called *kosodate*, or child rearing. The section follows these definitions when discussing research findings.

With reference to the factors influencing the fathers' involvement in childcare across the three generations, married participants with children in this study indicated an extremely low level of involvement in childcare. Although little is known of Japanese fathers' motivation, a recent study on nurturing fathers suggests that many respondents made amends for the authoritarian attitudes of their own fathers (Ishii-Kuntz 2003, pp.206-207). The participants in my study, by contrast, showed little motivation for paternal childcare, even though they reported little paternal childcare in their own childhood. Additionally, they did not seem to harbour ill-feeling because of their fathers' lack of childcare. Thus most of them followed a similar pattern to that of their fathers. Regarding relative and absolute resources, available studies indicate that the husband whose wife has a full time job and a high level of education tends to be active in childcare (Gender Equality Bureau 2006, p.11; Ishii-Kuntz *et al.* 2004, p.781; Ōno 1999, pp.99-100). The husband's higher level of education also directs him towards a keener engagement in childcare. The researchers suggest that an income gap between the husband and the wife may not be a significant factor because, even if the husband is the sole breadwinner, his wife usually has major control over the budget (Ishii-Kuntz *et al.* 2004, p.788) and also if she earns more she also contributes more and so this part of her role is seen as more valuable. As for age, a husband who has a wife of a comparable age tends to do more childcare than those who have a much younger wife (Ishii-Kuntz *et al.* 2004, p.781). In my study, all the participants worked for large companies and married participants with children were the principal earners in their families. The majority of their wives were housewives. Being the breadwinner and working for a large corporation gave the participants a sense of authority, regardless of the educational, income and age-gap between them and their wives. There is a gap, however, between a wish and the actual conduct. The fathers' wishes to participate in childcare more and to reduce working hours at the birth of the first child are rarely met. On the contrary, that men who prioritise work are widely considered to be ideal men and that society does not think highly of paternal childcare discourage fathers from engaging in childcare (Gender Equality Bureau 2005, pp.71-72). A couple's egalitarian gender ideologies influence the fathers' engagement in childcare (Ōno 1999, p.102). Likewise, Japanese fathers who actively participate in childcare found that strong persuasion by wives channelled them into active paternal participation (Ishii-Kuntz 2003, pp.207-208; Ōta 1999, p.83<sup>174</sup>). However, many mothers tend to take on the whole responsibility for childcare and mothers with full-time work are likely to feel guilty for spending less time on childcare than other mothers because these working mothers have internalised the myth that young children should be looked after by their mothers (Ōno 1999, pp.102-103). As a

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<sup>174</sup> See also *Otoko mo onna mo ikuji jikan wo!* Renrakukai (ed.) (1995) pp.40-42

result, the guilt of many mothers with a job drives them to overcompensate for their lack of time with their children and they try to engage in childcare at home as much as possible rather than expect their husbands to participate. The gender ideologies of the majority of the married participants in my study were decidedly conservative. They did not indicate incompatibility between their gender ideologies and those of their wives, except in some passing comments. For example, Hino-san in the fathers' generation mentioned that 'she hasn't said anything lately but I know she wants me to help more and play the role of father' and Tsutsumi-san in the same generation stated that 'she often says to me "you didn't care about me when I was having a difficult time [with infant-care]"'. The participants spent long hours at work, which suggested that they had little time available for childcare.

Japanese fathers who live in a large extended family, with more adults to offer childcare, tend to share childcare less than men who live in a nuclear family (Ishii-Kuntz *et al.* 2004, p.782; National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2000). Despite the fact that the majority of the married participants in my study lived in a nuclear family, only their wives took responsibility for childcare. However, participants who lived with their parents relied upon their parents for help. As for childcare demand, Japanese fathers are concerned about the care of infants and tend to make efforts to participate in infant care; however, they hand over it to their wives prior to their children's schooling (Ishii-Kuntz 1994 p.33; National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2000; Schwalb *et al.* 1987 p.256). Many married participants with children in my study were unconcerned about childcare demands at home because their main interest was their work. Ishii-Kuntz and others (2004, p.783) found that the fathers' dissatisfaction with their work channels them into their families, which increases their involvement in childcare. In my study, almost all the married participants were very satisfied with their jobs. However, even those respondents who were unhappy at work did not retreat to their families, being still bound by their companies. In fact, a study indicates that men who come home from work after eight p.m. and later are much less engaged in childcare compared with men who come home before eight p.m. (Kashiwagi 2003, p.269; National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2000; Ōno 1999, p.98)

Concerning the policies of the workplace, despite the availability of childcare leave for women and men in Japan since 1992, only 0.12 per cent of eligible fathers took childcare leave in 1996, rising to only 0.42 per cent in 1999, and changing not at all by 2002 (Kashiwagi 2003, p.268; Roberts 2002, p.70). Among my married respondents, taking childcare leave was unthinkable. Only one nurturing father, Hirose-san in the sons' generation, considered taking childcare leave. Ultimately, he decided not to do so because of financial difficulties. A word like 'outrageous!' was often uttered by participants of the grandfathers' and fathers' generations in response to the suggestion that fathers take childcare leave, implying the highest priority should be placed on work. Thus the participants demonstrated distinctly



uncooperative attitudes in relation to childcare. While Japanese fathers appear to hold the world record for minimal involvement in paternal childcare, the salarymen in my study appear to be even less involved than the average Japanese father.

### **3.3.3 The meaning of childcare**

I asked participants their views concerning a poster (see Figure 3) that appeared in the so-called 'Sam Campaign', carried out under a scheme called the 'Angel Plan' by the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW) (Roberts 2002, pp.57-60, 76-77). In the hope that paternal involvement would reverse the declining birth rate, the Sam campaign encouraged fathers to participate in childcare.

MHW produced the poster in 1999, in which Sam, who was at that time the husband of the very popular rock star Amuro Namie, was holding their baby. MHW disseminated one million posters across Japan (Roberts 2002, p.77). Its catch phrase is 'men who do not do childcare are not called father' which appears in the right hand margin. The message beneath the picture reads:

Seventeen minutes a day. That is the average amount of time Japanese fathers spend on childcare. It takes two people to make a child; however, it seems as if the mother is raising the child all by herself. Under this condition, it is no wonder that women do not feel secure about bearing a child. Pregnancy and childbirth are great work only women can do but isn't childcare a great job that men also can do? We would like fathers to know better the joys and difficulties of childrearing. We would like them to think more about the children who will carry the twenty-first century for us. Please take the time to gaze calmly into your children's hearts and become a wonderful father.

To the left, the section is entitled "aiming for society that supports childcare":

Although the basis of childrearing is the home, it goes without saying that the entire society should be involved in the issue of building a system to support childrearing. Our society is preparing a cooperative system in various areas in order to arrange an environment where people who desire children can give birth and rear them without anxiety. The time when not only the state and local governments but also companies, workplaces and local communities look after children of the twenty-first century is just around the corner.

In addition to their low involvement in childcare, respondents across the three generations maintained very gender-specific notions of infant-care and child rearing. Concerning infant-care, women changed nappies and spent time with their children in order to meet the children's day-to-day needs but,

according to my respondents, men did childcare by setting a manly example, by being the breadwinner for the family. To borrow Amano-san's words, this is called "manly childcare".

NOTE: This image is included on page 137 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 3 - Poster for the 'Sam Campaign'  
(Source: Asahi shinbun 17 March 1999, p.6)

Participants in the grandfathers' and some of the fathers' generation, whose children were born in the middle of the high economic growth period (1955-73), were physically and emotionally occupied with their jobs. They worked six days a week<sup>175</sup> and they were busy entertaining customers on Sundays. In retrospect, Honda-san of the grandfathers' generation mused that his generation represented those who hardly spent any time with their children. However, the situation was almost the same in the fathers' generation. They were bound by their companies. It was all they could do to see their children's sleeping faces when they returned home from work. Nevertheless, they yielded to the tide of the times without feeling any guilt at leaving childcare entirely to their wives. These men had a strong sense of the patriarchal division of labour. "Men at work, women at home" and "childcare is a woman's job" were typical comments.

Fathers in the sons' generation, who had more time at home than other generations because of the economic recession (commencing in the 1990s), were still reluctant to share childcare. Unlike the older generations, these young participants indicated that they understood the abstract idea that fathers should participate in childcare. Their actual involvement was, however, far from equal. The myth of motherhood was prevalent: a discourse which maintains that maternal childcare is natural, right and best for children and, therefore, mothers should devote themselves to their children regardless of their self-sacrifice entailed. Moreover, this discourse claims that such dedication is the virtue of motherhood, which is innate and supreme (Kashiwagi 2003, p.199). Shimizu-san of the sons' generation, who had two preschool children, asserted that 'there is no substitute for mothers in infant-care' and therefore, 'I would like to provide security [by working hard]'. Although childcare is a social construction, it is readily associated with women's physiological functions such as child bearing and lactation (Iwakami 2003, p.138).

Interestingly, many participants across the three generations concerned themselves with the definition of childcare. Regarding the poster, some participants began by saying 'it depends on what childcare means'. As Amano-san's comment above indicates, a number of men differentiated paternal childcare from maternal childcare. Tokuda-san of the sons' generation, who had a preschool son and daughter at the time of the interview, also distinguished paternal from maternal engagement in childcare:

I think it's a matter of definition. Infant-care doesn't mean only cuddling or playing with the child. Probably, ah, our behaviour is important. Even if you don't spend time with your children, I think they observe you. When I was small, I did the same. So, I don't think childcare is only spending time with children. I feel the poster is wrong and I sort of resist it. (Tokuda-san, S)

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<sup>175</sup> Working a five-day week was introduced in large companies in the 1980s (Ishii-Kuntz 1994, p.33).

Not only married participants but also the unmarried participant, Okano-san, stated that 'there are different ways to define childcare'. These men meant that maternal childcare was taking everyday physical and emotional responsibilities for the child, while paternal childcare was "indirect childcare" in which fathers work hard for the family. Tsutsumi-san of the fathers' generation conveyed precisely what other participants meant when he said:

Every father does childcare. Men are working hard. I think that's childcare too.

(Tsutsumi-san, F)

The idea that women are in charge of infant-care and that men provide financial security for their families is understood by participants to constitute correct parenting. Thus they resisted the government's message that men should participate in infant-care. This suggests that being a corporate warrior does not entail being a caring father or an affectionate family man.

The respondents had the same opinion in relation to child rearing. Hamada-san, of the fathers' generation, a father of two daughters, declared that his family was the most important thing for him and, therefore, he worked hard, believing that his hard work benefited his family:

Everyone has his own ideal. I have nothing to do with the poster, out of the question. I have other things to do, other things that contribute to child rearing. I do what I can as the division of labour is clear.

(Hamada-san, F)

Additionally, participants in the sons' and fathers' generations, who currently live with their children, considered their role in child rearing to be that of a severe father whom their children obeyed. As mentioned earlier, the idea that fathers are hard and severe disciplinarians and mothers are soft soothers is prevalent amongst the participants. The clear dualism between soft motherhood and hard fatherhood in home discipline is discernible. Noda-san of the sons' generation is a father of a preschool and a primary school child and his wife is expecting another child:

My wife tells our children off about everyday small things. But the children don't listen to her because they just think she is saying the same thing over and over again. So, I have implanted an image in them that father is severe. I give them the final lecture. Then, you know, they listen to me. It's like the final control. I think that's my role.

(Noda-san, S)

In accordance with Noda-san, Amano-san of the fathers' generation who is a father of two teenage boys also noted that his role was to give his children 'a severe scolding'. Okano-san, a single man of

the sons' generation, stated that it was more appropriate for a man to become 'a father with dignity in whose presence children behave' than to become a father who changed nappies. Any other notion of fatherhood hardly existed in the minds of the participants who strongly endorsed the dichotomy between motherhood and fatherhood in infant and child rearing. I attribute this dualism to ideologies such as the myth of motherhood and the patriarchal division of labour, which facilitate participants in limiting their paternal roles to patriarchal authority.

## Conclusion

The sexuality of the participants of all the generations evolved in the arena of a male homosocial and heterosexual world. Despite many participants' lack of experience in friendly and intimate relationships with women, most participants ensconced themselves comfortably in the institution of marriage. As the love marriage joined the mainstream, emotional attachment to the wife became increasingly important as an incentive to marry, in particular, for many married participants in the sons' generation. However, the utilitarianism in marriage did not disappear over the three generations. Moreover, marriage conferred the honour of *daikokubashira* (the breadwinner) upon participants regardless of generation, which was essential for the participants to nurture their sense of masculinity in themselves. Obviously, the majority of married men reproduced their original household patterns – the patriarchal power relations and the division of labour – in their own families. It was not only the participants' desires but also their wives' wills that replicated the traditional family arrangements in their own households. Unlike the contemporary young women who delay marriage or do not marry as discussed in Dales (2005) and those young women who demand the 'three lows' described in the media, wives in the grandfathers' generation followed traditional social expectations as a wife and mother. Wives in the fathers' generation, the last generation who willingly sought to become homemakers, also did so. Even in the sons' generation, a girlfriend of a participant, who accompanied him during the interview, stated without hesitation that she would like to follow in the footsteps of her parents, i.e. to marry a salaryman and become a housewife. Indeed, wives of the majority of married participants in the sons' generation are professional housewives. Thus mutual interdependence<sup>176</sup> between husband and wife continues to produce a replica of the original family and is the key to the efficient and prosperous salaryman family. Even so, some families in the sons' generation can be described as unconventional: Take-san did most of the housework as his wife was not good at it and Hirose-san's wife intentionally neglected some housework in order to avoid shouldering the entire burden. Furthermore, in the fathers' generation unexpected familial and conjugal crises altered the existing relations: e.g. Yoshino-san whose emancipation from traditional masculinity made his wife question her attitudes towards

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<sup>176</sup> Vogel (1986, p. 275) characterises Japan as an 'interdependent society'. In the conjugal context, she argues that, while the husband is dependent on his wife 'for emotional support and for care of all his daily needs', the wife is dependent on her husband for financial support (Vogel 1986, p.277).

performing femininity. However, the gendered division of labour and the identification of men with the breadwinning role remain strong, apparently stronger than in the USA, Australia and most other developed countries if men's share of housework is any indication. Thus the participants' performance of the role of corporate warrior indicates its irreconcilability with household responsibilities. The next chapter explores the participants in the public sphere, that is, their working lives and their post-retirement life.

## 4 WORK

The previous chapter discussed the participants' experiences in the private sphere: love and marriage. Conjugal relationships over the three generations changed from patriarchal relationships towards egalitarian partnerships. However, it is difficult to deny that most participants, regardless of generation, took the traditional division of labour for granted. That is, men played exclusively the role of the breadwinners outside the household and contributed little at home as fathers. The present chapter explores the participants as workers in the public sphere, the workplace and their post-retirement lives. Notwithstanding the prevailing concept that only men can perform the role of paid workers and breadwinners, there is a slight tension between institutional changes and individuals' ideals, a tension not observed in the private milieu of most participants in this study. The Japanese economy experienced high economic growth from 1955, attaining its fastest growth rate by the early 1970s. Japan's rise from the devastation subsequent to the Second World War was once extolled as the Japanese miracle (e.g. Vogel 1979). The 'miracle', however, came to an end in the early 1990s when the asset-inflation bubble economy collapsed. As seen in the previous chapter, these economic transformations certainly affected not only the participants' private lives but also their working lives. By examining corporate cultures, this chapter explores the participants' experiences in the public sphere. As Nakane (1967, pp.30-31) argues, participants in this study generally indicated their subjective perception of their companies and used expressions such as '*uchino*' (my) or '*warewareno*' (our) company, implying the importance of a collective or family-like structure in men's lives.<sup>177</sup> As will be evident in the following discussion, sex segregation is a marked characteristic in the workplace just as it was in the private sphere. This distinct demarcation between men and women does not necessarily provide the participants with continuing patriarchal dividend in their post-retirement lives. The Japanese media often demean retired men because of their uselessness, calling them, for example, "big rubbish". In fact, the number of divorces among elderly couples has been escalating over the last five decades (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 2000a; Saitō 1999, p.222; see p.182 below). These phenomena, whether a media craze or an actual distance between husband and wife, are by no means irrelevant to the retired participants in this study. This chapter also explores the post-retirement and the post-childrearing life of the retired participants, identifying this as the site where pronounced sex segregation throughout their lives manifests its consequences.

The first section looks at the transition from secondary and tertiary education to work. More importantly, it analyses the participants' perception of '*freeters*' (part-time workers, further explained below) who make a striking contrast to salarymen in relation to stability and security. The second

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<sup>177</sup> To be precise, the expression '*uchino*' connotes 'I am an insider' and, therefore, 'you are an outsider'. The expression signifies an individual's oneness with the workplace (Nakane 1967, pp.30-31). It is worth noting that Nakane's argument as a theory of the Japanese is criticised for its application to Japanese businessmen, the theory thus lacking an analysis of Japanese women. See Morris-Suzuki (1998) pp.128-129 and McLelland and Dasgupta (2005) p.3.

section examines sex-based discrimination in the workplace. More specifically, the employment system and sexual harassment are discussed. The participants receive the patriarchal dividend from their companies but have to pay a painful price, including long working hours, *karōshi* (sudden death by overwork), frequent transfers and *tanshinfunin* (going to a distant post unaccompanied by families, further discussed below). Among these costs, transfers and *tanshinfunin* are the themes in the third section. The fourth section deals with the significance of work for the participants through an exploration of their '*ikigai*' (what makes life worth living). The final section explores the outcome of sex segregation by looking at the retired participants' perception of the quality of their lives after retirement as well as the participants' communication with their wives and children after child rearing.

#### 4.1 Entering Society: Transition from Education to Work

In Japan, the phrase "*shakaijin ni naru*" (to become a fully fledged adult<sup>178</sup>) denotes entering society. It is also used to describe entering the workforce as full-time and permanent workers. In theory, the phrase applies equally to young men and women; however, the cultural expectation to enter society via employment is stronger in relation to men than women. The expectation is that men will move immediately from the completion of their formal education to full-time and permanent employment. In other words, regardless of the level of education at which they graduate, male students are expected to enter the workforce on the first of April, following their graduation in March in the same year.<sup>179</sup> Until recently, it was unthinkable to have an intermission between education and work. Therefore, job seeking (*shūshoku-katsudō*) before the completion of one's education is a necessary and almost universally shared ritual. It is of course advantageous for job-seekers to have a university degree in order to obtain a position in a large company; however, at least until the economic bubble burst, higher education was not always a prerequisite. For those students who had not completed university, 'career guidance' offered by junior high schools, high schools and vocational high schools placed their graduates in jobs in companies (Kariya 1991, pp.55-56; Nakajima 2004, p.101; Okano 1993, p.144).<sup>180</sup> The percentage of young people entering employment each year who do so through these paths was more than 60 per cent of male high school students in the 1970s and about 50 per cent in the 1990s (Fukuzawa and LeTendre 2001, p.22; Ojima 2003, p.19). Of these young people, some twenty per cent in 1987 and approximately thirty per cent in 1992 entered companies that had more than one thousand employees (Kariya 1991, p.31; Kosugi and Hori 2004, p.18).

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<sup>178</sup> *Shakaijin* literally means "a social person/human being"; however, the significance of the word is better understood by the term 'a fully fledged adult'.

<sup>179</sup> This recruitment of fresh school leavers and university graduates became a popular practice in some large corporations at the end of the nineteenth century (Beck and Beck 1994, p.36).

<sup>180</sup> See Kariya (1991) and Okano (1993) for a thorough account of the function of high schools as employment agencies.



The proportion of university graduates who entered large companies, by contrast, has been approximately twice that of their high school counterparts (Kariya 1991, p.31; Kosugi and Hori 2004, p.20). Until the 1970s, employment services in universities were as systematic and detailed as those in high schools. This is called *shiteikō-sei* (a system in which employers designate universities for job offers, the selection for which is often based on the academic quality of the students).<sup>181</sup> However, this system has been diminishing since the 1970s. Instead, private job agencies independent of universities have been providing students with information about jobs and students now apply to any company that interests them (Kosugi 2003, p.61). Starting on the first day in October prior to the year of graduation, employers begin to notify students informally that they have been successful in their job application (Kosugi 2003, p.19). As a result, some university students begin job seeking in their third year of study and all have started by early in their fourth year (Mathews 2004, p.121). Education is neglected for job seeking, the smooth transition to employment being more important in the life course of men than achieving excellent academic results (Mathews 2004, pp.122-123).

Irrespective of generation, most participants experienced a smooth transition from education to work either because it was a matter of course or of necessity. This feeling was especially acute for the participants in the grandfathers' generation whose families had experienced poverty and who felt that they had to reduce their parents' financial burden. Amongst the few exceptions were Kasuga-san, Shiga-san and Sonoda-san, who entered employment just before or just after the end of the Second World War when there were few available job choices.<sup>182</sup> While these participants initially took what was available to them, they kept changing their jobs until they gained a satisfactory position in a large company through the networks of their families or relatives. Only one participant, Segawa-san in the sons' generation, became a *freeter* after graduating from university.

Participants who entered employment from secondary education after 1949 found their jobs through employment services in their high schools. Simply following the suggestions of and with encouragement from their teachers, they took employment examinations. Ishihara-san in the grandfathers' generation and Hamada-san in the fathers' generation explained that as high school students they were ignorant concerning society or corporations and their teachers' guidance was crucial for them in finding a job, the only other employment path being personal contacts, knowing someone who had some influence in a particular company. The participants who went to university conducted their own research into companies, beginning in the third or the fourth year. They were interested in the scale of companies, the range of salaries and the quality of welfare and security. That

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<sup>181</sup> By contrast, the job referral system in high schools is called *tokuteikō-sei* (a system in which employers designate high schools, and selection is based on the established relationships between schools and employers rather than on the academic excellence of students) (Kariya 1991, pp.63-64; Kosugi 2003, p.61).

<sup>182</sup> Sonoda-san was a cleaner in a building that was occupied by the American Headquarters when Japan was in a state of destruction following the War. He was given one roll of bread for lunch and was paid ¥15 (A\$ 10 cents) per day.

is, they expressed job preferences on the basis of security and benefits offered by employers, not the duties of the job.<sup>183</sup> Comments by Tachibana-san in the fathers' generation perhaps represented most participants in this research. Tachibana-san claimed that, although very few people entered the corporations of their dreams, workers were satisfied with their employment situation and were as grateful as he was for their good fortune.<sup>184</sup> As an exception, Sasaki-san of the grandfathers' generation with a postgraduate degree in mechanical engineering pursued his dream of making motorcycles. Sasaki-san actively chose a company that could realise his dream regardless of the employment conditions.<sup>185</sup> Toda-san is another exception being actively scouted by his company because of his baseball talent, and so not having to undertake job seeking. Segawa-san is the only participant who did not enter employment immediately after formal education. He described himself as a *freeter* working part-time in an insurance company.

#### 4.1.1 *Freeter*

In the early 1990s, the smooth education-to-work transition among students was disrupted by the bursting of the bubble economy (Kariya 1991, p.3; Kosugi 2004a, p.37). From its peak in 1992, the automatic employment of new high school leavers continued to fall and high schools and vocational colleges were no longer able to guarantee job offers from employers to their students<sup>186</sup> (Kosugi 2003, p.16; Kosugi and Hori 2004, p.20; Nakajima 2004, p.108). While economic restructuring and globalisation have made it more difficult for those without a command of English and computer literacy to secure jobs (Kosugi 2003, p.30; Nakajima 2004, p.107), even university graduates with these qualifications find it difficult to secure work. This is because of the prolonged recession, the increasing supply (or rather an excess) of university graduates<sup>187</sup> and the proliferating procurement of temporary workers by employers (Kosugi 2003, p.55; Kosugi and Hori 2004, p.20). In particular, job offers from large companies have been diminishing (Kosugi and Hori 2004, p.20; Takanashi 2004, p.186). In 2002,

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<sup>183</sup> In Japan, companies recruit freshly graduated students regardless of their field of study because the companies provide 'On the Job Training' and, therefore, the new employees' adaptability and flexibility are more important than experiences or qualifications which companies in the West would expect from new employees (Kariya 1991, pp.47-49).

<sup>184</sup> Tachibana-san told the researcher that when he was in primary school, he wrote an essay about a company that was situated near his hometown, criticising the company for destroying the environment. However, his childhood anger did not prevent him from entering this same company when the immediate necessities of life became more important than his environmental concern.

<sup>185</sup> Sasaki-san chose to enter a middle-sized company because he felt that he would be oppressed if he entered a large company. However, his company eventually became one of the largest in its field.

<sup>186</sup> In 1992, there were 1,670,000 job offers to high school leavers who graduated in the same year, while, in 2002, this had fallen to one-seventh of the 1992 number at 240,000 job offers (Kosugi 2003, p.16), falling again in 2003 to 220,000 offers (Kosugi 2004d, p.53).

<sup>187</sup> In 1991, while there were 840,000 job offers, in 2002 there were 460,000. By contrast, in 1991, there were 290,000 graduates, whereas, in 2002, there were 420,000 (Kosugi and Hori 2004, p.19).

about ten per cent of high school leavers and university students who graduated did so without the prospect of regular employment (Kosugi 2003, pp.18-19).

The number of young people outside full-time employment after their formal education is growing and they have come to be known as *freeters*.<sup>188</sup> The term *freeteer* was coined in the late 1980s by Michishita Hiroshi who worked for a company that published a situations-vacant advertisement magazine. Michishita intended no pejorative connotations in describing young people who chased their dreams by supporting themselves with part-time or casual jobs (Uenishi 2004, p.55). Despite his intention, the term *freeteer* took on various negative meanings amongst the general public, coming to denote young people who want to become full-time workers but cannot as well as young people who do nothing or are idling because of no enthusiasm for work. Although currently there is no fixed definition of *freeters* (Kosugi 2003, p.2; 2004b p.4; 2004c, p.53), this section follows the Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training which defines *freetas* as young people whose ages range from fifteen to thirty-four, who are not students or married women,<sup>189</sup> who have part-time jobs or casual work and who are also between such jobs or seeking such jobs (Kosugi 2003, pp.2-3).<sup>190</sup> In 1982, there were 590,000 *freeters*, increasing threefold by 1997 (to 1.73 million) (Kosugi and Hori 2004, p.27). In 2001, it was estimated that there were some 2.06 million of them<sup>191</sup> (Kosugi 2003, p.5).

The discourse on *freeters* frequently emphasises male *freeters* (Mathews 2004, p.124); in fact, fewer males than females are *freeters*. For example, in 1997, female *freeters* accounted for fifty eight per cent of the total number of *freeters*, with females forming a higher percentage of older *freeters*.<sup>192</sup> The focus on males indicates widespread internalisation and acceptance of the traditional division of labour, that is, men bear the onus of being economic providers. According to Honda (2004, pp.162-164), many male *freeters* tend to have a negative image of themselves as opposed to the fully fledged male adult who can support his family (Shimomura 2004, p.78). Indeed, the majority of male *freeters* have a

<sup>188</sup> The term *freeteer* is an abbreviation of 'fri arubaitā' (a free casual worker) – a combination of English 'free', German 'arbeit' (part-time work) and the English suffix '-er' (a person) (Mathews 2004, p.134).

<sup>189</sup> Until the early 1990s, the majority of part-time/casual workers were married women. For example, in 1991, part-time/casual workers under 25 years old accounted for only 7 per cent of working men and 8.6 per cent of working women. Because of the increasing entry of young people into part-time/casual work from the early 1990s, the definition normally excludes married women in order to highlight young part-time/casual workers as a new category of part-time/casual workers (Kosugi 2003, p.6).

<sup>190</sup> This definition is basically the same as the definition of *freeters* which was presented in the White Paper on the Labour Economy (2000) by the Ministry of Labour; however, in the White Paper, regarding males, those who have worked as a part-timer for more than 5 years are not considered to be *freeters* (Kosugi 2003, p.2).

<sup>191</sup> It is also worth noting that the increasing *freeteer* phenomenon stems from the decline in full-time employment by companies, given the considerable advantages for employers in being able to employ staff on a short-term basis without the same benefits provided to career-track employees (Kosugi 2003, pp.24, 31).

<sup>192</sup> While male *freeters* accounted for 6.4 per cent of the entire population aged fifteen to thirty-four, female *freeters* amounted to 16.3 per cent of the total population of the same cohort (Honda 2004, p.149). In addition, the proportion of male *freeters* is 24 per cent of those aged between 15 and 29 years of age, 4 per cent of those aged between 25 and 29, and 2 per cent of those aged between 30 and 34, whereas their female counterparts maintain a high *freeteer* rate (14 per cent) after the age of twenty-five (Honda 2004, pp.149-150).

strong desire to enter regular employment (Uenishi 2004, p.70), while it has been argued that female *freeters* are more likely to see marriage as their escape route because, for them, marriage is regarded as part of their life-course (Honda 2004, pp.165-166; Kosugi 2003, pp.47, 67-68).<sup>193</sup> On the other hand, *freeters* who positively choose to work as part-time/casual workers appreciate its merits: flexible time, limited responsibility, interesting and satisfactory jobs and ease of entry into and exit from employment as well as enjoying a variety of work-experiences (Honda 2005, p.18; Kosugi 2003, p.38; Shimomura 2004, pp.76-77). For them being a *freeteer* is justified by their having a purpose or “*yaritakoto*” (what I want to do) in their lives (Shimomura 2004, p.83). More importantly, *freeters* themselves identify ‘good’ *freeters* as those who have a sense of “*yaritakoto*” (Kosugi 2003, p.38; Shimomura 2004, pp.82-83). Additionally, *freeters* often have an aversion to corporate cultures and affiliation to companies. Respondents in the study conducted by Honda (2004, pp.161-162) described salarymen as shackled to their companies. As Honda (2005, p.5) argues, *freeters* should not then be considered as mere victims of a prolonged economic stagnation, given that some *freeters* consciously choose not to enter companies.

The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training divides *freeters* into seven sub-groups within three groups as indicated in the chart below. The principal distinction amongst the three types is contingent on their lack of employment prospects in the current, more difficult economy, or on their pursuit of professions that require employment flexibility until they secure an opening, or on inevitable misfortune. The presence of the last category, ‘the inevitable type’, even in the official typology, reflects the presumed ideal transition from education to full-time work without a gap in Japan.

The topic of *freeters*, which reflects a sharp contrast to the salaryman life in relation to stability and security, was intentionally raised with participants by the researcher in order to explore the participants’ perception of *freeters*, which in turn mirrored their perception of themselves. Interestingly, the classification of *freeters* is reflected in the views of the respondents. Moreover, the participants’ negative views of *freeters* expose their gratitude for their own full-time employment as follows.

The majority of participants first distinguished between acceptable *freeters* and outrageous or unacceptable *freeters*. According to them, the acceptable *freeters* are young people who have faith in their dreams, who have a clear plan for their future, who strive to cultivate their skills and who stay as *freeters* only for a short period of time. The outrageous ones are characterised by any one of the following features: intentional avoidance of becoming a full-time worker and accepting their

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<sup>193</sup> The successful rate of conversion from *freeters* to regular employment amongst female *freeters* is lower than that of their male counterparts, thus it is harder for women to find a full-time job than for men and, therefore, this difficult situation frustrates women’s occupational ambition (Kosugi 2003, p.47; 2004a, p.49; Kosugi and Hori 2004, p.27).

responsibilities, having no enthusiasm for work and/or having an inclination towards being free from the restrictions of companies.

**CHART 1**  
**Types of *Freeters* Based on Reasons for Becoming *Freeters***

Type	Sub-type	Description
<b>The moratorium type</b>	The moratorium type after leaving school	Those who become <i>freeters</i> after completing or leaving education without any future prospects
	The moratorium type after leaving a job	Those who become <i>freeters</i> when they resign full-time positions without any future plans
<b>The dream-pursuer type</b>	The dream-pursuer of talent-based professionals	Those who have dreams of becoming talent-based professionals such as artists and entertainers.
	The dream-pursuer of skill-based professionals	Those who have dreams of becoming skill-based professionals such as artisans and free-lancers
<b>The inevitable type</b>	The inevitable type with a strong intention of becoming a full-time worker	Those who become <i>freeters</i> as an unfortunate result of their job-searching
	The inevitable type who works as a <i>freeter</i> only for a limited period of time	Those who work as <i>freeters</i> only for a limited period of time while they are between educational institutions
	The inevitable type who works as a <i>freeter</i> because of private matters and troubles	Those who become <i>freeters</i> because of problems in their family, workplaces and relationships

Sources: Kosugi 2003, pp.13-15; Uenishi 2004, pp.58-59

Notwithstanding the above dichotomy, almost all participants across the three generations remonstrated against *freeters* as a whole, with only a few participants in the grandfathers' generation showing any compassion towards *freeters*, explaining their plight in terms of the prolonged economic stagnation which is very different from the booming economy that gave work to the grandfathers' generation. The participants' negative views of *freeters* were generally attributed to disadvantages that *freeters* would have in their own individual lives and to the lack of contribution which they made to society. Interestingly, the degree of opposition towards *freeters* became harsher as the generation descended in this research. In the sons' generation, the two youngest participants were the most critical of *freeters*. While most men in this generation understood that it was difficult to secure full-time employment in today's economy, they criticised *freeters* ostensibly because of the difficult lives they would have as well as their negative impact on society. However, some of the sons' generation appeared to express slight jealousy of *freeters*, a point discussed further below.

Men in the grandfathers' generation received the benefit of a remarkable industrial development, a rapid economic growth and a long economic stability. Because of these experiences and their deep appreciation of their good fortune, some of them were aware that the current socio-economic circumstances marked a significant departure from their own good times. Hirose-san, Honda-san and Yanase-san extended this understanding to compassion towards *freeters*:

You know, it's the current society [that is to blame for *freeters*]. I'm sorry for them. Of course, there are *freeters* who don't work because they can't find jobs that they want. That's another story. Leave them to please themselves. Anyway, we currently have this social environment where some people inevitably become *freeters*, because of which I really feel that there is something wrong with society. You should have a steady job but it's impossible unless the economy improves.

(Hirose-san, G)

In a word, politics is to be blamed for the difficulties faced by today's youth. For example, if you compare Japan with the South East Asian or the East Asian countries, it is manifest that Japan is saturated with fully equipped factories. There is no need to invest in them.... China and the South East Asian countries have that need. Because of the huge need in China, competent young Chinese people have a different look in their eyes from young Japanese people. I'm sorry for them when I think of my time. This is not only their fault but also the fault of politics. We don't have politicians who can make a change of direction and can put life into young people. (Honda-san, G)

Although the above quotations implied some criticism of young men who are particular about what job they will take (Hirose-san) or who lack passion for work (Honda-san), these participants excuse those who cannot find a job, blaming the stagnant economic conditions and the politicians.

Yoshida-san's statement represented the most common viewpoint in this generation.

I really think that it's beneficial for *freeters* to do various things in order to build up their skills. But in the long run, I think that, considering real life and purpose, it's much more beneficial for you to enter a company and work steadily. When you are young, any kind of life is fine as long as you have a plan for the future because you can support yourself and you won't trouble other people. But if you think about the future, it doesn't have to be a big corporation but I think you had better work for a decent company.

(Yoshida-san, G)

Again, in his remark, 'it doesn't have to be a big corporation', Yoshida-san, like the other grandfathers, implied his awareness of the contemporary tight job market. Nevertheless, although Yoshida-san

accepts a period of freedom that would have been unthinkable a decade ago, he is concerned about *freeters*' future prospects, their insecure livelihood, denying passage to adulthood – “*shakaijin ni naru*” (to become a fully fledged adult).

The fathers' generation more often expressed incomprehension concerning *freeters* ('I don't understand why they choose to become *freeters*'; 'they have completely different ideas [about work]') or strong criticism ('nonsense! You've got to stick to one job'; 'they are only trying to dodge [company] restrictions'). Others echoed Yoshida-san's concerns that (male) *freeters* cannot accomplish, “*shakaijin ni naru*” but were more critical of young men who failed to commit to their obligations as steady breadwinners:

I don't deny *freeters* because they have their own ideas [about work]. It's O.K. as long as they are strangers to me but I won't accept my children as *freeters*. I mean, their lives are fine now [when they are young] but they can't marry or do anything without a future plan whatever their sex is. Actually, I think a woman is fine if she marries but because I believe that a man has to support his family if he marries, *freeters* can't marry. I wouldn't let my daughter marry a *freeteer*. (Ueno-san, F)

I know that I shouldn't discriminate between men and women because we have the Equal Employment Opportunity Law. I shouldn't discriminate but still, from my point of view, men as a pillar should be firm. It doesn't matter if your salary is large or small. A man can't establish a good family if he doesn't form a basis for his livelihood including the social security system. In this sense, beginning [as *freeters*] would be fine but my point is that men should establish a firm basis.

(Toda-san, F)

Likewise, Tsutsumi-san would not permit a *freeteer* to marry his daughter. As mentioned earlier, the importance of playing the role of breadwinner as a fully fledged man was internalised deeply in the minds of participants in the fathers' generation. Moreover, the belief that men as *daikokubashira* (the breadwinners) should have full-time work, as expressed in the above quotations, means that the social issue of female *freeters* is not taken seriously. These men were not concerned that their daughters might be *freeters*, only that they might marry one. Toda-san even expressed his awareness that his viewpoint contradicted the gender-free society envisaged by the revised 1997 Equal Employment Opportunity Law. These participants did not imagine that wives might become full-time salaried workers in those cases where husbands could not or did not want to. The fathers' generation's contempt for *freeters* on the assumption that they were failed men was the reverse side of the participants' self-confidence in their own success as the breadwinners.

In the sons' generation, the two youngest expressed the strongest disapproval of *freeters*:

I feel that the majority of *freeters* today readily give up regular employment. I mean, from my 'spiritualist' point of view, I think they lack *gaman zuyosa* (power of endurance) and *konjō* (will power)... I think many *freeters* do things by halves. Once you've become *shakaijin* (a fully fledged adult), you should be responsible. When you become old enough to enter society, I think entering full-time employment is fulfilling your responsibility for society. Well, *freeters* are idling without doing anything. If you ask me if that's O.K., I would definitely say that they should find a stable job and work with a sense of responsibility. (Kusuda-san, S)

I think it's very bad. Talking of *furī* (freedom), it's only for people who have purpose and responsibilities. I think the freedom of those who don't have responsibility isn't real freedom. People who fulfil their duties and responsibilities can claim their right to freedom. In this sense, the word *freeteer* was made to recognise and define those who made the minimum money so they could enjoy themselves but I think this word conveys social acceptance and lets them get away with their way of living. I think it's really bad. (Miura-san, S)

These young men confronted the tight labour market but surmounted the difficulties, expressing their confidence as responsible adults in their utter repugnance towards *freeters* who many of the above participants see as lazy and weak. In the same vein, Tokuda-san said that 'times are hard but if *freeters* make the effort, they would find a job'. Both Kusuda-san and Miura-san emphasised the importance of fulfilling one's responsibility to society as a fully fledged adult. As with the fathers' generation, it was felt that being a *freeteer* was incompatible with marriage (for a man): 'it's better to have a regular job if you want to marry' (Nakama-san) and 'becoming a *freeteer* was never my option because I decided to marry before I entered my company' (Shimizu-san).

Miura-san was, perhaps, sharply critical because he was also jealous of the 'freedom' of the *freeteer* – a freedom they do not deserve because, according to Miura-san, they are not making their proper contribution to society as a proper '*shakaijin*'. The above participants are aware of their own inflexible working conditions that do not allow them to have as much free time as *freeters* enjoy. Given that workloads are intensifying and working hours are increasing due to restructuring, these young men are also reflecting on their ongoing transformation into corporate-tamed employees ('corporate animals') and thus expressed their jealousy of the freedom enjoyed by *freeters*. In addition, given the growing inclination of young people to become *freeters*, the above participants felt that *freeters* undermine hegemonic masculinity expressed in their defensive reactions to *freeters*. This indicates that a fine line, or rather a tension, between glory and sacrifice in hegemonic masculinity surfaced in the sons'



generation. This tension is particularly evident in the later section on *karōshi* and transfer, troubling the fathers' generation and having troubled the grandfathers' generation.

Presenting a striking contrast to the above participants, Ebara-san expressed his acceptance of *freeters* because he was forced by his company to resign in the midst of restructuring and was disappointed by the reality that there is no guarantee of life-time employment. Similarly, Segawa-san, an *ex-freeter*, accepted a short term period as a *freeter*, but echoed some of the participants above who felt that *freeters* must take the responsibility for entering adulthood seriously, which meant for men securing full-time employment. Ebara-san did not have a job at the time of the interview. Studying in pursuit of his dream, "*yaritakoto*", Ebara-san found a sense of fulfilment in his life, which he never gained from his work. Because of this, he readily accepted *freeters*. On the other hand, Segawa-san found satisfaction in his full-time work, which explains his acceptance of *freeters* whose part-time work is a steppingstone to full-time employment. These participants indicate that experiencing job market difficulties, either as a *freeter* (Segawa-san) or something very similar to it (Ebara-san), has an impact on attitudes towards *freeters*. Given that the number of *freeters* is increasing, and that more men will experience employment insecurity, it is likely that people's perception of *freeters* will change from a negative one to a more tolerant one.

In summary, participants' views on *freeters* mirrored their own life experiences. Reflecting their gratitude for their stable lives guaranteed by their companies, the grandfathers' generation was appreciative of the chance to perform hegemonic masculinity, a situation that arose during the course of their lives. The fathers' generation, focusing on the ideal role of men as the breadwinners in the marriage partnership, expressed their self-assured performance of hegemonic masculinity. The sons' generation, however, indicated a tension between their privilege and constraints – the image of corporate warriors who benefit from the patriarchal dividend and that of company animals who have limited free time. These participants' implicit comparison of themselves with *freeters* implies the potential for future change in hegemonic masculinity. Nevertheless, it is true that not one respondent, not even those who had experience as *freeters*, suggested that this lifestyle was superior to that of the salaryman in a large company. Being satisfied with their stable and secure livelihood, the men in this study revealed their sense of superiority as fully fledged men and workers over *freeters*; they considered *freeters* to be failures not only as workers but also as men. Thus the ideology of ideal masculinity that is associated with an economic provider (and husband and father) maintains its force, in particular, amongst those who embody hegemonic masculinity (McLelland 2005b, p.97; McLelland and Dasgupta 2005, p.10).<sup>194</sup> The following section turns to another presumption – an employment

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<sup>194</sup> One of Dasgupta's interviewees (salarymen) likened a man who does not have a job to an animal that cannot hunt for its food and he described such a situation metaphorically as 'death' (Dasgupta 2005a, p.194).

system that favours men over women, with its attendant sexual harassment that defends a homosexual male territory in the workplace.

## **4.2 Sex Discrimination**

It has been two decades since the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (hereafter EEOL) became effective in 1986. This labour legislation came into effect partly because of Japan's ratification of the plan (including the elimination of violence against women) that arose out of the final United Nations Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi in 1985 (Burns 1995, p.99). The EEOL's enforcement is also partly attributed to growing discourses on the 'utilization of women power' and the 'revitalization of the female workforce' from the 1970s (Lam 1993, p.198). The EEOL thus aimed at establishing equal treatment of men and women in every aspect of employment and career opportunities. However, the EEOL was only hortatory and did not have any legal force, consequently having little impact on the unfair culture and practices in the workplace (Lam 1992a, pp.7-8; 1993, pp.207-208). In 1999 the EEOL was revised to stipulate employers' responsibilities for the occurrence of any discrimination against women as well as for its prevention, identifying sanctions for companies that failed to comply (Chan-Tiberghien 2004, p.2; Miya 2000, p.225; Ochiai and Yoshitake 2001, p.2).

Despite the steady increase in the number of female workforce from the 1980s (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications 2006b) together with the enactment of the EEOL in 1986 and the 1999 revised EEOL, as will be evident in the following section, the improvement of female workers' conditions has been very slow. This section deals firstly with the changing employment system in Japan in relation to sex discrimination. Secondly, it explores the participants' perception of female workers. Finally, it discusses sexual harassment and the participants' attitudes towards it.

### **4.2.1 The employment system**

The disparity between men and women in employment opportunity, wages, promotion and in-company welfare and training exists to this day in Japan. It is salarymen, especially men in large corporations, who benefit most from these disparities. There is not a large gap between the starting salary for men and women when they enter the workforce. However, the salary for women in the general duties grade becomes almost half of the men's salary by the time they reach their forties, women no longer experiencing wage increases from the end of their thirties (Broadbent 2003, p.15; Itō 1996, p.237; Itō *et al.* 2002, p.143; Ogasawara 1998, p.35). The salary of men increases according to the seniority based wage system and assessments by superiors (Broadbent 2003, p.11; Cook and Hayashi 1980,

p.4; Lam 1993, p.198; Molony 1995, p.268; Ogasawara 1998, p.36).<sup>195</sup> In 1978, in cash earnings, female average earnings accounted for only 56.2 per cent of their male counterparts in the aggregate (Cook and Hayashi 1980, p.13). In 1985, the female percentage was 59.6 (Abe 2005, p.15). In 2004, even after the revised EEOL, female earnings represented only 67.6 per cent of male earnings in the aggregate (Abe 2005, p.15). While the advanced Western countries have been moving in the direction of comparative worth in order to bridge the wage differential between men and women, Japanese salarymen continue to enjoy considerably higher wages compared with those of their female counterparts.

This discrepancy in wages between men and women is, to a large extent, attributed to unequal employment and promotion opportunities. Before the enactment of the EEOL, female workers were highly protected by the Labour Standards Law – e.g. no night work from ten p.m. until five a.m., no dangerous work and menstruation leave (Cook and Hayashi 1980, pp.14-15, 18). However, there was a fine line between protection of women and discrimination against them. Women were not protected as workers but as reproductive bodies (Buckley 1993, p.349; Mackie 1997, pp.76-77; Molony 1991). Female workers were denied the benefits that men had by employers on the assumption that women were physically weaker, intellectually inferior and mentally less committed than men (Buckley 1993, p.349; Cook and Hayashi 1980, p.28). For example, just before the imposition of the EEOL, more than forty per cent of companies recruited only men. These companies explicitly mentioned “men only” in their job advertisements. Moreover, many companies selected women who lived with their parents, a condition which was not applied to men (Lam 1992a, p.15; 1993, p.210).<sup>196</sup> Women who overcame these hurdles to obtain work experienced further discrimination in career opportunities. All women were placed in the general-duties grade, whereas men comprised the core members of the career track (Lam 1993, p.211).

As a result of the enactment of the EEOL, discriminatory job advertisements largely disappeared (Lam 1992a, pp.15-16; 1993, p.210). Corporations started employing women in the executive-track grade, as well as in the general-duties grade, although dual-track employment was called ‘a big firm phenomenon’<sup>197</sup> (Lam 1992a, p.18), whereas almost all men were ‘automatically’ assigned to the executive-track grade (Lam 1992a, p.20; 1993, p.214). Because of the dual-track system, large

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<sup>195</sup> Although the merit-based pay system (*saiyōrōdō-sei*) was introduced into Japan in 1987 (Shimada 2003, p.6), its diffusion has been very slow. Amongst companies with more than 1000 employees, in 2001, less than 6 per cent had adopted the new system and it was largely applied to those workers who have special knowledge and skills (Satō 2003, p.4). Salarymen’s wages are still evaluated largely by their working hours regardless of their efficiency.

<sup>196</sup> I, who was away from my parents and living by myself in Tokyo, experienced this as a disadvantage in finding a job.

<sup>197</sup> At the end of the 1980s, some 40 per cent of large corporations that had 5000 employees or more had introduced the dual-track system, while only around 10 per cent of middle sized and small companies with less than 1000 employees had done so (Lam 1992a, p.18).

companies allege that they do not discriminate against women employees. However, in effect, the fundamental principle is that companies generally employ women as clerical workers except for a few elite women employed as future managers (Atsumi 1997 p.273; Itō *et al.* 2002 p.143; Morley 1999, p.78; Takenobu 1994, p.41). Indeed, the dual-track system was open only to female university graduates (Lam 1992a, p.20). Men are in charge of almost all business and management and are expected to acquire special skills and knowledge through their work and in-company training. Moreover, men are promoted according to their accomplishments and the seniority system (Lam 1992b, p.63). By contrast, most women are engaged in simple subsidiary clerical work to support men. These OLs (Office Ladies) have little hope of promotion. They are excluded from the seniority system and, as a result, do not receive the training necessary for advancement. For example, before the EEOL, the majority of companies, either officially or customarily, required women to resign at marriage or pregnancy and childbirth<sup>198</sup> (Broadbent 2003, p.15; Cook and Hayashi 1980, pp.25-26). Even after the EEOL, managers may imply directly or indirectly to OLs that it is time to leave the company (Gottfried and O'Reilly 2002, p.29; Itō *et al.* 2002, p.243; Renshaw 1990, p.30) with a so-called '*kata tatakai*' – tap on the shoulder (Gottfried 2003, p.265; Kondo 1990, p.227; Ogasawara 1998, p.64). Moreover, some corporations do not allow a woman employee to stay in her position if she marries a co-worker, believing that a working wife may not be fully able to take care of her husband (Ogasawara 1998, p.33).

As a result, the notorious "M-shape curve" in the graph of Japanese women's workforce participation endures, even if less sharply than in former decades (Gender Equality Bureau 2006, pp.4-5).<sup>199</sup> While more than ninety per cent of men remain in their companies regardless of their age, the percentage of women employees begins to decrease after the age of twenty-five. This decrease continues until women reach their early thirties when the percentage of women in the workforce increases again (Abe 2005, p.16; Gender Equality Bureau 2006, pp.4-6). As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, this pattern reflects the saying "good wife wise mother" (*ryōsai kenbo*). Women who resigned their job at marriage or childbirth re-enter the labour market when their children become teenagers, although the majority become part-time workers<sup>200</sup> (Broadbent 2003, p.8; Broadbent and Morris-Suzuki 2000, p.167; Gottfried 2003, p.265; Ogasawara 1998, p.18).

This female work pattern diminishes companies' incentives to give female workers job training equivalent to that of the men (Abe 2005, p.16). While, before the enactment of the EEOL, female

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<sup>198</sup> This was euphemistically called 'early retirement' (Cook and Hayashi 1980, p.9).

<sup>199</sup> Women's workforce participation in the developed Western countries was represented by the M-curve until the 1970s; today it is represented by the trapezoid line because marriage and childbirth have little affect on women's participation in the workforce (Broadbent 2003, p.9).

<sup>200</sup> The tax system was one of the factors in producing female part-time workers because a husband whose wife earns less than ¥1,030,000 per year received a tax reduction of ¥380,000, which was called the 'million yen wall' (Morley 1999, p.70; Renshaw 1999, p.34); however, this system was abolished in 2004.

workers received almost no training (Cook and Hayashi 1980, p.9), after the EEOL, one-fourth of companies still provide training only for men and nearly one-half of companies conduct “men only” training for managers (Abe 2005, p.16).<sup>201</sup> In 1985, the proportion of female workers in managerial positions accounted for 8.8 per cent, whereas in 2000, it increased to 11.3 per cent (Hamada 2005, p.13), despite the fact that females account for sixty per cent of the entire workforce (Gender Equality Bureau 2006, p.6). The higher the position, the fewer women are represented.<sup>202</sup> The saturation of men in the boardroom had changed little by the late 1990s (Renshaw 1999, p.204). It is economically expedient for corporations to employ young women fresh out of college or university to replace women resigning to marry or start families. The relatively low wages such women receive underwrites the high cost of men’s employment because of the seniority system and lifetime employment (Broadbent 2003, p.15; Lam 1992a, p.5; Morley 1999, p.70). Although the 1999 revised EEOL obliges companies to eliminate unequal treatment on the basis of gender, the increasing number of lawsuits by female workers against their male employers and employers indicates persistent discrimination in relation to wages, evaluation and promotion (Hamada 2005, pp.4-6). The following turns to the participants’ perception of female workers in their workplaces.

Changing attitudes to female workers were expressed by the participants, for example disapproval of the term ‘OL’ or claiming that women were no longer required to serve tea to their male work colleagues.<sup>203</sup> Even so, unequal employment and career opportunities between men and women are far from having been eradicated in participants’ workplaces. For example, heavy industries recruit mainly men. Participants from the iron, steel and cement companies described their workplace as ‘a man’s world’ (Hirose-san, Ishihara-san and Uchida-san in the grandfathers’ generation). They simply thought that there was no room for women in their industries. Moreover, of twenty-seven companies in my research, only thirteen had women in managerial positions. They were, however, either subsection chiefs or section chiefs, with no women at the higher levels of manager or executive. None of the participants had ever had a female boss. All the participants had experienced in-company training separate from female workers, suggesting that female workers are not given equal opportunities in this area.

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<sup>201</sup> In her study of gender and management in retail industries, which utilise women as workers more than any other industry, Kimoto (2005, pp.83, 157) argues that, from the very beginning, men and women receive different training and assignments on the assumption that while men are future managers, women will leave.

<sup>202</sup> For example, in 2004, the proportion of male chiefs in the total number of chiefs was 89 per cent. Male section managers represent 95 per cent of the total number. Male directors comprise 98 per cent of the entire number of directors (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 2005).

<sup>203</sup> Although visitors are still served tea by female workers, photocopying is no longer the female workers’ duty in the companies in this study.

When asked how they would feel if they had a female boss, the majority of the participants answered that they would feel uncomfortable, regardless of their generation.<sup>204</sup> Especially was this the case in the grandfathers' generation who had little interaction with female workers. Honda-san claimed that he was simply not able to imagine that there were women who were as competent as "us" [men]. Participants in the fathers' generation faced the dilemma of complying with the principle of equality, namely the revised EEOL, or of consciously or unconsciously adhering to their comfort zone – patriarchal and paternal work conditions. Participants in the son's generation also saw men as the main workers. However, some of them were bewildered by the changing attitudes of female workers who have no intention of working for the men beyond their official tasks, thus revealing that even men in the sons' generation believe working women should do subsidiary tasks, e.g. photocopying and serving tea. Participants indicated that there were general problems with women workers as well as the specific problems of what they assumed to be women's preferences, for example, women's focus on childbirth and childcare.

Participants generally assumed that women gave the family priority over work, suggesting that they leave work permanently, and that their temporary absence from work due to childbirth introduced trouble in the workplace (Wajcman 1999, p.36). In addition, many participants suspected that women who have children were not able to balance work and the family. In other words, 'women's relation to the domestic sphere is problematised' in the minds of participants (Cockburn 1991, p.76). Although Shimizu-san currently works in the department of general affairs in his company, reflecting on his experience in a personnel department, he suggested that childbirth dooms women's prospects of success:

If a woman gets married, she will definitely have a child. Probably I myself think that way. And then she will take maternity leave. This means she deserts the front line. Therefore, I think people who are in managerial posts tend to think the same and they also think they never know the future if they promote a woman. I know we shouldn't have this thought, but in reality, women definitely walk away from the front line. It's not discrimination but we just hesitate to promote women...but I also think there are women who work hard and want us to forget about our negative thoughts about them. We don't know...we can't ask them.

(Shimizu-san, S)

Shimizu-san's company is one of the largest companies in Japan and internationally prominent. However, only those women with specialist skills, such as advanced computer literacy, were securing jobs, which were previously occupied exclusively by men. Hamada-san, by contrast, works for a securities company that zealously promotes gender equality throughout the company. While he had a

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<sup>204</sup> See Wajcman (1999) pp.64-65 for her respondents' attitudes towards female managers, being similar to these in my study.

high opinion of female workers as workers,<sup>205</sup> he was doubtful of their commitment to work because they, although competent, not only chose the family over work but also undermined high quality job achievement.<sup>206</sup>

A woman enters a company and gets married a few years later and then she takes maternity leave for several months. She comes back to work and then she gets pregnant again and takes leave. Men and women have equal rights but only women bear a baby. Well if I say this, some people get angry but I wonder. This kind of woman is a problem. If it is a small- or middle-sized company, the company will go bankrupt. Don't you think so? I am fine with the EEOL but I still feel there is something wrong with it. I have two such women in my team. They are on their maternity leave. Think about if they keep on doing this...

(Hamada-san, F)

As Hamada-san said, certainly, men do not become pregnant or give birth. Accordingly, Hamada-san did not see women's maternity leave as unfair to men. Nevertheless, even though men in his company have the right to take childcare leave, Hamada-san gave no endorsement to young male workers who take childcare leave. In other words, in the final analysis, Hamada-san saw women as the sex of domesticity. In the same vein, Sugiura-san said women were not able to combine childcare with work:

It's hard for women. I'm in my forties. Women in their forties have children at home. Do you think these women can go out in the middle of the night?

(Sugiura-san, F)

Another 'women's problem' raised by many participants was their lack of ambition. For example, Amano-san, who works in a personnel department in his company, suggested:

The other day, we were talking about female workers in our company. This idea just came up. We should let them do various tasks. But we also wondered how many of them would want more work and we concluded no one would... I am sorry for women who want to work hard but don't have any opportunity but I think it is rather cruel to give an opportunity to women who don't want it.

(Amano-san, F)

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<sup>205</sup> In his company, unlike other Japanese companies, from April 2004, employees have worked on a contract-basis and are paid by the merit-based pay system. Some female workers in his team earn ¥1,000,000 (A\$10,500) a month. According to him, in big cities, there are successful female workers who earn ¥2,000,000 ~ 3,000,000 a month.

<sup>206</sup> Acker (1998, pp.198-199) argues that this kind of frustration represents 'a response to the ineluctable antagonism' between the practices of organisations in the public sphere and the practices of reproduction in the private sphere. She maintains that, unless both men and women are considered equally to have caring responsibilities in the private space, maternal and paternal childcare leaves and childcare centres for parenting will play a role in maintaining sex segregation in (or exclusion of women from) organisations because these are often utilised by women and are by no means compatible with profit-making organisations, women thus continuing to be marginalised as workers.

Likewise, Hino-san, who also works in a personnel department, regretted that female workers in general duties refrained from facing a challenge:

I would like them to take up a challenge and I give them the chance quite often. But, unfortunately, they sidestep difficult tasks and escape to their support job. I ask them to attend a meeting and present a report but they say something like this, 'no, I don't want to attend a meeting' or 'no, I don't want to talk in front of people'. Female engineering graduates may be different but female workers in general duties are satisfied with their current tasks. Unfortunately, I don't have any ambitious ones.

(Hino-san, F)

The women discussed by Hino-san and Amano-san are working in the general-duties track which means they have not received any training that might help them with challenging tasks. Neither Amano-san nor Hino-san seemed aware of this discrimination against female general-duties workers, instead attributing their hesitation to incompetency. Even if female general-duties workers were encouraged to do more work than their current tasks, the above participants' suggestions can be interpreted as offloading work onto them without due payment.

The presence of unskilled female workers with few resources represents an institutionally granted advantage in order that men can retain their privileged status in their organisations (Cockburn 1991, p.45). Moreover, men have a cultural advantage. Men's collective corporate culture also represents an obstacle to women's empowerment at work. Kusuda-san argued that women did not fit into the male drinking culture:

I think men and women have a different way of thinking about the company and work. Ah, let me see, for instance, men can have a frank and open talk when drinking together after work but I think you can't have such a talk with women. You know, I think it's hard for men and women to talk together after work. I think trust is built better in a conversation outside the company than inside the company. When you go drinking, you might speak your real feelings. Maybe it's because you are drunk but my point is men and women can't have such a frank and open discussion.

(Kusuda-san, S)

Men resist women advancing into their territory, not wanting to give up their established homo-social fraternity. Other participants criticised women on the grounds that they were temperamental, fastidious about insignificant matters and shrewish,<sup>207</sup> implying that men are rational and, therefore, suitable for

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<sup>207</sup> In her study of correctional officers working in a men's and women's prison, Britton (1999, p.462) argues that, regardless of sex and their current workplace, the majority of the officers prefer working in a men's prison to working in a women's prison partly because of their perception of women as being emotional and 'higher strung' than men.



work (Wajcman 1999, pp.60-61). Drawing on the examples of their wives or teachers, Nakama-san, Kuraoka-san and Amano-san extrapolated to imagined female work colleagues, claiming that women cannot see the wood for the trees and are over-emotional:

I don't have any experience of working under a female boss. Probably I would feel uncomfortable. I think it depends on the person's quality but... I only know my wife as a woman and an example. She's moody. I don't think all women are moody at work but I don't want to study women's moods all the time at work. (Nakama-san, S)

Basically I feel uncomfortable, probably because of the experience in my school life. Female teachers were particular about small things. To put it in a nasty way, women don't see the mountain but the trees. They are like that. They observe leaves and branches closely but they can't grasp the whole mountain. That's what I think. I may be biased but I think women tend to scold emotionally. (Kuraoka-san, F)

Keeping my wife in mind, I think women are naggers. From first thing in the morning, my wife says the same thing every day to our children and me. So, we had a quarrel the other day again. Therefore, I can't remove that image about women from my mind. People use the word *hisuterikku* (hysterical), women are not that bad but still they are something similar. (Amano-san, F)

The above criticism of female workers by the three participants indicates their narrow contacts with women inside and outside the workplace. Sugaira-san also argued in a similar manner that women were not patient enough in dealing with difficult clients, suggesting that it was culturally inappropriate for women to take clients out for drinks at night and ask favours of them. These participants were clearly unwilling to invest women with authority or competence.

In contrast to the above arguments, some participants asserted that they would not look at their bosses through a gendered framework. They were only concerned about the quality of their boss as a superior. Participants who knew women in managerial positions evaluated them in two ways. The first was an appraisal of them as exceptional. The other was a subtle criticism of their femininity by seeing them as desexualised (or masculinised) women, that is, as 'honorary men' (Cockburn 1988, p.40; Pringle 1989, p.176). In this way, these participants also endorsed the assumption that normally only

men could hold positions of authority.<sup>208</sup> For example, Tachibana-san praised a woman who became a section chief:

This woman got into the head office via the executive-track. She has become a section chief over there. When I was working there, she arrived unexpectedly. Our company hired her at midyear. That woman became a section manager. I think it is natural because, it's amazing, she was very competent from the very beginning. And she was different from other young men. Her way of thinking, dealing with work and negotiating were definitely different. I was surprised when I heard she became a section chief but I also thought it was proper. (Tachibana-san, F)

The fact that Tachibana-san compared the above woman's competence with young male workers implies that he judged her upon a standard of evaluation for men, Tachibana-san thus masculinising the female section manager. On the other hand, Katagiri-san made an implied criticism of an able woman who rose above her husband:

There was a married couple working for our company and the wife became more important than her husband. But, but, she is not ordinary. How can I put it, she is a kind of person I don't understand. I think she had better become a government official... Elite women clearly distinguish between work and marriage. Those women go overseas leaving their husbands alone in Japan, don't they? (Katagiri-san, G)

Katagiri-san's comment that the capable woman is beyond his understanding suggests that he does not see femininity in her, thus representing desexualisation of competent women. These two women were 'different' and not 'ordinary', whether because they were more capable than a man (manly) or were able to balance work with the family without being bound by domestic commitments (unfeminine).

In summary, the various interpretations of female workers offered by the participants played a role in defending their fortress and protecting their patriarchal dividend in their companies. On the one hand, women are defined as the sex of reproduction, incapability, outsiders to the fraternal corporate culture and temperamentally unsuitable for authority. On the other hand, women who become 'insiders' are referred to as desexualised exceptions or condemned as unfeminine. Sex segregation is thus sustained by the collective and 'active engagement of male employees' (Cockburn 1988, p.32). In either case, this male resistance to the advancement of women was unreflective among the participants, no one mentioning men's advantage in the institutional, organisational and cultural

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<sup>208</sup> See Smith and Kimmel (2005) pp.1837-1838 for an example of a woman who was 'unsexed by success'. A competent female senior manager was proposed for a partnership but her employer cancelled it for the reasons that she was 'macho' and she 'overcompensated for being a woman'.

protection of male superiority and masculine egos in the workplace. The next section explores sexual harassment as another aspect of sex discrimination in the workplace.

#### 4.2.2 Sexual harassment

Even though sexuality as an aspect of gender relations is ubiquitous in all organizations, until around the 1970s, organization theory and management theory failed to notice gender relations in organizations (Burrell and Hearn 1989, p.9; Collinson and Collinson 1989, p.91; Collinson and Hearn 1996, p.64; Gutek 1989, p.57; Hearn and Parkin 1987, p.4; Martin and Collinson 1999, p.295; Pringle 1989, p.159). Drawing on the definition by Hearn and Parkin (1987, pp.57-58), sexuality in organisations refers to ‘the social expression of, and relations to bodily desires, real or imagined, by or for others or for oneself, together with the related bodily states and experiences’. Sexuality is generally understood as a private matter that has nothing to do with work. However, sexuality is omnipresent in public life and involves ‘all-pervasive body politics’ (Burrell and Hearn 1989, p.13; Hearn and Parkin 1987, p.57) given that sexuality inevitably entails power dynamics (Hearn and Parkin 1987, p.58; Mills 1989, p.31; Pringle 1988, p.28; 1989, p.159; 1992, p.80). In the workplace, while femininity – for example, passivity and expressions of affection – can easily be associated with being a seductive sex object, manliness does not invoke sexual elements but is connected with being rational (Gutek 1989, pp.57-58). As a result, despite the fact that men consciously and proficiently utilise sexuality more than women to facilitate their objectives at work, these stereotypes only reinforce the idea that men are suited for work (Gutek 1989, pp.62, 65). Given recent legislative and policy change in this area, this section focuses on sexual harassment in Japanese organizations.<sup>209</sup> Given that Japanese salarymen in general have little understanding of sexuality in the public sphere, it was felt that focusing on a topic which has had recent public exposure would elicit more active and comprehending responses in the interviews. Interviewees did, in passing, discuss other aspects of sexuality in organizations, for example meeting their future wives at work and approving gender segregation in occupations.

In the early 1970s in the U.S., the term ‘sexual harassment’ was created by Gloria Steinem and others (Ochiai and Yoshitake 2001, p.24) and by 1976, the term had become widely diffused (Pringle 1989, p.164). A few years later, the classic text *Sexual Harassment of Working Women* was published by Catharine MacKinnon (1979) who pointed out defects in the legal interpretation of sexual harassment and argued that sexual harassment was sex discrimination. In Japan, in 1989, the diffusion of the term was achieved by a lawyer, Kawamoto Kazuko.<sup>210</sup> Thus, while sexual harassment is an old practice, it

<sup>209</sup> There is same-sex harassment that does not involve sexual desires and is appropriately called “gender harassment”. However, it is beyond the scope of this thesis and, therefore, is not dealt with in this section. See Smith and Kimmel (2005) for gender discrimination in the workplace.

<sup>210</sup> In 1986, the lawyer, Kawamoto Kazuko, defended a woman who was arrested for murder, citing legitimate self-defence. She pushed a drunken man on a train station platform, who persisted in touching her, and he fell onto the train line and was killed by

is a new issue. It is old because the phenomenon has existed for a long time. Poor girls, who were sent to textile mills to work, were sexually harassed and treated inhumanly by their factory employers, so the practice can be documented at least as far back as the Meiji period (1868-1912) (Itō 1974, pp.6-7; Numazaki 2003, p.226). It is new because the concept of sexual harassment was only invented at the end of the 1980s. By means of this concept, victims of sexual harassment were finally able to express their fear, disgust and distress. Although Japan adopted the foreign words 'sexual harassment' (*sekush(u)aru harasumento*) into Japanese, Japanese people use the abbreviation '*sekuhara*' (Miya 2000 p.21; Morley 1999, p.119).

In 1992, in Fukuoka, the sexual harassment lawsuit that delivered a guilty judgement against the accused harasser became the landmark case of sexual harassment in the workplace (Aeberhard-Hodges 1996, p.520; Chan-Tiberghien 2004, p.56; Miya 2000, pp.112, 129; Tsunoda 2004, p.619). At least until then, sexual harassment by male workers towards female workers was regarded as 'acceptable' (Gordon 1991, p.15) and women were expected to bear these obnoxious circumstances at work (Ochiai and Yoshitake 2000, p.2).<sup>211</sup> Indeed, the 1986 Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEO) failed to grasp sexual harassment as a legal matter, the EEO requesting companies only to make efforts to prevent sexual discrimination against women.

Sexual harassment was understood as 'personal' and 'natural' in male-centred society as was the case in the U.S. a decade earlier (Ochiai and Yoshitake 2001, p.2; Gutek 1989, p.59; MacKinnon 1979, p.84). By regarding sexual harassment as personal, the harassed person is divested of her legal rights. A victim is likely to be regarded as responsible for the outcome. A personal matter disguises the important point that sexual harassment is sex-based. It also vitiates another point that sexual harassment is related to work. Finally, it removes the employers' accountability for the injustice (DiTomaso 1989, p.72; Gutek 1989, p.62; MacKinnon 1979, pp.84-87). Drawing on biology, a sexual drive towards the opposite sex becomes 'natural', 'normal' and, therefore, acceptable (Collinson and Collinson 1989, p.94; DiTomaso 1989, p.71; Gutek 1989, pp.57, 62; MacKinnon 1979, p.90). This concept of sexual harassment results in organizations becoming blind to or tolerant of male sexual advances towards female workers (Collinson and Collinson 1989, p.93). From the mid-1970s through to the mid-1980s, in order to promote legal actions against sexual harassment and to make men understand that sexual harassment was a legal wrongdoing, feminists argued that the above understanding of sexual harassment based on 'personal' and 'natural/biological' viewpoints is a male

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a passing train. In 1987, the complainant won the case with the support of '*sasaeru-ka*' [a society that supports the plaintiff] formed by many women, who had had similar experiences of sexual harassment. Although the term sexual harassment was not raised during the trial, the lawyer learned of the concept and played a key role in disseminating the term (Miya 2000, pp.14-21).

<sup>211</sup> Japanese women are also exposed to sexual abuse outside the workplace. Sexist public advertisements and calendars are ubiquitous. According to Morley (1999, p.118), even children's toy companies sell pornographic games 'such as "Human Trash" in which players buy and sell women labelled with numbers representing how many men they have slept with.'

discourse and that it neglects the socially constructed nature of gender, women's sexual rights, unequal power relations between victims and harassers and the fact that sexual harassment is a social and organisational phenomenon (Aeberhard-Hodges 1996, p.527; Gutek 1989, p.58; MacKinnon 1979, pp.91, 101; Martin and Collinson 1999, p.295; Pringle 1989, pp.164-168; Stockdale 1996, p.11).

In 1999, sexual harassment was finally considered to be violence against women and an infringement of women's human rights at the enactment of the revised EEOL. Article twenty-one in the revised EEOL stipulates that employers are responsible for the occurrence of sexual harassment at work and that they must take measures to prevent it as well as impose sanctions<sup>212</sup> against it (Chan-Tiberghien 2004, p.2; Miya 2000, p.225; Ochiai and Yoshitake 2001, p.2). The Japanese government, initially slow to take action regarding discrimination against women, finally launched a project to eliminate sexual harassment from the workplace. The revised EEOL adopted two broad classifications of sexual harassment based on the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the courts: 'quid pro quo' and 'condition of work' or 'hostile work environment' (Miya 2000, p.206; Tsunoda 2004, p.621). The 'quid pro quo' refers to an individual's submission to or rejection of a sexual advance, which involves threat or bribery including dismissal, a pay cut and promotion, thus affecting the individual's condition of employment. The 'condition of work' or 'hostile work environment' is understood as unwanted sexual conduct that impedes an individual's work performance or creates an unbearable work environment (MacKinnon 1979, pp.32, 40; Miya 2000, pp.225-6; Stockdale 1996, p.6). Commentators (Numazaki 2003, p.234; Suzuki cited in Miya 2000, pp.227-228) argue that sexual harassment in Japan is characterised by coercion of the sex role, in which female workers are expected to play the role of a caring wife, lawsuits corroborating this aspect (Miya 2000, p.228; Numazaki 2003, pp.231-233). This feature is, however, termed the 'sex role spillover' in the West in which female workers are expected to fulfil female stereotypes (Gutek 1989, p.59; Stockdale 1996, p.10). Indeed, male bosses readily use the term 'office wife' to describe their secretaries (Pringle 1989, p.171). Sexual harassment is a tool by means of which men maintain male supremacy over women (Cockburn 1991, p.142; Collinson and Collinson 1989, p.99; DiTomaso 1989, p.73; MacKinnon 1979, p.9; Morley 1999, p.118; Walby 1990, p.143).

Auditing sexual harassment-related court trials from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s, Miya (2000) demonstrates prevailing male assumptions in the Japanese workplace, thus indicating the power dynamics. Women are trivialized as workers and objectified as the target for men's sexual desires. Sumitomo Realty and Development Company is one recent example.<sup>213</sup> At the end of 1999, the company held an end-of-year party organised by its personnel department in which 130 male workers

<sup>212</sup> However, companies receive no legal sanctions for failing to follow the Article (Tsunoda 2004, p.623).

<sup>213</sup> See also Numazaki (2003) pp.231-233 for an extreme case of the so-called 'Yano Incident' in which a prominent professor imposed sexual services on his secretaries as part of their duties.

and 18 female workers were involved in indecent athletic-type games (Saitō 2001, p.24). The majority of female workers were temporary workers, who were compelled to participate if they wanted to avoid dismissal at the whim of the company.

According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2001), some eighty per cent of companies in the survey either circulated an official notice about sexual harassment or stipulated their policy on sexual harassment in the office regulations and one-third of the participating companies undertook each of the preventative measures of providing pamphlets, training managers and promoting attention to sexual harassment. However, training for all employees was rarely given and less than ten per cent of companies provided access to specialists or lawyers.<sup>214</sup> As dissatisfaction with and complaints by female workers concerning their companies' responses to sexual harassment are increasing, the number of lawsuits against sexual harassment is growing dramatically (Chan-Tiberghien 2004, p.45; Hamada 2005, p.6; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 2001). The following reveals the participants' imperfect understanding of sexual harassment, including their implicit acceptance of sexual harassment as men's nature, which, they think, can never be eliminated.

Most participants had heard of sexual harassment or had actually seen it in their working environments. Only five people (three in the grandfathers' and two in the sons' generation) stated that sexual harassment never occurred in their companies. Of course, these participants were not necessarily reliable in their reports, the grandfathers' generation being generally less familiar with the concept of sexual harassment, several merging it with illicit love affairs. Furthermore, participants may have wished to protect their companies' reputation, one in the sons' generation initially evading the question by focusing on the company's efforts to educate its employees, but concluding 'in reality, well, ah...'

Those participants who knew of incidents of sexual harassment described various forms including thoughtless remarks made without being aware of their gravity, unpleasant touching and unwanted sexual advances. Following the revised EEOL, the participants noted that most of their companies gave lectures on sexual harassment to their employees as part of the induction course for newly hired employees and part of the training for newly promoted managers. These companies also provided their employees with booklets about sexual harassment. There were a few stories of companies punishing harassers by dismissing them. Although training for employees in the prevention of sexual harassment seemed to be well established in large corporations,<sup>215</sup> the participants found it hard to

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<sup>214</sup> See also Chan-Tiberghien (2004) pp.44-46 for companies' measures against sexual harassment

<sup>215</sup> Since sexual harassment in large companies attracts the media's attention, there are more preventative measures in large corporations as compared with small/medium-sized companies.

understand exactly what sexual harassment meant.<sup>216</sup> For example, the statement ‘I had training and read a booklet but I still don’t understand what is and what is not *sekuhara*’ (Minami-san, F) was common amongst participants. The participants tend to think that sexual harassment is judged by the female workers’ yardstick. Tokuda-san in the sons’ generation, who works in a personnel department, sighed that ‘it is hard [to define sexual harassment] because it is a matter of women’s perception’. In the same vein, Amano-san, who also works in a personnel department, stated:

There is sexual harassment, sure. Some workers do startling things. Others easily pat female workers on the shoulder. We got used to seeing them. We thought that women didn’t care but we found that actually they did. Female workers here are not very young. One female worker reported that she was asked “are you going to marry yet?” We simply think that’s only an everyday greeting but apparently girls think it’s sexual harassment. This came up last year in a questionnaire. If it’s called sexual harassment, we have it. I wonder if there is a company where there is no sexual harassment. I think it depends. It’s a matter of the environment where people have good human relations and don’t take everyday greetings as sexual harassment. (Amano-san, F)

Despite the fact that Amano-san was a member of the sexual harassment prevention committee in his company, his thoughts on the results of the survey reflected the fundamental problem that sexual harassment was not taken seriously as violence against women and an infringement of women’s human rights. Moreover, it was obvious that even those participants who were in charge of sexual harassment prevention never took male workers’ misbehaviour seriously. In effect, Amano-san and other members of the committee only released the survey results but did not advise the harasser to stop his wrongdoing, expecting him to realise and mend his ways.

Hino-san works in a general affairs department. He thinks that sexual harassment will never be eradicated:

Of course, as I work in a general affairs department, I’ve heard of it many times. We educate employees to a moderate degree. Just because we provide training, I don’t think it will disappear. I think reasonable education is enough...but we haven’t really done anything about sexual harassment. Actually we are concerned whether or not we can really do something about it. My job is to take care of the sexual harassment that has happened. It is hard to decide how far we can take preventative measures. Therefore, we just provide reasonable education because I don’t think the prevention will ever be complete. Well, it occurs, then we deal with it. (Hino-san, F)

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<sup>216</sup> In fact, the Revised EEOL does not define the term “sexual harassment” (Tsunoda 2004, p.631).

Likewise, other participants who worked in a personnel department stated that they provided preventative education because “they have no choice but to do it in compliance with the government’s policy”.<sup>217</sup> Sexual harassment was trivialised, even by the participants who were responsible for educating workers about it. Under the circumstances, how did other workers perceive sexual harassment?

“Sexual harassment was somebody else’s business” was the attitude of most participants. While they claimed that their companies provided meticulous training and education about sexual harassment, they turned a blind eye to it. However, Katagiri-san was an exception, in that he was very cautious concerning the possibility of accusations of sexual harassment. Although Katagiri-san was always on good terms with the female workers, articles on sexual harassment which he read in magazines made him think that he should refrain from making jokes because female workers may misinterpret his jokes in a negative way. He related an experience that kept him on edge, although a joke was not the cause:

There was a tall woman called Akemi-chan. I called her ‘Akemi-chan’ and then another woman asked me if I knew her first name. I thought ‘oh no, that’s it’. I memorized the first names of twenty-three women in my section in 10 minutes. I was that careful. (Katagiri-san, G)

Despite his popularity amongst the female workers, Katagiri-san was in a cold sweat. While he remembered the name of the tall woman only because she was extremely tall, the other employees might think this was discrimination or favouritism. Moreover, Katagiri-san called the tall woman by her first name with *chan*, which connotes endearment and is normally used in close relations, which he was also concerned might be understood as sexual harassment, in which case he might be sent to a branch office or a subsidiary company.<sup>218</sup>

As the imported term ‘*sekuhara*’ indicates, its alien character meant that sexual harassment was still an unfamiliar concept for many participants in this study. In addition, because of a lack of “human right education”, except for Dowa education (education for eliminating discrimination against *Burakumin*) in Japan (Chan-Tiberghien 2004, p.70), participants lacked the essential understanding of sexual harassment as a serious matter in relation to women’s human rights. Moreover, even those participants who provided preventative education to workers in their companies did not deal with the

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<sup>217</sup> In fact, one participant, who works in a personnel department and is engaged in the elimination of sexual harassment, implied that I should marry. This incident reflected his fundamental lack of understanding of sexual harassment as well as his lack of sensitivity.

<sup>218</sup> Disciplinary action includes reprimand, salary and/or grade reduction, transfer, delay in promotion, withdrawal of annual salary increments, demotion, suspension or even actual dismissal: internationally common forms of sanction (Aeberhard-Hodges 1996, p.530; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 2001).



issue in earnest. The trivialisation of sexual harassment is one form of men's collective mobilisation of masculinity in order to exclude women (Martin 2003, p.350; Martin and Collinson 1999, p.302). Especially in large Japanese male-centred corporations, it is easy to promote such a collective practice unnoticed (Connell 1995, p.172). As Walby (1990, p.145) suggests, sexual harassment is a by-product of other forms of patriarchal supremacy over women. The revised EEOL may dissuade male workers, although not every worker, from indulging in sexual harassment; however, it cannot demolish the organisational stratagems that maintain male dominance.

### **4.3 Transfer and *Tanshinfunin*: One Painful Price of being a salaryman**

Male patriarchal dividend does not come without a price. Notorious are Japanese salarymen's long working hours, *karōshi* (sudden death by overwork)<sup>219</sup> and transfers. The issue of working hours amongst white-collar workers attracted media attention from the late 1980s, the curtailment of long working hours being the major topic. Between 1975 and 1991, the average white-collar salaryman's annual working hours increased from 1,043 to 2,080 hours, ironically when the government was attempting to reduce them to 1,900 hours (Palumbo and Herbig 1994, p.55). Japanese salarymen retained their infamous reputation as workaholics until the mid-1990s when they were displaced by U.S. workers<sup>220</sup> (Reiss 2002, p.17). While in 2002, working hours were reduced to 1,837 hours, another problem of '*sābisu zangyō*' (unpaid overtime service) surfaced (Palumbo and Herbig 1994, p.54; Shimada 2003, p.2). This was a product of reduced recruitment due to the prolonged recession which increased the tasks and thus the working hours of young salarymen in large corporations (Shimada 2003, p.3). Moreover, the percentage of salarymen who take paid annual holidays has been decreasing since 1997 (Shimada 2003, p.3).

*Karōshi*, or salaryman sudden death syndrome, was first legally recognised in the early 1980s (Ōno 2003, p.21; Reiss 2002, p.17). Despite the increasing number of lawsuits in the early 1990s, the Japanese government was reluctant to accept *karōshi* as a work-related, fatal, mental and physical breakdown. Compensation was given to families of victims only if a victim had 'worked continuously for 24 hours preceding death', or had 'worked 16 hours a day for seven consecutive days leading up to death' (Palumbo and Herbig 1994, p.57). However, in 1999, because of further increases in *karōshi* suits and suicides,<sup>221</sup> the definition of *karōshi* provided by the Ministry of Labour was amended and

<sup>219</sup> Karoshi used to be called '*kachōbyō*' (manager's disease) (Palumbo and Herbig 1994, p.55).

<sup>220</sup> Americans have become the most hard-working people. They work for 1,979 hours a year on average (Reiss 2002, p.17). Workers in the U.K. came to spend more hours on work than those in Japan at the end of the 1990s (Watts 1999, p.1273). However, Ōno (2003, p.23) argues that, if the measure of Japanese working hours included, the hours of unpaid overtime service that do not appear in the official record, Japanese working hours would be second to none.

<sup>221</sup> The 1999 record indicated 32,863 suicides which was greater by 34.7 per cent than the previous year. Moreover, the number of men in their fifties who committed suicide showed a 45 per cent increase over that of the previous year (Watts 1999, p.1273).

included suicide committed, not only by those who had a mental illness, but also by those who had enormous work-related pressure and stress (Watts 1999, p.1273). One example of a painful price – transfers – is the major theme in this section.

Salarymen (and bureaucrats) are occasionally (or regularly) transferred from their head offices to a branch office, and vice versa (Japan Institute of Labour 1994; Tanaka 1991, p.12). When the new office is out of commuting range, married employees have to decide whether their whole families move with them or they go alone to the place of their transfer. The former is called *tenkin* (a transfer)<sup>222</sup> and the latter is referred to as *tanshinfunin* (going to a distant post unaccompanied by families). An early account of *tanshinfunin* appeared in Vogel's study. He described salarymen and their families who lived separately because of the salarymen's transfers (Vogel 1963, p.152), although he did not specifically use the term *tanshinfunin* – probably because the term was diffused by the media only in the 1980s (Tanaka 1991, p.vi).<sup>223</sup>

The redeployment of workers within the company has been a vital tool for personnel management. In the 1980s, the reshuffle of personnel meant a redistribution of excess workers in order to maintain lifetime employment, fill vacant positions, reform the organization, educate prospective workers concerning corporate management, and offer a solution to workers who reported maladjustment to their work environment (Tanaka 1991, p.37).<sup>224</sup> During the 1990s and onwards, in addition to the above reasons, the redeployment of workers became more important than ever because of the ongoing restructuring of companies such as moving factories, dividing companies and transferring the function of the main office to other places (Hikkoshi Bunka Kenkyūjo 2001a). Amongst the entire full-time workforce in all companies in Japan (thirty-one million), three per cent are said to be *tanshinfunin* workers within Japan (nine hundred thousand)<sup>225</sup> (Hikkoshi Bunka Kenkyūjo 2001b). Additionally, large corporations have the largest percentage of transfers overseas in the form of *tanshinfunin* (Hikkoshi Bunka Kenkyūjo 2001b).

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<sup>222</sup> In contrast to the transfer system, the 'fixed workplace location' system is called '*gentei kinmuchi seido*' and '*saishū ninchi sentaku seido*' (the limited workplace system and the selection of the final workplace system). This system used to be applied automatically and indiscriminately to workers who could not obtain promotion – female workers and less educated male workers. The system is now applied to workers in the executive-track; however, the price of choosing it is less promotion, income and welfare benefits than the workers who subject themselves to the transfer system (Hōsei Daigaku Ōhara Shakai Mondai Kenkyūjo 2001; Tanaka 1991, p.45).

<sup>223</sup> The practice itself existed as early as the mid-1940s, there being an official record of companies which paid an allowance to their married workers who lived separately from their families because of their work. This allowance is still paid (Tanaka 1991, p.ii).

<sup>224</sup> According to Eguchi (2005), bank employees, journalists and bureaucrats are often transferred by their employers in order to prevent the employees from engaging in activities that bring private benefit to them.

<sup>225</sup> In January, 1984, a wife, whose husband was away from home due to *tanshinfunin*, forced her children to join her in suicide, leaving a suicide note – 'if you live only as a man, you should live by yourself. You do not need a family. Being a woman is cheerless' (Tanaka 1991, p.7). Because of this incident, companies refrained from issuing transfers during 1984. Additionally, the media's report of this tragedy played a role in spreading the word *tanshinfunin* (Tanaka 1991, p.6). However, from 1985, the number of *tanshinfunin* immediately increased.

Until the early 1990s, while companies issued transfer orders mostly for their own reasons (Tanaka 1991, p.43), large corporations strongly recommended to their workers that they relocate with their families, only accepting or choosing *tanshinfunin* in compelling circumstances (Tanaka 1991, p.9). However, according to a survey conducted at the turn of the twenty-first century, large companies now regard *tanshinfunin* as unavoidable in maximising organisational mobility in order to revitalise companies (Hikkoshi Bunka Kenkyūjo 2001b<sup>226</sup>). Some workers readily choose *tanshinfunin* if it does not disturb their private circumstances, for example, children's education and schooling,<sup>227</sup> the maintenance of houses,<sup>228</sup> and the care of elderly parents (filial piety) (Tanaka 1991, p.22). However, male workers in their forties and fifties who receive an order to transfer are likely to have children who are busy preparing for examinations for high school or university, to own their own homes and to have their parents living with them (Tanaka 1991, pp.12, 30). Since many companies do not give consideration to their workers' personal circumstances, as a result, the concept that the transfer is an unconditional command is widely accepted by both corporations and salarymen. The following reveals the participants' experiences of transfers and *tanshinfunin* as prioritising the demands of their working lives for the sacrifice of their families.

The table below indicates that the numbers of transfers and *tanshinfunin* are largest in the fathers' generation, although this might be partly explained in relation to the sons' generation by their shorter working lives. Participants in the fathers' generation regarded transfers and *tanshinfunin* as part of work and, therefore, inevitable. Some participants regretted causing inconvenience to their families due to their transfer, which indicated an increasing preference for *tanshinfunin*. By contrast, although only about half the grandfathers' generation experienced transfers and *tanshinfunin*, those who did saw work as a matter of the highest priority. With regard to the sons' generation, nearly half of the participants had already experienced transfers, despite their young age.

Several in the grandfathers' generation refused or avoided transfer or *tanshinfunin*. Hirose-san reported a fabrication to avoid transfer, telling his company that he had a sick mother to look after.<sup>229</sup> Sasaki-san refused his company's order because his wife had a job, while several others were 'lucky' to escape transfer or *tanshinfunin*.

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<sup>226</sup> This trend was verified by one of the participants, who works in a personnel department.

<sup>227</sup> It is difficult to change high schools due to the educational system. In addition, parents are worried about their children's maladjustment to new school environments.

<sup>228</sup> As it is very difficult to buy a house in Japan, people have a strong attachment to their own house and land, and it is unusual to repeat buying and selling houses from place to place.

<sup>229</sup> A rejection of the company's order by its workers is rare; however, one-third of companies penalise workers' rejection and they are often subject to disciplinary action (Tanaka 1991, p.44). However, some companies give consideration to employees' sick family members (Tanaka 1991, p.16).

**TABLE 9**  
**Participants' Experiences of Transfers and *Tanshinfunin***

	Transfer	<i>Tanshinfunin</i>	Transfer & <i>Tanshinfunin</i>	Never Experienced	Percentage Experiencing Either Transfer or <i>Tanshinfunin</i> *
<b>The Grandfathers' Generation</b>	<b>2</b> (16.6%)	<b>2</b> (16.6%)	<b>2</b> (16.6%)	<b>6</b> (50%)	<b>50%</b>
<b>The Fathers' Generation</b>	<b>3</b> (20%)	<b>6</b> (40%)	<b>5</b> (33%)	<b>1</b> (7%)	<b>93%</b>
<b>The Sons' Generation</b>	<b>5</b> (45%)	<b>1</b> (10%)	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b> (45%)	<b>55%</b>

\* One of participants in the grandfathers' generation was a seaman who was at sea most of the time in his working life. He was not counted in this table.

By contrast, and despite the fact that those participants who experienced transfers or *tanshinfunin* had to move many times (more frequently than the other generations), they expressed a sheer sense of mission for their work with no commitment to their families, embodying the devotion of the corporate warrior to the company. Despite his eight transfers and three *tanshinfunin*, Yanase-san proudly related his experiences. Shiga-san, who worked for a bank, was transferred from one branch office to another every three years. After buying a house, Shiga-san was determined to commute to his distant workplace from his house. At one stage, he caught the five-forty train every morning and came home after midnight, spending the night in a hotel if he missed the last train, at 10 p.m.. Even so, Shiga-san appreciated the long commuting time, explaining that he had time to read and learn. Katagiri-san was transferred overseas four times. He received one order just after his child was born. He decided to go overseas by himself:

I was prepared [to obey the order]. My company gave us the right to refuse. You don't get any punishment if you do so.<sup>230</sup> But I think my company is too kind to its employees. Salarymen must do what they are told to do. Therefore, I think my company is soft. (Katagiri-san, F)

The above participants unhesitatingly obeyed their companies' commands, neglecting their families in the process. These corporate warriors in the grandfathers' generation clearly revealed their internalisation of corporate ideology.

<sup>230</sup> One-third of companies take measures to deal with refusal of transfers. Those salarymen who refuse transfers are often subjected to disciplinary action by their companies (Tanaka 1991, p.44). A colleague of Yoshino-san in the fathers' generation was asked to resign his post when he refused a transfer.

Most participants in the fathers' generation experienced transfers or *tanshinfunin*, although most were only transferred once or twice. For these participants, while work took precedence over their families, they were also concerned about the impact of their transfers on their families, especially on their children's education and schooling. Ono-san's wife told him that his sons experienced bullying at school. Ono-san was troubled that his sons might not be able to make good friends because of his many transfers. Similarly, Hino-san and Toda-san expressed their worry:

I have had transfers twice so far. I don't have any problem but my child does. [When we moved] he was in the second grade in junior high school. He had trouble with friends. We moved from Nagoya to Kagoshima. The language is different, culture is different, apparently, textbooks, eleven out of twelve, are different. It was just before examinations for high school. My child seemed to be so worried. I thought he would grow out of it but it was difficult for him. He thinks that he was forced to move. (Hino-san, F)

Of course, I regard transfers as part of work. I work in the personnel department and I made workers move. But I have a slight regret because my children had to bear the inconvenience. They said that they didn't cry at the graduation ceremony when other students were crying and they felt bored. I as a parent thought that children would get used to the new environment but... In this sense, if I could do the transfer over again, I would leave my family. (Toda-san, F)

Toda-san and Ueno-san, who worked in the personnel department in their companies, also noted the change in attitudes in companies from encouraging their employees to go to a new post with their families to accepting *tanshinfunin* (Toda-san), often because wives and children resisted the move (Ueno-san). Transfers caused difficulties not only to some participants' children but also to wives. Hamada-san's wife felt lonely because she did not have friends in the new post until she started part-time work. According to Hamada-san, transfers, once children finished secondary school, were hard for his wife because there were no school events, e.g. Parent-Teacher Association meetings that provide opportunities to make friends. *Tanshinfunin* poses different problems. Hamada-san was in the middle of *tanshinfunin* at the time of the interview.

I didn't do any housework [at home]. Now I have to do it. I didn't even make tea. I have daughters. I just said 'tea' and I got it. I clean the bath tub and toilet but my wife comes here once a month. (Hamada-san, F)

Likewise, Ueno-san who called his situation half-*tanshinfunin* explained:

At the moment, half [*tanshinunin*]. My wife makes a trip between Hakata in Fukuoka and here fortnightly because we have a house in Fukuoka. She lives alone over there but our children live close by. Because I pay an allowance to her for this, she's got to come here [to do housework for me].  
(Ueno-san, F)

So-called 'half'-*tanshinunin* was the experience of some other participants, whose wives came regularly to their 'digs' or the hotel where they were staying in order to perform household tasks, for example taking away their dirty clothes to be washed and returned. Participants also expressed the economic power and patriarchal perceptions of the veteran salaryman – they paid for their wives' services and expected them to be provided. While it was obvious that participants in the fathers' generation who experienced transfers and *tanshinunin* obeyed their companies at the sacrifice of their families, there was an undercurrent of concern for and complaints from their families that was almost totally absent in the grandfathers' generation.

Almost none of the participants in the sons' generation had to juggle family and work commitments, experiencing transfers as single men. Shimizu-san, the only married participant in this generation who experienced *tanshinunin*, went through an extremely difficult time. When he was transferred, his wife was pregnant with their second child and the first child was only three years old:

My wife wanted to raise children here, so I was sure that if I got a transfer, that's going to be *tanshinunin*. As I have an ambition for success as a salaryman, it was a dilemma... My wife said to me that she was like a father as well as a mother and she couldn't count on me. It was hard to take. The second child was born when I was away from home. We often had quarrels [over the phone]. I was very busy and it was impossible to look after my children because of my location. She was sort of asking me to quit my job. I was very sorry for my family.  
(Shimizu-san, S)

Being distressed by the situation, Shimizu-san found a new job and was about to resign his position in order to return to his home. However, his superior kindly made an arrangement for him to return to his former workplace after serving away for a further year. Shimizu-san and his wife discussed the arrangement and both agreed to accept it. His wife and children were happy to have Shimizu-san at home, but Shimizu-san planned to commit himself more fully to work when his children became old enough to be left without him. The sons' generation experienced the increasing redeployment and reshuffling of workers and lowering of the age of first transfer. Because of this, in the future, married participants with young children may have similar problems to Shimizu-san's, given the growing likelihood that wives with babies and toddlers in this generation will express their complaints, demanding their husbands' participation in childcare.

In brief, work is more important than the family for most participants across the three generations. Many participants perform the role of corporate warriors as their proper task without any doubt, fulfilling corporate needs at the sacrifice of their families. In the grandfathers' generation, some participants showed their extreme determination to devote their lives to work in their attitudes towards transfers or *tanshinfunin*. This single-minded approach was balanced with some concern for costs to family amongst participants in the fathers' generation, some preferring *tanshinfunin*; however, their wives and children were still sacrificed to work demands. In the sons' generation, *tanshinfunin* caused a family crisis because of a wife's protest and the company accommodated this. Unlike long working hours and *karōshi*, participants' families pay the immediate price, shouldering a heavy burden of additional housework and/or the entire child rearing. Notwithstanding this, many participants continue to nurture their work ambitions even if this means neglecting their families. The next section further explores the meaning of work for the participants by examining the way in which they locate work in comparison with other important aspects of life such as the family, children, and leisure activities.

#### **4.4 Ikigai**

The present chapter, so far, has depicted salarymen in this study as beneficiaries of the patriarchal dividend such as power and material resources, with which their large male-centred companies rewarded them as men. It has also indicated that their ambition for work is not easily disturbed by the cost that their family members have to pay. In return, salarymen are expected to offer loyalty to their company, accepting transfers and *tanshinfunin*. This section asks how much importance participants give to work. To what extent are they loyal to their companies? The significance of work is revealed through the lens of "*ikigai*" (what makes life worth living). Each participant identified at least one stage in their lives when work was their total *ikigai*. While most participants across the three generations suggested that "corporate warrior" was an antiquated dedication to work, many were unsuccessful in identifying an *ikigai* other than work.

The Japanese term "*ikigai*" connotes several slightly different meanings. *Ikigai* can refer to life's worth (Lebra 1984, p.162), something to live for (Mathews 1996, p.vii), fulfilment, one's whole life, a purpose to life or something that makes life worth living (Mathews 1996, p.3, 2003, p.109; Plath 1980, p.90). English does not have a commensurate word for *ikigai* although Mathews (1996, p.27) suggests that the discourse on *ikigai* in Japan bears a close resemblance to the discourse on 'the meaning of life' in the U.S. Although *ikigai* appears to be a grave word, it is a topic which is frequently discussed in the Japanese media (Mathews 2003, p.109). For example, Plath (1980, pp.90-93) discusses two surveys on *ikigai* conducted in Japan (one in 1970 and the other in 1972). In one of them, respondents (men and women whose ages ranged from fifteen to forty-four) chose their *ikigai* from given answers

including family, children, leisure, work, lifestyle, social activities and 'other'. The results indicated that the older men became, the more the family and children became important. Similarly, the older women became, the more children became their *ikigai*. In the other survey, respondents (two groups of men, young and middle-aged, in large corporations) chose three things that were the most important to them. Although health was of the greatest concern for the majority of men, regardless of age, similar to the above survey, older men considered the family to be significant for them. Lebra (1984, p.162) also presents the results of a survey conducted by the Japanese government in 1972 in which women (70 per cent) view their children as their *ikigai*, one-half of their male counterparts seeing their *ikigai* in work and family (Lebra 1984, p.213).

According to Mathews (1996, p.12), a survey in the mid-1980s also indicates that, whereas men over thirty claimed work or family and children as their *ikigai*, women over thirty overwhelmingly claimed family and children as their *ikigai*. Comparing *ikigai* amongst Japanese people and Americans, Mathews (1996; 2003) examines how cultural and socio-economic factors in each society shape its people's *ikigai*. He suggests conflicting ideas in the *ikigai* discourse in Japan. While one idea encourages self-realisation (*jiko jitsugen*), in which "self" is vital, the other promotes a sense of unity with or commitment to a group, in which "playing a social role" becomes crucial (Mathews 1996, p.18). While many of his respondents find their *ikigai* in oneness with, for example, work (in the case of men) or children (in the case of women), the majority of the respondents, regardless of sex, reveal ambivalent feelings about finding their *ikigai*. The respondents are aware of the two conflicting values of *ikigai* and indicate the dilemma between living for a group or someone (playing social roles) and pursuing a life for themselves (self-realisation). The familial/gender division of *ikigai* amongst married Japanese respondents demonstrates a striking difference from their American counterparts who expect the ideal *ikigai* between spouses to be one that brings mutual comfort to them and, therefore, has no specific gender implication (Mathews 1996, p.95). Mathews argues that the interpretation of *ikigai* as self-realisation resulted from Japan's economic changes from the end of the Second World War. Rebuilding their society after the War, people were fulfilled in making their contribution but the advent of affluence meant 'soul-searching', which in turn questioned the importance of unity with the group (Mathews 1996, p.148; 2003, p.118). Mathews (2003, p.121) argues that men in the older generation in his study take it for granted that work should be men's *ikigai*, whereas younger respondents tend to distance themselves from work. Despite their opinions, in reality, cultural and institutional constraints facilitate the continuing gender division of *ikigai* and, therefore, work continues to represent men's '*de facto ikigai*' (Mathews 2003, p.113).

Nevertheless, *ikigai* is precarious. The participants in my study constantly shape and negotiate their *ikigai* according to their personal, social, cultural, institutional and economic circumstances. It was not



easy for many participants to articulate their present *ikigai*. The majority of participants in the grandfathers' generation, however, claimed without the least hesitation that work had been their *ikigai* (see Table 10 below). Their *ikigai* entailed unity with their company, except for one participant whose *ikigai* meant self-realization in his work. While most participants who were retired found a new *ikigai* in leisure activities, the others were not certain what their *ikigai* was at the time of the interview. The fathers' generation indicated ambivalent feelings towards both work and family as *ikigai* except for one participant whose *ikigai* was work but clearly in the mode of self-realization. Some participants saw their families as *ikigai*. Some said that both work and family were important as *ikigai*, although their conception of the relationship between work and the family varied. The others expressed their wish to find *ikigai* outside work. In the sons' generation, a few participants spoke their minds about wanting their work to be *ikigai*, implying that their experience of work as *ikigai* accorded neither with playing a social role nor with self-realization. For them, work represented an expedient, i.e. a means of earning a comfortable income that enhanced their lives in relation to leisure. Some claimed that work and other aspects of their lives were equally their *ikigai*, while others found their *ikigai* in their family.

**TABLE 10**  
***Ikigai* of the Participants**

	Work and Company	Work	Work and Family	Self-realisation		Family only	Leisure Travel, etc.
				Through work	Through something else		
<b>The grandfathers' generation</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>The fathers' generation</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>The sons' generation</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>36%</b>

Note: Percentages add up to more than 100% as participants could be classified into multiple categories.

With regard to the grandfathers' generation, while the percentages are based on the participants' perception of *ikigai* in the past, except for two participants who currently works, the percentage of "Leisure" reflects their current post-retirement lives.

Work had been *ikigai* for many participants in the grandfathers' generation. Thinking fondly of their working life, for example, a number of them stated simply 'of course [work was *ikigai*] even though it was hard'. These participants, representing corporate warriors, worked frantically for their companies during the high growth period, perhaps with pride in reconstructing Japan after the War. In this process, their sense of unity with their companies gave them a feeling of their value as men. Indeed,

many of them showed total loyalty to their companies. For example, in retrospect, Ishida-san expressed his devotion to his job with complete loyalty:

Of course, [I had] 100 per cent [loyalty]. I had a sense of satisfaction. There were times when I didn't feel satisfied but it's natural because your company doesn't let you please yourself. It can't be helped. I think we were corporate warriors. We worked for the sake of our companies. We were in the middle of the high economic growth period and it was quite a long challenging period. At that time, we weren't aware that we were corporate warriors but now I think we were. We carried out any tasks no matter what conditions we were in. (Ishihara-san, G)

Shiga-san as a branch manager of a bank made every effort to make his branch the best one amongst all the branches, reporting proudly that his output was disclosed in a well known economic newspaper. Hirose-san went to work even on Sundays and even when he was ill, believing that his hard work would make a difference to his company. According to Katagiri-san, around the time of the Tokyo Olympic Games (1964) in the middle of the high economic growth period, there was a television commercial that depicted a dedicated salaryman together with the catchphrase 'Oh intense (*mōretsu*)!' meaning salarymen were extremely hard-working. Katagiri-san described Japanese society at that time as 'strangely frantic', as did the commercial.

Their confidence in their own hard work was reflected in their criticism of younger colleagues, arguing that they were disappointed by young workers because of their lack of passion for work. Obviously, these participants' *ikigai* meant oneness with their work or with their companies during their working lives. As Honda-san said 'to this day, I give thanks to my company', such gratitude being barely expressed towards their families.

By contrast, Sasaki-san pursued his *ikigai* as self-realisation in his work, holding no loyalty to his company. He chose his company with the clear purpose of satisfying his knowledge and skill in engineering:

Yes, work was *ikigai* because I did what I wanted to do. I didn't want promotion because, you know, you can't do what you want to do. It is funny to say that but I hated being a manager. I truly wanted to do a technical job, so I hated administrative tasks. I said I don't want to become a manager when I was promoted but I was told that I can't say that. (Sasaki-san, G)

As an example of where Sasaki-san's loyalties lay, he once ruined a project with which he was not satisfied, realising that his conduct was burdensome to his company, although he did not regret having

done it. Sasaki-san was unusual among this generation in being from a wealthy family and having a postgraduate degree, factors which might have influenced his path and his different sense of value.

Many participants who had retired from their work found a new *ikigai* in their leisure activities, whereas men who had no hobby were pining for work. For example, Hirose-san was not able to articulate his *ikigai*, saying:

Work was my *ikigai*. It's hard to say what my current *ikigai* is... I wonder if it is my family. I've got two grandchildren. Well, grandchildren are adorable, though.... (Hirose-san, G)

To be sure, Hirose-san adored his newborn grandchildren and he occasionally visited his daughter's and son's places to see them. However, he did not find his *ikigai* in his familial situation. He was simply bewildered by an excess of free time. None of these participants, whether their *ikigai* was oneness with their companies or self-realisation, discussed their families as part of their *ikigai*, reflecting lives occupied by work and a clear familial/gender division of *ikigai*.

In the fathers' generation, *ikigai* was much more varied. Three participants considered work to be their *ikigai*, only Hino-san clearly claiming his *ikigai* as self-realization at work. Sugiura-san said that his *ikigai* was work; however, his manner was uncertain:

If you ask me if work is my *ikigai*, it's not. I admire people who say work is *ikigai*. Work is just work... But if I think hard, probably, I suppose, work is my *ikigai* because it's hard if I don't have a job. It's hard to live without anything to do. It's hard to be just alive. (Sugiura-san, F)

Sugiura-san's passive or hesitant manner in the above quotation suggests his ambivalent feelings towards his real *ikigai*. Nevertheless, Sugiura-san showed considerable loyalty to his company. Respecting the president of his company, he regarded himself and his colleagues as corporate warriors in the field of information technology, thus indicating that work was pivotal in his life. Ueno-san also found *ikigai* in his job, likening work to the sun and himself to the earth that revolved around the sun. However, at the same time, Ueno-san expressed anxiety about his life after his retirement, explaining that he would not live in contentment unless he began to make friends outside work, which indicated his limited social activities outside work and perhaps shallow friendships amongst colleagues.

Indeed, for Hamada-san who was content with his job and committed himself to work, there was no boundary between work and the family:

To be 100 per cent responsible for my family means to be 100 per cent responsible for my company. Because, for example, let's say, you have to give an importance to your company out of 100 per cent and to the family the rest. In this case, I give 100 per cent importance to my family which is the same as giving 100 per cent importance to my company. For example, I never take a paid holiday for the sake of my family. My family may be unhappy about that but if I trouble my company by taking holidays, that doesn't do my family any good. (Hamada-san, F)

Hamada-san further criticised his young colleagues.

Today's young people easily take paid holidays. 'Yes, I'm going overseas'. They do that so easily. Well, I wonder if that is ok. It's an annual paid holiday and therefore that doesn't affect the company negatively. But still it's not productive for the company, is it? They don't care about the company at all. They don't do anything good. They only claim their rights. (Hamada-san, F)

The above criticism of young people embodied Hamada-san's loyalty to his company. Hamada-san's *ikigai* was work in the guise of the family allowing him to place his family's happiness in abeyance while prioritising his company's profits.

Hino-san represented work as a central part of *ikigai* as self-realization:

Of course [work is my *ikigai*]. My company is not *ikigai* but my work is. I don't think that this company is the only place for me. I have eighty per cent loyalty to my company but twenty per cent is my determination that I will leave when I fail to realise myself. (Hino-san, F)

Nevertheless, despite his determined statement, Hino-san disclosed that personal financial liabilities meant that he would be unlikely to change jobs. In reality, his duties as a breadwinner were in conflict with *ikigai* as self-realization.

For the majority of participants in this generation, work was of equal importance as *ikigai* compared with other factors such as family or leisure activities. Some had previously experienced work as *ikigai* but were dissatisfied now that they were older, having failed to receive the same promotion rates as those who entered the company with them, and were perhaps aware of a future without work. For Yoshino-san, *ikigai* was something that gave him pleasure, and included his family and leisure activities:

Work is not *ikigai*. *Ikigai* is what I take pleasure in. So, my own *ikigai* is... I enjoy spending time with my family. There are things I want to do. In order to do them, I work for convenience's sake.

(Yoshino-san, F)

Yoshino-san and his wife enjoyed playing sports in a community sports club. Tsutsumi-san coached a community baseball team of which his son was a member. Four men denied work as playing any part in their *ikigai* instead claiming their *ikigai* to be their family.

Regarding the son's generation, only two participants found *ikigai* in work. The other participants were divided into two groups. While some of them found *ikigai* in work and leisure activities and/or the family, the others claimed that *ikigai* was their family. Young men who viewed work as their *ikigai* did not show the single-minded commitment to their companies observed in the grandfathers' generation. Rather, they actively sought pleasure from their work so that they could carry on. Their *ikigai* in work did not represent unity with their company; however, it did not necessarily signify self-realization either. For example, Miura-san expected work to be a source of satisfaction:

[Work is] *ikigai*. I like my job but I don't like to work like mad. I think that because I make a sacrifice of fun time to work, like catching up with my friends, travelling or exercising, it's a waste of time if I don't enjoy my job. I am happy if my work contributes to society but I want my own satisfaction from work. Because I spend so much time on work, I want to say *ikigai* is my work for the time being, otherwise I would feel sad.

(Miura-san, S)

Similar to Miura-san, in retrospect, Ebara-san also said that, given that work occupied a considerable amount of time in the day, it should give satisfaction:

I suppose work was *ikigai*. Work takes up a huge part of the day. It's important for me to find some fulfilment in my work. Well, [fortunately] I was enjoying my job.

(Ebara-san, S)

As Sasaki-san in the grandfather's generation and Hino-san in the fathers' generation indicated earlier, "self-realisation" through work entails simply having personal pleasure without expecting promotions, whereas "satisfaction" and "fulfilment" in the above quotations involve receiving others' praise or recognition of their worth in their jobs, perhaps, with ambitions for advancement in social standing but without working as hard as the older generations did. In fact, although Miura-san was content with his job after two years' service, he was already thinking about changing jobs in pursuit of more satisfaction. Ebara-san, who was dismissed by his company because of restructuring, also enjoyed his work and the interactions with his customers who appreciated his contribution. Among these and other

participants is the idea that they had neither a sense of oneness with their companies nor a strong desire for self-realization but used their companies as an expedient for achieving extrinsic satisfaction at work.

Some participants lived for work as well as for additional *ikigai* factors such as leisure activities and the family. From a calculating point of view, Okano-san, a single young man, asserted that:

I am proud of my work and enjoy it. But basically, for me, work is a means to earn money for life. You have to work hard to earn money but you also have to play. I want to get good pay but I also want to play. For example, I want to spend my pay on travelling and seeing the world. But because I want to improve my skills, I think I should work hard. (Okano-san, S)

Shimizu-san, who was married with children, found *ikigai* in his work and his family.

Work is *ikigai* but child rearing is too. I am engaged in two trades at the same time... When I was in the personnel department, work was more important than my family. But now I am more engaged in my family than in work. So, my family is happy. But *ikigai* in work is declining. I want to improve the quality of my job. I can't make much output in carrying out routine tasks at the moment. (Shimizu-san, S)

For others, leisure activities were the incentive to work, although it was likely for those men who were in the early stage of childcare that work may become the first priority later in their lives.

Those participants who denied work as *ikigai* were all married and had toddlers. Communication with their very young children gave them great satisfaction as fathers:

Work hasn't become *ikigai*. This [pointing to his newborn baby] is my *ikigai*. If I have to choose work or my family, I would choose my family. I optimistically think that we will survive. (Hirose-san, S)

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Hirose-san in the son's generation is a son of Hirose-san in the grandfather's generation. The young Hirose-san offers a sharp contrast to his father throughout this study. As mentioned earlier, his father had lived for work. As a result, he was at a loss after his retirement. On the other hand, utilising flexi-time, the young Hirose-san looked after his baby as much as possible. This father and son is a good example of a generational shift in *ikigai*. However, not all participants whose *ikigai* was the family indicated their actual involvement in childcare. As Mathews

(1996, p.16) suggests, men's claim that *ikigai* is family stems from their sense of responsibility as breadwinners. Their physical and mental devotion to work is socially praised. Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 3, given their equating work with childcare, their minimal engagement in childcare does not undermine their claiming that *ikigai* is family.

In summary, it is very likely that work retains the status of '*de facto ikigai*' for many participants in this study (Mathews 2003, p.113), although the unswerving identification with one's company waned across the generations. In contrast to the grandfathers' generation whose *ikigai* was derived from work, many in the fathers' generation put their hearts into their work, while some of them also put their hearts into other *ikigai* factors. In the sons' generation, by contrast, work become an expedient, i.e. a means of maximising satisfaction and achieving a good lifestyle, although work remained as *ikigai* for many participants as a means of realising personal goals rather than entailing loyalty to the company.

It is clear that the sex segregation, which is seen in the participants' experience of schooling and in their private space of the family (Chapters 2 and 3), is also evident in the sphere of work. The final section discusses the outcomes of this clearly gendered division of labour in the participants' lives after retirement and child rearing.

#### 4.5 Consequences of sex segregation

Retired men have been apposite targets for the media who degrade their reputation with derogatory names such as *sodaigomi* (big rubbish) and *nureochiba* (wet fallen leaves).<sup>231</sup> Given the strict gender segregation of household and childcare work, retired salarymen are seen by their wives as "useless" like big rubbish (or wet fallen leaves) and, therefore, they are treated as "burdensome".<sup>232</sup> In fact, it is widely reported that recently retired Japanese men find that their lives are now empty of meaning and that they lead miserable lives (e.g. BBC New 2006; Faiola 2005, p.19; see also Fuess 2004, p.165 for the media reports in Japan). The wives' reluctance to have their retired husbands around at home and the increasing divorce rate among elderly couples reported in the media are, however, not a mere

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<sup>231</sup> The term 'big rubbish' appeared in the early 1980s. The term 'wet fallen leaves' originated when a certain housewife who likened her husband, who always wanted to accompany her when she went out, to wet fallen leaves that could not be removed no matter how hard she brushed. Being introduced by a commentator, Higuchi Keiko, the usage of the term spread widely, to the extent that the term won the prize for the most popular expression in 1989. The euphemistic expression of wet fallen leaves is preferred to the blunt tag of big rubbish. See URL: <http://zokugo-dic.com/15so/sodaigomi.htm> and <http://zokugo-dic.com/23nu/nureochiba> for more information.

<sup>232</sup> As an atypical example, Take-san described his wife as big rubbish. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Take-san did more housework than his wife. Sitting in the middle of a room doing nothing, she looked like big rubbish to him, although he did hasten to add that he did not necessarily hold her in contempt. Therefore, Take-san used the media term 'big rubbish' to refer to someone who is unable to perform her/his role.

media craze. The divorce rate in Japan has been soaring since 1988 (Fuess 2004, p.145).<sup>233</sup> In particular, an increase in the number of divorces over the last five decades among couples who have lived together for more than twenty years is striking, escalating from 3.5 per cent in 1950 to 16.9 per cent in 1998 (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 2000a; Saitō 1999, p.222). In no group where the duration of cohabitation is shorter than twenty years was there such a marked increase in the divorce rate.<sup>234</sup> In addition, in many cases, wives in their middle and early old age demand divorce on the grounds that their husbands cannot give them emotional fulfilment (Saitō 1999, pp.222-223), which suggests not only Japanese men's alienation from their family in retirement but also their lack of communication with their wives. Studies show that, while couples in their twenties have good communication, that of couples in their thirties and forties decreases sharply (Kashiwagi 2003, p.127; National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2000). Although couples in their fifties regain interaction to some extent, it is worth noting that their topics of conversation involve mainly their children and that it is often one-way conversation from wives (Itō 1996, pp.64-65; Kashiwagi 2003, p.128). In comparison with American couples, Japanese couples spend much less time together not only on communication but also on socialising activities (Kashiwagi 2003, p.127). These facts accord with my participants' interactions with their wives.

Responses of many participants to the media's pejorative terms concerning retired men revealed their anxiety about their future lives after retirement rather than their indignation that these tags were applied to retired men. Indeed, some retired participants experienced a strong sense of loss in a purpose for living. From the participants' point of view, a hobby, whether or not they had one, was the decisive factor in the quality of their post-retirement lives. As other researchers (e.g. see Allison 1994, p.125; Coleman 1983, p.191; Hendry 1981, p.89) have found, the outside interests of men in this study were clearly gender segregated. Some participants avoided unwelcome retirement by working on secondment for other companies after the due retirement age:

Actually, the other day, my wife said to me 'you might become large rubbish if we spend time together all the time. You should keep on working'. She is worried about my health. If I'm not well and stay at home, I am a trouble for her. That is, I am a wet fallen leaf...I don't like the word. I really hate that word. But if I stay home, I might be like that. It's depressing because we don't talk much. If we see each other's face all the time, I think we will choke. So, I can understand the feeling of wet fallen leaves. (Yoshida-san, G)

<sup>233</sup> See also URL: [http://www1.mhlw.go.jp/toukei/rikon\\_8/index.html](http://www1.mhlw.go.jp/toukei/rikon_8/index.html) for various statistics about divorce issued by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2000b)

<sup>234</sup> This is in contradistinction to the couples who were married for more than twenty years. For example, in 1950, 65.3 per cent of couples who were married for less than five years, 18 per cent of couples who were married for between five and ten years, 8.8 per cent of couples who were married for between ten and fifteen years and 4.4 per cent of couples who were married for between fifteen and twenty years divorced. In 1998, the percentages were 38.8, 22.1, 12.5 and 9.7 respectively (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 2000a). Thus none of the groups indicates a marked increase.



Yoshida-san has been working as a contract employee after his due retirement, a pattern followed by the majority of participants in the grandfathers' generation. Despite doing the same job, Yoshida-san's salary was dramatically reduced – to a quarter of his former salary. While he was disappointed with this treatment by his company, to the extent that he came to distrust his company, he wanted to continue to work as long as he could. He expressed clear anxiety as he imagined relations with his wife once he retired properly, an anxiety only made worse after his wife suggested that he should have a hobby. Similarly, Hirose-san, who had just retired, was eager to work again. His statement showed how extensively work occupied his life:

It's better for me to have a job. After all, I have more time than I know how to use. I crazily worked but now I have no work. This makes me sick. I've been thinking I shouldn't be like this. You know, I would love to work if there is an opportunity. It's not about money. I just want to work. And, I asked my friends to find me a job. And actually I work a few days a month. That makes a real difference. I can't stand passing my days in a fog or looking after bonsai. (Hirose-san, G)

Occasional exercise at a golf practice range, walking the dog and looking after bonsai did not keep Hirose-san sufficiently busy. Rather, as time hung heavy on his hands, he felt physically and emotionally unwell. In retirement, men like Hirose-san, who embodied the corporate warrior, are now confronted by the outcome of their performance. That is, they are at a loss how to cope with their strong dependence on their company, implying imperfection of the corporate warrior. This also suggests a challenge to hegemony of salaryman masculinity.

On the other hand, half of the retired men in my research valued their retirement lives above their working lives. They indulged in their hobbies or participated in various activities organized by community institutions. However, hardly any engaged in joint activities with their wives:

My wife has also established her own world. And if I get in there and say 'me too', of course I definitely become *nureochiba* (wet fallen leaves)... You know, I knew it. Just before I retired, I suppose my wife thought that I would work a bit longer because I could stay in my company for another two years but I said to her 'I'm going to quit'. And then she looked a bit gloomy. So, I said 'I won't have lunch at home except for weekends, how does that sound?' She has her own world in the weekday afternoons and so it is hard for her to fix something for me for lunch. Japanese men, you know, they have left their wives alone for a long time. And then they say to their wives 'let's enjoy ourselves' because they've got time. Their wives say 'give me a break!' for sure.

(Katagiri-san, G)

Katagiri-san was one of the minority who decided not to work after their due retirement. He actually started planning how to spend his time long before his retirement. He had many hobbies that kept him busy outside his house. However, it was obvious that he and his wife maintained separate spheres during the day as if nothing had changed since his retirement.<sup>235</sup> This strategy was adopted by participants who had made a successful transition to retirement.

While participants in the fathers' generation did not deny their uneasiness about their lives after retirement, they did not take the possibility of becoming burdensome at home seriously:

I feel danger.... Well, you know, I'm going to let her be free to do things and I will do things as I like, I suppose. Of course we live together but as we get older, we don't need to be together all the time in our old age. If we want to live together, we do so. We don't have to get divorced at all. I mean, 'let's enjoy being with friends'. I spend time with my friends and my wife with hers. Moreover, my family as a whole mixes with other families, various ones. I am going to prepare for that before it is too late.

(Ueno-san, F)

The fact that Ueno-san discussed divorce implied his awareness of the widespread media representation of "the family restructuring" amongst elderly couples (Fuess 2004, p.165), as was evident in his statement that he feels 'danger'. His future plan accords with the tendency among couples aged over forty that each spouse wants to have separate quality time (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2000). Likewise, according to participants in the fathers' generation, making preparations was the solution to avoiding a depressing life after retirement. Because the majority of the participants had no hobby in common with their wives, their retirement would also be characterised by separate spheres for the husband and wife. Being aware of this, Fukuda-san made an effort to find shared hobbies and attended tennis lessons with his wife.

On the other hand, just as in the grandfathers' generation, there were a few participants who were determined to pursue their work even after reaching retirement age.

I think that I will work as long as I can after sixty. Even though my salary decreases, I want to work because my *ikigai* (something to live for, a purpose in life) and *yarigai* (something challenging, something worth doing) are work, self-realisation. When I get in poor health and can't work, I may become wet fallen leaves. Therefore, I am worried about the situation I would be in when I got sick.

(Hino-san, F)

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<sup>235</sup> According to Katagiri-san, there are many retired men in suits with briefcases who loiter around department stores during the day, eating their lunches on a bench in front of Shinbashi Station in Tokyo.

Hino-san called himself *kigyō-senshi* (a corporate warrior). Work represented his whole life. Accordingly, for Hino-san, planning for his life after retirement was pointless; how to extend his working life was his preoccupation.

Although retirement was not an urgent topic for participants in the sons' generation, they were aware of media discussion of the issue. Reflecting on their current working lives, they pointed out that it was important to achieve a balance between work and family, to have communication with family members and to spend more time at home in order to have a joyful life after retirement. Similar to the older generations, they suggested that making preparations and having a hobby would reduce the risk of becoming big rubbish and wet fallen leaves. However, a few participants in this generation showed striking differences from the older generations. Segawa-san almost always spent his leisure time with his wife and discussed his wife's attitudes in ways that suggested considerable communication between the couple. Likewise, Hirose-san confidently stated that 'I'm not worried about [retirement] at all' because he and his wife had many hobbies in common.

So far, the above narratives have described the participants who did not confront a serious challenge in their post-retirement lives. In contrast to them, in one household, gender relations changed after retirement. Kasuga-san's wife developed heart disease when he was in his mid-seventies. Although he still held a very traditional and patriarchal concept of gender relations, his participation in housework increased considerably in order to reduce his wife's physical (and mental) fatigue. Kasuga-san stated a little nervously:

Recently, I do the cleaning. Ha hah hah. Only recently. My wife does the cooking but I dry dishes and tidy up the sink because if you don't clean the sink, you can't do the next thing. And I clean the bathroom.... I also look after the kitchen waste. And I never complain about what she cooks. To be honest, I thought that she became ill because I have been selfish. I thought she might die [because of my selfishness].

(Kasuga-san, G)

Kasuga-san tenderly took care of his wife because, as he said, without her there was no fulfilling life for him. His story expressed the ideal arranged marriage as it is portrayed in Japanese literature, that is, emotional bonds that accumulate over time. More importantly, his narrative suggests that participants took their wives for granted, only realising their emotional dependence in times of crisis.<sup>236</sup> However, Kasuga-san drew no wider gender lessons from his personal experience. Indeed, he did not like the idea of gender equality. As Connell (1995, p.159) suggests, while Kasuga-san has achieved an

<sup>236</sup> The average life expectancy for men after their wives die is less than three years, which is much shorter than that for women after their husbands die, their average life expectancy being approximately fifteen years. While the facts that women generally live longer than men and that women often marry husbands who are older than them may contribute to the above data, the data still imply men's lopsided dependence on their wives (Itō 1996, pp.71, 74).

'individualized project of reform' in gender relations between him and his wife, his awareness of his change did not generate political ramifications. He lacked knowledge of feminism as well as 'political consciousness' of gender relations in wider society. For Kasuga-san, his changed circumstances are justified only in the ideology of the ideal arranged marriage. Negative consequences of sex segregation are associated, not only with the limited communication between the participants and their wives, but also with minimal interactions between the participants and their children, to which the following turns.

Physically absent Japanese fathers are still powerful psychological presences in the minds of children, principally because fathers are assumed to be severe disciplinarians and most Japanese fathers actually practise this method of fatherhood (Ishii-Kuntz 1994, p.32; Ōno 1999, p.87). Thus one study found fathers who hardly shared childcare tend to give orders to their children rather than making suggestions (Kashiwagi 2003, p.248). By contrast, fathers who are actively involved in childcare develop attitudes more like those of mothers, primary responsibility for childcare shaping similar attitudes in men and women who take on this role (Field 1978, p.184; Kashiwagi and Wakamatsu 1994). While a survey conducted in 1995 indicated that the number of people who support mothers' and fathers' equal responsibilities in disciplining children was increasing (Ōno 1999, p.87), other studies suggest that Japanese fathers, in general, are inclined to believe that their duty as a father begins when their children reach adolescence (Kashiwagi 2003, p.255). However, according to an international comparison between Japan, the U.S. and Germany concerning the communication between fathers and children, only 5 per cent of Japanese fathers answered that they actively keep their children company, whereas 40 per cent their American counterparts and 11 per cent of their German counterparts did so (Saitō 1999, p.218). This finding concerning Japanese fathers' lack of enthusiasm for interactions with their children was also reflected in the attitudes of fathers in my study. These men tend to think that infant- and child- rearing are women's jobs. In fact, my research found that communication between authoritarian fathers and their children diminishes as the children grow. Participants in the grandfathers' generation had minimal conversation with their adult children.<sup>237</sup> Many of them mentioned that they heard about their children second-hand from their wives, who mediated between the participants and their children. Moreover, some men in the grandfathers' and fathers' generations whose children were independent expressed embarrassment or regret that they had not participated in child rearing.<sup>238</sup> Katagiri-san has two independent children. Although he lives with them, he has almost no communication with them:

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<sup>237</sup> Ironically, according to Thang (2002, pp.156-157), 'rent-a-family' business is prospering in order to meet elderly couples' or individuals' longing for an ideal three-generational family. This paid service is called 'service of the heart' and seeks to respond to the fissure between older and younger generations.

<sup>238</sup> Wajcman's study (1999, p.142) reveals that male corporate managers in Britain also lament neglecting their family, especially their children.

I feel embarrassed because I did nothing. It's not regret. As they say '*oya wa nakutomo ko wa sodatsu*'<sup>239</sup> my children chose their schools by themselves and they got a job on their own.... I didn't know anything about my children. Actually I was thinking that I would use my connections and ask my friends for help to find a job for my children but they got a job without my help just like they chose their schools... so I don't interfere with them at all. (Katagiri-san, G)

Hardly any of the participants in the grandfathers' generation expressed gratitude towards their wives for raising their children with so little support. On the contrary, some criticised their wives' child raising methods. Yoshida-san has a son, a daughter and three grandchildren. He expressed his regret:

My wife did most of child rearing and I didn't get in her way. I totally left it to my wife. I tried to communicate with my children on weekends, though. Now I regret that she spoiled them a little bit. They sort of lack guts. It's like this: they always come to us and ask for help. I think I failed in child rearing a bit but I can't tell this to my wife because she gets angry. (Yoshida-san, G)

In retrospect, Yoshida-san felt that he should have contributed his masculine perspective<sup>240</sup> to the children's upbringing and so failed in child rearing. Because of his limited involvement in childcare, perhaps his wife experiences his criticism of his children as criticism of her child-rearing practices.

Participants in the fathers' generation, by contrast, did not explicitly voice their dissatisfaction with their wives' way of raising children, except for Ono-san who had just had a grandchild, and could not hide his disappointment saying 'I regret having had no real discussion with my children' and Sugiura-san who regretted his decision to stay in a hotel on business for a year because he felt that he lost contact with his family which had been good and well established. While the majority of participants who were in the process of child rearing were critical of and discontented with their wives' child rearing ways, they knew that there were no legitimate grounds for complaint. For example, Hino-san thought 'my wife is unnecessarily attentive to our child' but he said nothing critical because 'I'm not going to help her with anything anyway'. Moreover, comments such as 'my wife is powerful within the household' (Ueno-san), 'a woman becomes strong after childbirth' (Amano-san and Kuraoka-san) suggested these wives were confident in their child-rearing practices. Therefore, these men seem to readily accept the division of labour. Although they do not agree with their wives in all respects, they do not feel that they should criticise or correct their wives, otherwise their wives may demand assistance with childcare and housework. This is perhaps demonstrated by an unusual case. Realising that his children were

<sup>239</sup> Children who lose their parents early still grow up into adults and, therefore, there is no need to worry about children without parents.

<sup>240</sup> Australian divorced fathers in Winchester's study also stated that fathers can contribute to the family by providing a "male perspective" in contrast to the "female perspective" of mothers (Winchester 1999, p.91). Since the 1970s in Japan, this approach has been consistently disseminated by psychologists, for example, Hayashi (1996) (Nakatani 1999, p.50).

overwhelmingly influenced by his wife's way of thinking, Tachibana-san decided to interact more with his children and give them a different perspective from their mother's. This was what other participants avoided doing: directing their mind to something other than work.

With regard to the sons' generation, four participants were in the middle of infant-care. Amongst them, Hirose-san's involvement in infant-care was remarkable compared with the other participants and men in general.<sup>241</sup> He changed nappies, fed his baby and dandled her. Actually, the two-month-old baby girl was present at the interview. Whether with embarrassment or regret, many participants believed that their parenting role was to provide financial security by working hard. In the process, they failed to establish close ties between themselves and their children. The consequence of sole parenting by their wives caused great disappointment in some participants' hearts.

### Conclusion

Patriarchy is 'an important dimension of the structuring of modern societies' and of contemporary reality that forms men's and women's different lives and opportunities (Cockburn 1991, p.18). In the context of work, men in this study benefited from the patriarchal dividend – 'the advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women' in their organizations (Connell 1995, p.79). This hierarchal system, as was discussed in the early section of this chapter, inevitably involved the ranking of men in society. The system thus empowered the participants as the elite male workers compared with male *freeters* who were not valued workers. In contrast to the foregoing chapters, there was less evidence of generational changes in workplace experiences, although family demands on salarymen have grown, for example in questioning transfers, while men in the two younger generations did not express a clear *ikigai* in loyalty to the company.

While the advent of EEOL and the subsequent revised EEOL have been ineffective in eliminating sex discrimination against women, they have had some minor impact on expanding the role of women in the workplace, the profit motive encouraging companies to resist changes that will lower the exploitation particularly of mothers returning to part-time work. Participants across the three generations manifested their resistance to women's advance into their territory by both sexualization (sexual harassment) and desexualization of women (evaluation of elite women either as manly or unfeminine).

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<sup>241</sup> Many young salarymen in Dasgupta's study indicate a sign of change in the discourse on fatherhood, expressing their desires to become a father and to be involved in childcare, fatherhood thus becoming 'cool' (Dasgupta 2005b, p.180). See also Otoko mo onna mo ikuji jikan o! Renrakukai (ed.) (1995) and Ishii-Kuntz (2003) for men's active participation in childcare.

Most participants were able to enjoy the patriarchal dividend because of their families' (in particular, their wives') support (Wajcman 1999, p.141), which indicated, as was the case in the previous chapter, the taken-for-granted division of labour/*ikigai*. The clear demarcation between men and women in the workplace and in the home produced only occasional criticism and identification of tensions as men discussed their experiences of growing up, marrying and forming a family, and working. However, in their retirement, some participants expressed remorse for failing to establish a close relationship with their wives and children, thus pin-pointing the major price, which they had to pay for being a salaryman. As a 'corporate warrior' in a large company they had prestige and strong confirmation of their masculinity. As a 'company animal', they had to be loyal to their corporation, dedicating themselves to long working hours and accepting transfers away from their families so that they became strangers to their family. Without their role as a salaryman, they were nothing, and many found it almost impossible to forge a new *ikigai* built around relationships with wife and children, the pursuit of hobbies or community activities, or any other sense of self-realisation than soldiering for Japan through their company. The Conclusion further explores the question that prompted this thesis whether my participants represent "corporate warriors" or "company animals".

## CONCLUSION

My bemusement with and questions concerning Japanese salaryman masculinity, which arose from my experience of working for a Japanese company, are reaching the final stage of their clarification. As the previous three chapters have demonstrated, the construction of hegemonic salaryman masculinity amongst my participants is an ongoing collective process – what Connell (2002, p.82) terms ‘gender projects’, thus indicating its dynamic and fluid nature. Despite this plasticity of hegemonic masculinity, as Connell (2005a, p.1810) points out, a rigid adherence to the *status quo* and tenacious resistance to changes in gender relations are also ubiquitous throughout the participants’ lives, in particular, among the two older generations.

The prerequisites of hegemonic salaryman masculinity – being heterosexual, an economic provider and a father – have been maintained over the latter half of the twentieth century (Dasgupta 2005b, p.181; McLelland and Dasgupta 2005, p.6). The major institutions of social life such as the family of origin, education, the family of marriage and work have mutually reinforced the gender ideology in each sphere. Accordingly, the majority of Japanese men from the mid-1920s to the present day grow up in families and schools that confer superiority upon them purely for being male, marry into a family where their role of fatherhood consists solely of earning an income for the family, and maintain their status as corporate warriors contributing to Japanese society as long as they retain their position as an economic provider in the family. However, as my study has shown, there are challenges to this armoury of hegemonic masculinity, which are brought about by economic changes (the bursting of the Japanese bubble economy), social changes (increasing discussion of individual fulfilment, for example, the *freeter* – young casual/part-time workers – phenomenon) and changes in gender relations (the introduction of “gender barrier free” legislation and policies, a widening acceptance of homosexual lifestyles and the rising number of young women delaying marriage and motherhood). These issues are canvassed in my discussion of the meaning of the *freeter* or young people who cannot or will not enter the role of ‘company animal’, while the reflection of the grandfathers on their contemporary social positions as “big rubbish” or “wet fallen leaves” also challenges the unquestioned hegemony of salarymen as ‘corporate warriors’ – the tight and successful interweaving of heterosexuality, breadwinner and fatherhood. The changing relations between the elements that construct hegemonic masculinity were uncovered in interviews with three generations of salarymen.

In the period of growing up, across the three generations, the formative effects of dominant masculinity upon the participants were enhanced through the endorsement of institutions such as the family and school. Participants were governed by the persistent gender ideology and gender regime of each institution. The authority of fathers, which was supported by the *ie* system (the family system), and the confinement of mothers to their households, which was maintained by the ideology of “*ryōsai kenbo*”



(good wife and wise mother), were evident in the participants' family lives. The whole school environment, involving the symbolism in textbooks, subjects and club activities, different treatment between girls and boys, the 'masculinity test' in corporal punishment (Connell 1996, p.217), the valorisation of physical prowess in PE and peer hierarchy, taught the participants that men were the ruling sex. An unchanging aspect of masculinity, namely hierarchy based on age and gender, was omnipresent in all spaces including the family, the community and school across the three generations, investing the participants with self-assurance as men with unearned privileges.

However, a major change between the two older generations and the youngest generation was indicated by the growing popularity of computer games in the sons' generation. While technology facilitated this change, it meant a redefinition of appropriate masculinity to shift the emphasis from physical prowess to intelligence in the son's generation. As Connell (2000, p.52) and Connell and Wood (2005, pp.350-351) suggest, boys who play computer games are preparing themselves for roles as corporate warriors who do not need physical prowess but intelligence in the contemporary corporate world.

Conspicuous sex segregation in the participants' childhood continued into their adolescence, maintaining their immersion in a male homosocial world. This was reinforced by the social mores that prevented the participants from dating as well as by their preference for representing themselves as *kōha* (the hard school) over *nanpa* (the soft school) (Buruma 1984a; 1984b, pp.143, 147), although in the sons' generation, being *kōha* has become old-fashioned as the social practices and gender segregation become less restricted. Participants such as Miura-san and Kusuda-san enjoyed working with female classmates in school events throughout their schooling. They still enjoy socialising with mixed friends of men and women. The institution of marriage or heteronormativity was powerful enough to overcome the older participants' lack of intimate relationships with women and to lead the men to marriage. *Miai kekkon* (the arranged marriage) helps men in shifting from the homosocial life to heterosexual marriage. For them, marriage was only "common sense", a natural destination that is a social matter rather than a private matter in Japanese society (Lunsing 2001, p.138). The arranged marriage that enabled many men in the grandfathers' and the fathers' generations to marry, despite their virtual ignorance of women and their worlds, has been replaced by the love marriage in the sons' generation, as co-education and more female co-workers make it possible for young men to meet members of the opposite sex.

Marriage was an essential element of hegemonic masculinity across the three generations, signalling adulthood and heterosexuality. Fatherhood was considered to be a natural outcome of marriage by almost all the participants in the grandfathers' and fathers' generations, heterosexual masculinity being

taken for granted. By contrast, the idea that having a child is a couple's choice emerged in the sons' generation. This indicates that the individualised lifestyle is prioritised over the social expectations, implying the potential for change in one of the prerequisites for hegemonic masculinity, fatherhood. Most participants with children contributed hardly anything to childcare, morally justifying their breadwinning roles by equating childcare and parenting with their perceived duty to be an economic provider. This was so much a part of some participants' framework that taking a family holiday could be seen as against the interests of one's family because it showed reduced commitment to one's work. The old saying "men at work, women at home" has changed into "men at work, women have work and a family", indicating changing roles of women who now balance work and family and the social acceptance of the roles. However, some men regard both work and family as their *ikigai*, while many women consider only their family to be their *ikigai*. The number of participants who regard both work and family as *ikigai* increases as the generation descends. However, perhaps, what these participants mean by the family as *ikigai* is their breadwinning role. This might explain why men regard the breadwinning role as "child-rearing" but women do not call "childcare" "work".

While the prerequisites of hegemonic salaryman masculinity – being heterosexual, an economic provider and a father – have been maintained in the private sphere over time, there were some changes to this in the sons' generation. Some men have tried to change their practices. For example, Hirose-san is involved in childcare more fully than anyone in the older generations. He, without hesitation, changes nappies, feeds his baby girl and fondles her with joy in front of his father. Interestingly, the father, Hirose-san in the grandfathers' generation, also feeds his granddaughter but in a constrained manner.<sup>242</sup> The elder Hirose-san does this only because he can interact with his granddaughter. He is not certain if his family is his *ikigai* in his post-retirement life. He, rather, feels that he has no purpose in his life. By contrast, the young Hirose-san has no attachment to his company and he is ready to resign his post, if any opportunity that meets his personal and familial fulfillment comes along.

Loyalty to the company was evident among the participants in the grandfathers' and fathers' generations in the face of transfers. However, in the sons' generation, this tendency of corporate warriors is declining. Shimizu-san chose to resign from his company when his working conditions clashed with his wife's demands for his participation in childcare. Thus he prioritised his family needs, indicating his lesser loyalty to the company than was apparent in the older generations. Nevertheless, these participants' engagement in childcare is enabled by flexi-time (Hirose-san) and the company's special arrangement (Shimizu-san). That is, these changes are supported by the workplace change,

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<sup>242</sup> I saw both young and old Hirose-san feed the baby on the day of the interview.

thus showing some but, on the whole, minimal change in workplace cultures. Therefore, these changes can only be limited unless there is an extensive change in workplace rules.

The other compulsory step on the path to hegemonic masculinity was to enter the world of work as a full-time and permanent worker, as a corporate warrior. At first the salaryman was secure in his hegemonic masculinity and applauded for his contribution to the development of the Japanese economy, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s. However, the bubble burst in the 1980s, the capacity of the economy to continue to guarantee the rewards of hegemonic masculinity was challenged. Several in the sons' generation in particular expressed this anxiety in defensive and jealous attitudes towards *freeters*, attitudes not expressed by the older generations. As several also identified working for their company, not as their unquestioned *ikigai*, but as a means to an extrinsic end, these attitudes suggest a more ambivalent relationship for salarymen today with their companies, more questioning of workplace demands. Similarly, those in the grandfathers' generation accepted transfers as their duty, those in the fathers' generation more often experienced tension, particularly when their wives expressed concern for effects on the family or on them as mothers carrying the sole burden of child-raising. In the sons' generation, as mentioned earlier, Shimizu-san was so distressed by being separated from his family that he decided to resign from his company in order to return to his home. No longer, then, can companies presume that their salarymen will align their family's interests with their corporation's interests, suggesting the need for more of the 'family-friendly' policies that allow men and women to combine careers and parenting.

In fact, the legislation promoting a "gender equal society" has had only minimal impact on working relations. Participants were aware that their personal views that men were the workers and breadwinners contradicted the gender equal society envisaged by the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOL). The 1986 EEOL enabled more women to advance into the workforce and also facilitated the entry of (university-educated) women into the executive-track grade in corporations. Participants were aware that the institutional championship of male privileges was diminishing, generating insecurity among the participants. Yet the participants continued to defend their status of elite full-time workers at the top of the social ranking of workers under the protection of large companies, marginalising men in other categories, particularly *freeters*, and women as a whole, but particularly those who were part-time workers. Participants resisted women's advancement into the managerial or executive stream by describing them primarily as mothers who were unsuitable for work because of their maternal responsibilities, or as unmotivated or temperamental and fastidious. Male bonding or collective activities to resist the entry of women workers were also reflected in the participants' trivialisation of sexual harassment, despite the revised EEOL. Sex segregation thus wove through the

participants' lives both in the workplace and in the home. The consequence of this clear demarcation between men and women was the alienation of some participants from their wives and children.

Most participants in all three generations had established a completely different world from that of their wives. While the participants performed their task as breadwinners, their wives fulfilled their role as homemakers. Lacking time or being too exhausted during their working lives, the participants spent little time with and paid little attention to their wives. Consequently, the distance from their wives only widened. Even most married men in the sons' generation had already fallen into this habit of neglecting conjugal communication. The media terms – “big rubbish” and “wet fallen leaves” to describe retired salarymen – maintain their currency. Some of the authoritarian and stern fathers in the grandfathers' and fathers' generations, now experiencing almost no contact with their adolescent or adult children, felt a sense of either embarrassment or regret at the estrangement from their children. This is possibly a lesson for young men in Japan today.

The central interrogation of this thesis has been to discover my participants' locations on the “corporate warrior”-“company animal” axis. Similar to my former male colleagues at work, seemingly, the participants in my study appeared to be corporate warriors. Obviously, the participants would not (want to) consider themselves to be company animals. However, there are cracks and fissures in their narratives, suggesting that the mask/role of corporate warrior is not totally secure. In particular, the operation of the EEOL and the Angel Plan, the rise of *freeters* in the face of the economic downturn and the alienation from wives and children represent challenges to hegemonic masculinity.

The regulatory challenge to hegemonic masculinity, for example the introduction of the EEOL, is associated with institutional changes in society beyond the individuals' control. The Japanese government has been attempting to reform gender politics by enforcing the EEOL and promoting the Angel Plan (e.g. the Sam campaign). The EEOL has reformed the male-centred employment system, although not completely, and succeeded in allowing more women to enter the workforce and to pursue a career on an equal footing with men. In addition, while the majority of the participants in this study revealed ignorance, denigration and trivialisation of sexual harassment, the sexual harassment legislation stipulated in the revised EEOL has had some effects in reducing sexual harassment in the workplace. Indeed, the increasing number of law suits and the actual dismissal of workers in a few participants' companies exemplify the limitations of men's resistance to women's growing entry into the workforce.

Many participants expressed outright rejection of participation in childcare that was envisaged by the Sam campaign. However, awareness of the importance of paternal childcare is growing in the public

together with the continuing Angel Plan. For example, since 1980, the members of *ikujiren*<sup>243</sup> have been advocating men's involvement in housework and childcare and the development of men's sense of responsibility for the household work (Ōta 1999, p.89; *Otoko mo onna mo ikuji jikan o!* Renrakukai 1995, p.3). Amongst these *ikujiren* members, there are salarymen who balance their work commitment and childcare responsibilities. The presence of such caring fathers, the salarymen in *ikujiren* as well as Hirose-san in the sons' generation in this study who is actively involved in childcare, demonstrates a challenge to the attitudes of work-oriented corporate warriors.

The shifting economic situation, from the devastation of the Second World War to Japan's economic miracle and the subsequent bursting of the bubble, inevitably affected the participants' lives. These economic transformations also indicate that the power of the company is relevant to the formation and sustenance of salaryman masculinity, thus implying that hegemonic masculinity is also 'reliant' or dependent masculinity (Wajcman 1999, p.102). Without secure careers in large companies to rely on, *freeters* have become more common, providing a negative contrast with the salaryman identity almost all the respondents expressed. Interestingly, those in the grandfathers' generation appeared to understand the difficulties of the present job market better than did the sons' generation trying to find a foothold in that job market. I argue that the defensive response to and the jealousy of *freeters* in the sons' generation emphasise the contrast between the image of "company animals" who are bound to their companies and *freeters* who have flexibility in the management of their time. The responses of the participants reveal the way in which *freeters* challenge the beliefs and ideas of men who perform the corporate warrior of hegemonic masculinity. While *freeters* are not conscious 'agents of social and structural change' in relation to masculinity, the fact that a growing number of young men are refusing the path of the company animal suggests that individual choices and practices can also put pressure on structural changes (Dales 2005, pp.148-149). Not only *freeters* but also women who choose not to have a baby or who demand an egalitarian relationship in marriage can provide viable alternatives to widely accepted social and cultural expectations.<sup>244</sup> The emergence of *freeters* thus indicates the potential for changes in hegemonic masculinity in association with socio-economic circumstances as well as reflecting individual pursuit of happiness or *ikigai*.

In contrast to the above challenges to hegemonic masculinity brought about by institutionally and economically changing society, what Connell (1995, p.159) calls 'individualized projects of reform' in gender relations also emerged in the life-course of some participants. For example, Kasuga-san in the grandfathers' generation, who used to have patriarchal attitudes towards his wife, changed his

<sup>243</sup> *Ikujiren* is an abbreviation of 'Otoko mo onna mo ikuji jikan o! Renrakukai' (Network Promoting Childcare Hours for Men and Women) (*Otoko mo onna mo ikuji jikan wo!* Renrakukai, 1995; see also Ishii-Kuntz 2003; Ōta 1999)

<sup>244</sup> Dales also applies this idea to 'parasite singles' (single young people in their twenties and thirties who are (often) employed and live with their parents) (Dale 2005, p.134).

attitudes and began to do housework during his retirement when his wife became ill. Yoshino-san in the fathers' generation also followed his personal desire to reform his assumptions concerning masculinity when he was enlightened by a public lecture on men's issues. As a result, he began to participate in a men's group and school events. However, Kasuga-san's involvement in housework and Yoshino-san's participation in the 'therapeutic practice' do not generate change in the Japanese gender order (Connell 1995, p.159). Even so, their personal transformation did change the micro-politics of their households. For example, actively participating in school events, Yoshino-san presented an alternative not only to his wife but also to other mothers who assumed that men were the breadwinners and, therefore, did not attend school events such as meetings of the Parent-Teacher Association.

Moreover, even though Tachibana-san and Kuraoka-san in the fathers' generation are comfortable with the conventional division of labour in their households, their comment that the household pattern may vary according to individual choice demonstrates the existence of competing discourses in contemporary Japanese society, which challenge the absolute gendered division of labour. In fact, Hirose-san, who is fully involved in childcare, Shimizu-san, who gave his wife's demands for his participation in childcare priority over his job, and Take-san, who does most of the housework, represent actual practices of the new discourses in the sons' generation.

The loyal devotion to companies brought many participants disappointment and anxiety in their post-retirement life as well as regrets and embarrassment in their post-child-rearing life. The lamentation of failed husbands and fathers results not only from lack of individuals' efforts but also from a structural force in wider society, for example, long working hours. Their inability to meet their wives' emotional fulfilment and to establish meaningful relationships with their children undermines the completeness of the corporate warrior role. Moreover, the facts that corporate warriors lose their sense of self and power when they retire from their company and that they result in being called "wet fallen leaves" or "big rubbish" indicate the dark facets of being a salaryman, that is, the aspects of the company animal. Company animals are so dependent on their company for their identity that they cannot adjust themselves to the post-retirement life. For example, some salarymen become 'large corporation disease' or a 'reliance-upon-a business card syndrome', a salaryman's morbid fear of meeting people if he should lose his business card (Toyoda 1997, pp.138-139) and some former salarymen pretend to go to work every day after their retirement. Indeed, Hirose-san in the grandfathers' generation expressed that he felt emotionally and physically sick as nothing satisfied him in his retirement. The post-retirement life discloses salarymen's dependence on the role of company animal, thus challenging hegemonic masculinity.

Returning to the initial question that prompted my thesis, the *freeter*, the openly gay salaryman (Dasgupta 2005a) and the growing networks of gay men (McLelland 2000; 2005a), as well as the gender free legislation and the economic downturn, challenge the 'corporate warrior' as a family man, exposing that the disguise of the corporate warrior hides the experience of the company animal. The men in this study cannot be classified into either the distinct category of the corporate warrior or the contrasting category of the company animal because, as their narratives have demonstrated throughout this thesis, there are contradictions, doubts, dilemmas, anxieties and resignation behind the façade of their confidence and pride. In other words, the aspects of the corporate warrior and the company animal coexist in the participants' experiences. To be sure, these positive and negative facets differ among the participants according to their personal attributes, their interaction with others and social and personal circumstances.

Nevertheless, there has been change over time. Thus some participants in the sons' generation are drawn into the vortex of unconventional gender relations in the private sphere, their partners' influence being forceful to the extent that these men are adjusting themselves to the new social and economic milieu. The life histories of the participants over a half-century evince signs of change in salaryman hegemonic masculinity. Indeed, the terms "corporate warrior" and "company animal" may be replaced by other appellations as time goes by, and not just in the negative parlance of "*freeter*" or "wet fallen leaves" but possibly in positive terms that convey the validation of, for example, the "full-time caring father" or of men who are openly gay.

## APPENDIX 1

### Biographies of the Participants (In alphabetical order)

#### The Grandfathers

**Hirose-san**, one of three children, was born in 1941 in Gunma. His father was a bus driver. His mother was a housewife. He worked for a steel company after completing vocational high school. He married for love. He has two children. He became a grandfather in the year of the interview. He has retired from work but he is eager to work again.

**Honda-san**, one of six children, was born in 1936 in Tottori. His father was a public servant. His mother was a housewife but did farming for self-sufficiency. He worked in heavy industry after completing vocational high school. He met his wife in the workplace. He has two children. After the due retirement age, he worked for two different subsidiary companies of his former company until he was sixty-six years old. He enjoys playing *go* (a board game) and taking charge of various *go* clubs.

**Ishihara-san**, one of two children, was born in 1941 in Kōchi. His father was a salarymen before the Second World War, self-employed during the war and a civil servant after the war. His mother was a housewife. He worked in heavy industry after completing vocational high school. He met his wife in the workplace. He has three children. After the due retirement age, he has been working part-time for a subsidiary company of his former company. He also enjoys various hobbies, participating in community clubs.

**Kasuga-san** was born in 1925 in Nīgata, one of five children. His father was a naval officer; however, he became a property custodian because of disbandment of his unit in the Navy. His mother was a housewife. He lived with another family as a *shosē* from the age of thirteen until eighteen. He changed jobs until he found a job in the manufacturing industry and worked until he was fifty-nine years old (the due retirement age was fifty-seven at that time but he worked for another two years for the same company after retirement). He met his wife in the workplace and has two children. He went to a training school for golf for a year when he was sixty-three and still enjoys playing golf once a month.

**Katagiri-san** was born in 1942 in Hiroshima. His mother's sister and her husband adopted him when his father died in the Second World War. He has a sister; however, he became an only child in the new family. His 'father' was a salaryman. His 'mother' was a housewife. He worked in the manufacturing industry after graduating from university. He married through the arranged marriage system. He lived with his parents until they passed away. He has two employed children living with him. He retired from work at the due retirement age of sixty. He enjoys various hobbies.



**Kishida-san** was born in 1936 in Kōchi, the youngest of four children. His father was a salaryman. His mother ran a boarding house for university students. Abandoning high school, he went to a training school for sailors and became a seaman. He was at sea for most of his working life. He married through the arranged marriage system. He has two children. He retired voluntarily from his work at the age of fifty-three because of restructuring and worked onshore as a part-timer for a few years. He attends various community clubs and enjoys his hobbies.

**Nishida-san** was born in 1937 in Hyōgo, the youngest of seven children. His father became a teacher after returning from World War II. His mother was a housewife. He worked for a steel company after graduating from university. He married through the arranged marriage system. He has two children. He enjoys attending community clubs.

**Sasaki-san**, one of six children, was born in 1940 in Aichi. His father succeeded the family business after returning from World War II. His mother assisted his father. Most of the housework was done by a maid. He worked in the heavy industry sector after completing a master's degree. He met his wife in the workplace. He has two children. He worked for a subsidiary company of his former company for two years after the due retirement age. He serves as a volunteer teacher of a computer class in the community club.

**Shiga-san** was born in 1935 in Chiba, the youngest of eleven children. His father ran munitions factories but he became bankrupt at the end of World War II. His mother and his older brothers assisted his father. He worked for a bank subsequent to working as a resident help for one year after completing high school. He married for love. He has two children. He enjoys various hobbies.

**Sonoda-san** was born in 1930 in Hyōgo and is one of four children. His father was an artisan. His mother was a housewife. He completed compulsory education (today's primary school) and went on to a vocational school for three years. He changed jobs until he found one in the manufacturing industry. He married through the arranged marriage system and again when his first wife died. He lived with his mother until she died. He has a child from the first marriage. He worked on secondment for another company for eleven years after the due retirement age. He enjoys his hobbies.

**Uchida-san** was born in 1938 in Kagoshima, the youngest of five children. His parents were farmers. He worked for a cement company after completing high school. He attended evening courses and obtained a bachelor's degree while he was working, receiving a subsidy from his company. He married through the arranged marriage system. He has two children. He has been working on secondment for another company after the due retirement age. He enjoys working and wants to work until he becomes seventy.

**Yanase-san** was born in 1939 in Yamagata, one of six children. His parents were farmers. He worked in the manufacturing industry after completing high school. He met his wife in the workplace. He has two children. He worked for a subsidiary company of his former company after the due retirement age. He helps in his wife's business after retirement.

**Yoshida-san**, one of four children, was born in 1943 in Tokyo. His father was self-employed but became a civil servant after the Second World War. His mother was a housewife. He worked in the manufacturing industry after completing high school. He met his wife in the workplace. He has two children. He has been working for the same company as a contract employee after the due retirement age.

### **The Fathers**

**Amano-san**, one of three children, was born in 1961 in Kagoshima. His parents were farmers. His mother also had a part-time job. He has been working for an oil company since he completed vocational high school. He met his wife in the workplace. He has two teenage children. He lives next to his wife's parents. He coaches a community soccer team. He had received an order of transfer shortly before the interview and decided to go to the new post alone.

**Ashida-san**, one of three children, was born in 1956 in Kagoshima. His father was a public servant. His mother was a housewife. He has been working for an oil company since he graduated from university. He met his wife in the workplace. He has three children.

**Fukuda-san**, one of two children, was born in 1953 in Kanagawa. His father was a salaryman. His mother was a housewife. He has been working for an oil company since he completed commercial high school. He attended evening courses and obtained a bachelor's degree while he was working. He met his wife in the workplace. He has three children. He and his wife attend tennis lessons on weekends.

**Hamada-san**, one of three children, was born in 1954 in Hiroshima. His father was a salaryman on weekdays and a farmer on weekends. His mother was a farmer. He has been working for a securities company since he completed high school. He met his wife in the workplace. He has two children. He was in the middle of *tanshinfunin* (going to a distant post unaccompanied by families) at the time of the interview.

**Hino-san**, one of three children, was born in 1956 in Aichi. His parents were farmers. He has been working in the manufacturing industry sector since he graduated from university. He met his wife in the workplace. He has two teenage children.

**Kuraoka-san**, one of three children, was born in 1953 in Kochi. His father was a self-employed watchmaker. His mother assisted his father in his shop. He has been working in the manufacturing industry sector since he graduated from university. He met his wife in the workplace. He has two children.

**Matsuzaki-san** was born in 1948 in Hyōgo and is one of two children. His father was self-employed but became a public servant after World War II. His mother was a housewife and did farming for self-sufficiency. He has been working for an electricity company since he graduated from a corporate school run by his company. He attended evening courses and obtained a bachelor's degree while he was working. He married through the arranged marriage system. His wife kept her full-time job after marriage. He has two children.

**Minami-san**, one of five children, was born in 1953 in Ibaragi. His father was a public servant. His mother was a housewife. He has been working in the manufacturing industry since he graduated from university. He has not married.

**Ono-san**, one of three children, was born in 1945 in Kagoshima. His parents were farmers. He has been working for a securities company since he completed commercial high school. He met his wife in the workplace. He has two children. He became a grandfather a few years before the interview. He was preparing for retirement at the time of the interview, obtaining a license for a boat for fishing and cruising. He retired from work in 2005.

**Sugiura-san**, one of two children, was born in 1959 in Chiba. His father was a salaryman. His mother was a housewife. He has been working in the information technology industry since he graduated from university. He married for love. He has a child. His wife has a full-time job. They live with his parents.

**Tachibana-san**, one of two children, was born a descendant of a samurai family in 1954 in Kagoshima. His father was a public servant. His mother was a housewife. He has been working for an oil company since he graduated from university. He met his wife in the workplace. He has two children. He succeeded to his parents' *ie*. He lives there with his mother as he has always done (his father died a while ago).

**Toda-san**, one of three children, was born in 1951 in Kanagawa. His father was a salaryman. His mother was a housewife. He was scouted by an oil company for his talent in baseball. He played baseball in the company's baseball team when he was younger. He has been working for this oil company since he graduated from university. He met his wife in the workplace. He has two children. He lives with his parents as well as his wife's mother.

**Tsutsumi-san**, one of two children, was born in 1961 in Kagoshima. His parents ran a business. His father died when he was seven years old. He has been working for an oil company since he completed vocational high school. He met his wife in the workplace. He has two teenage children. He coaches a community baseball team as a coach.

**Ueno-san** was born in 1951 in Saitama and is one of three children. His father was a self-employed fish shop owner. His mother assisted his father. He has been working for an oil company since he completed commercial high school. He married for love. He has two children. He was in the middle of *tanshinfunin* (going to a distant post unaccompanied by families) at the time of the interview.

**Yoshino-san**, one of two children, was born in 1958 in Fukuoka. His father was a self-employed tailor. His mother assisted his father. He has been working in the manufacturing industry since he resigned from his former company and returned to his hometown. He married for love. He has two children. Since he attended a public lecture on men's issues, he has been attending meetings of a men's group.

## The Sons

**Ebara-san**, one of two children, was born in 1973 in Hyōgo. His father is a car mechanic and owns a garage. His mother assists his father. He worked in the information technology industry for several years but was forced to resign due to restructuring. He was studying hospitality in Perth, Australia at the time of the interview. He is single. He has a girlfriend; however, he cannot consider getting married until he finds a job.

**Hirose-san**, one of two children, was born in 1969 in Saitama. His father was a salaryman, **Hirose-san** in the grandfathers' generation. His mother is a housewife. He has been working in the information technology industry since he completed vocational college. He married for love. He has a child, who was born shortly before the interview. He participates in childcare as much as possible.

**Kusuda-san**, one of three children, was born in 1977 in Kagoshima. His father owns a small business. His mother assists his father. He has been working for a bank since he graduated from university. He is single. He has a girlfriend. He would like to marry in the future, expecting marriage to give him peace of mind and support.

**Miura-san** was born in 1978 in Tokyo and is one of two children. His father is a salaryman. His mother is a housewife. He has been working for a consultancy since he graduated from university. He is single. He would like to marry in the future.

**Nakama-san**, one of three children, was born in 1971 in Kagoshima. His father is a salaryman. His mother is a housewife. He has been working for an oil company since he graduated from university. He married for love and has no children.

**Noda-san** was born in 1970 in Tanegashima and is one of four children. His father was a salaryman, who died before he entered primary school. His mother raised all the children, working as a cook in a hospital. He has been working for an oil company since he graduated from university. He married for love. He has three young children.

**Okano-san** was born in 1971 in Fukuoka and is one of three children. His father runs a business. His mother assists his father. He has been working in the manufacturing sector since he completed vocational college. He is single. He has a girlfriend, who was present at the interview with him.

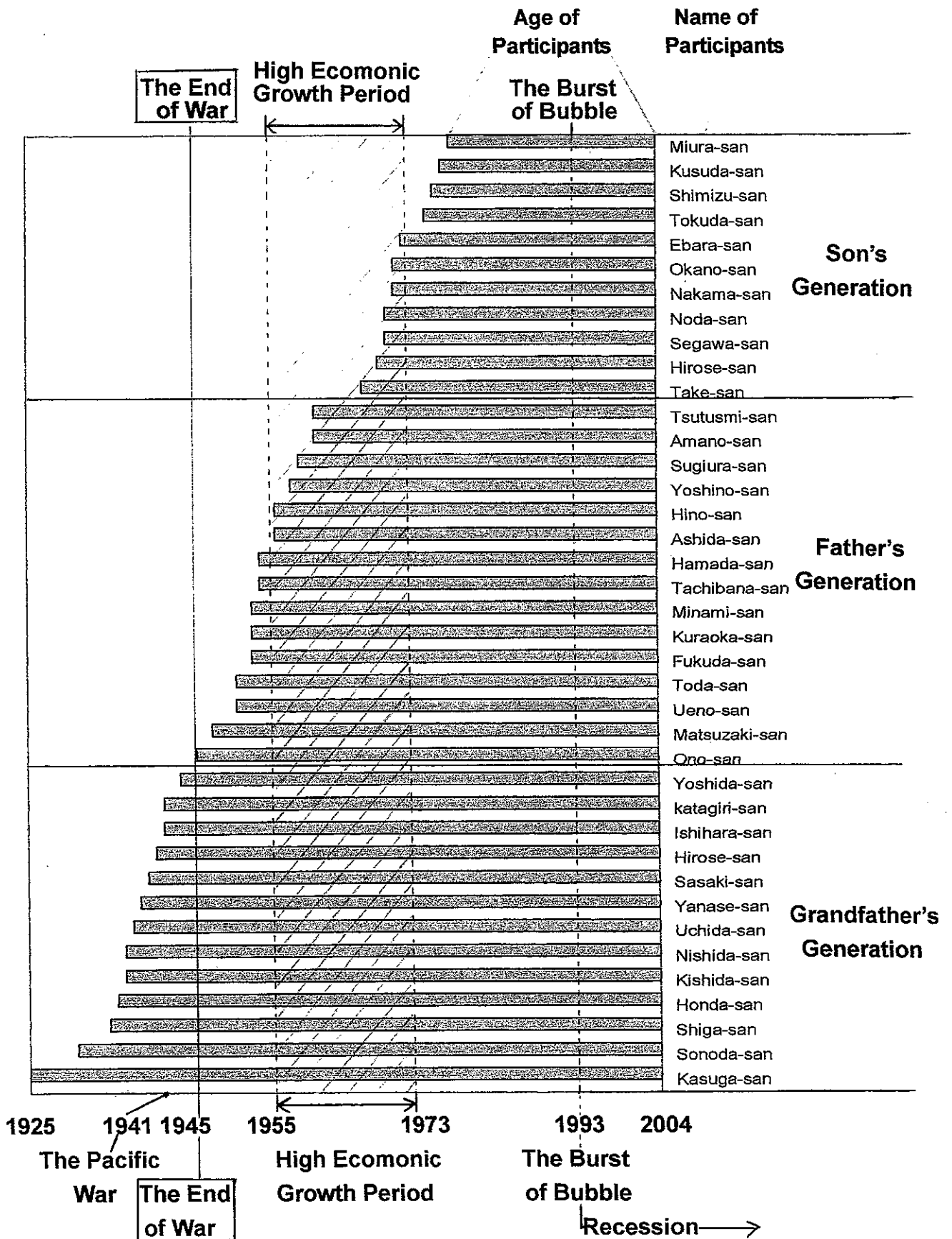
**Segawa-san**, one of three children, was born in 1970 in Tokyo. His father was a salaryman. His mother was a housewife. He was left in a relative's house at the age of thirteen. He became a *freeter* when he graduated from university. He has been working for a securities company since he resigned his post in an insurance company, where he initially worked part-time then became a full-time worker. He married for love and has no children. He is studying to become a professional property advisor.

**Shimizu-san** was born in 1976 in Fukuoka and is one of two children. His parents are school teachers. He has been working in the manufacturing industry since he graduated from university. He married for love. He has two very young children.

**Take-san**, one of two children, was born in 1967 in Shizuoka. His father was a salaryman. His mother worked for the same company as his father. He has been working for a real-estate developer. He married for love and has no children. He does most of the housework.

**Tokuda-san**, one of two children, was born in 1975 in Kagoshima. His parents were divorced when he was nine years old. He lived with his mother who ran a small restaurant and who died twelve years ago. He has been working for an oil company since he completed high school. He married for love. He has two young children.

## APPENDIX 2 CHRONOLOGICAL BACKGROUNDS OF THE PARTICIPANTS



## APPENDIX 3 INTERVIEW THEMES

### **1 GROWING UP**

#### **The Original Family**

- Structure of the original family
- Division of labour
- Occupation of parents
- Home discipline
- Relationship with parents & siblings
- Expectation of parents

#### **Play**

- When, what, how and with whom to play

#### **Schooling &**

##### **Higher/Post-secondary Education**

- Academic achievement
- Differences between male and female teachers
- Peers
- Division of Labour among students
- Corporal punishment
- Relationship with female classmates
- Physical education
- Sports & Club activities
- Major field of study
- Involvement in other activities

#### **Adolescence**

- Awareness of the changing body
- Sexual awakening
- Dating

### **2 WORK**

#### **Transition from Education to Work**

- Meaning of entering society
- Views on *freeters*

#### **Training**

- When, what, how and how long

#### **Hierarchy**

- Division of labour
- Views on office ladies
- Views on young male workers
- Views on female bosses
- Company regulation

#### **Loyalty**

- Satisfaction and
- Disappointment at work
- Mobility (transfer)

#### **Socialization**

- Friendship at work
- Drinking

#### **Sexual Harassment**

- Education of workers
- Incidents
- Measures

#### **Retirement**

- Satisfaction and
- disappointment
- Changes in division of labour
- at home

### **3 LOVE AND MARRIAGE**

#### **Marriage**

- Pattern of marriage
- Reasons for marriage

#### **The Family of Marriage**

- Structure of the family of marriage
- Division of labour
- Occupation of wives
- Parenting
- Views on Sam campaign
- Communication with wives
- And children
- Changes in relationship

### **4 OTHER QUESTIONS**

#### ***Ikigai***

#### **Leisure Activities & Hobby**

#### **Moment of Feeling Masculine**

#### **Satisfaction and Regret in life**

**APPENDIX 4**  
**DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS**  
**APPROVAL**



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF ADELAIDE  
AUSTRALIA

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (RESEARCH)

SABINE SCHREIBER  
SECRETARY  
HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE  
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AUSTRALIA

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CRICOS Provider Number 00123M

1 October 2003

Professor MC Bulbeck  
Gender Studies

Dear Professor Bulbeck

**PROJECT NO:** *Corporate Warriors or Company Animals? : An investigation of dominant  
H-55-2003 Japanese salaryman masculinities in the early 21st century*

I write to advise you that the Human Research Ethics Committee has approved the above project. Please refer to the enclosed endorsement sheet for further details and conditions that may be applicable to this approval.

Approval is current for one year. The expiry date for this project is: 31 December 2004

Where possible, subjects taking part in the study should be given a copy of the Information Sheet and the signed Consent Form to retain.

Please note that any changes to the project which might affect its continued ethical acceptability will invalidate the project's approval. In such cases an amended protocol must be submitted to the Committee for further approval. It is a condition of approval that you immediately report anything which might warrant review of ethical approval including (a) serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants (b) proposed changes in the protocol; and (c) unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project. It is also a condition of approval that you inform the Committee, giving reasons, if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.

A reporting form is available from the Committee's website. This may be used to renew ethical approval or report on project status including completion.

Yours sincerely

pp. CE MORTENSEN  
Convenor  
Human Research Ethics Committee



## APPENDIX 4

### INFORMATION SHEET (English)

#### Salaryman manhood in Japan

My name is Tomoko Hidaka. I am undertaking research as part of my PhD in the Disciplines of Gender Studies and Asian Studies at the University of Adelaide. My supervisor is Professor Chilla Bulbeck, who is a sociologist working on gender issues inside and outside Australia. My research is concerned with salaryman manhood in Japan. My project looks at the way in which salarymen construct their masculinities through their lives. I am also looking at differences among three generations of Japanese men, those now aged in their 60s, 70s and 80s, their sons, aged in their 40s and 50s, and their gradsons, young men in their 20s and 30s who have recently entered the workforce.

I would like to have interviews with salarymen who have worked or working for a large company, and who are in one of the above age groups. I would really appreciate it if you could participate in the interview. The interview should take 40-60 minutes and will be more like a 'conversation' than a formal interview. I will organise a time and place that suits you. I would like to talk about your schooling experiences, how you developed your sense of yourself as a boy and a man in your relations with the family you grew up in, and how your idea of yourself as a man changed, if it did, when you finished your education, got married (if you did) and started your career.

The discussions will provide an opportunity for you to reflect upon the various aspects of your experience as a man through your life. I hope that this research will provide a deeper understanding of salaryman masculinities from the salarymen's own perceptions of themselves; however, I can not guarantee that you will personally benefit directly from the study.

You are assured that strict confidentiality will be kept with regard to your responses. Therefore, nothing that you say will be reported in a way that will identify you or your remarks about any person or organization. A pseudonym will be used to attach to your interview notes and which will be used in my thesis and any publication from the research.

You are free to change your mind and withdraw at any time before the study has been completed. You are also not obliged to answer any questions or to discuss any issues that you do not wish to. You do not have to give me any reason if you decide to withdraw from the study.

I would like to record our conversation if it is fine with you. Your real name will not be connected with the tape. The tape will be erased as soon as I have finished using it. I am happy to take notes if you would prefer not to be tape-recorded. Please indicate your preference on the attached Consent Form.

This research has been approved by the Adelaide University Ethics Committee.

If you require additional information regarding this research, please contact:

Ms Tomoko Hidaka PhD Research Student Discipline of Gender Studies and Asian Studies University of Adelaide Telephone: 61 (08) 8303 8253 (Australia) 099 281 5530 (Japan) Fax:          61 (08) 8303 3345 (Australia) Email tomoko.hidaka@student.adelaide.edu.au	Professor Chilla Bulbeck Professor of Gender Studies Discipline of Gender Studies University of Adelaide Telephone: 61 (08) 8303 4864 (Australia) Fax:          61 (08) 8303 3345 (Australia) Email chilla.bulbeck@adelaide.edu.au
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## APPENDIX 4

### INFORMATION SHEET (Japanese)

#### 調査への参加と協力のお願い

私は、樋高知子と申します。アデレード大学のジェンダー研究とアジア研究所の博士課程に在籍しリサーチを行っています。私の指導教官はチラ ブルベック教授で、オーストラリア内外のジェンダー問題に従事している社会学者です。私の博士論文は、日本人サラリーマンの男らしさについての研究です。サラリーマンが彼らの人生を通してどのように男らしさを形成するのか、また、現在六十歳から八十歳の方々を筆頭にその息子さんとお孫さんの三世代間の異なる男らしさについても研究します。

大企業に勤め（あるいは退職された）、二十歳から三十歳、四十歳から五十歳、六十歳から八十歳の各年齢層に所属するサラリーマン（あるいは元サラリーマン）の方々とインタビューを行いたいのですが、どなたか参加していただけると大変うれしいです。インタビューは40分から60分で、形式だったものというよりも、むしろくだけた会話だと思ってください。都合の良い時間と場所を前もって手配いたします。私がお聞きしたいのは、あなたが学生時代について、少年あるいは男としての自意識を学校や実家や現在の家族あるいは職場を通してどのように身に着けたのか、また、卒業や結婚や入社といった折々に、その自意識に変化などあったか等です。

インタビューでの会話はあなたにとってこれまでの様々な人生経験を振り返る機会になるのではないかと思います。サラリーマンの男らしさについて、皆さんの認識を通してより深い理解を得たいと思っておりますが、この研究は必ずしもあなたの利益に直接結びつくものではありません。

あなたのプライバシーが外部に漏れることはありません。提供して下さった情報は研究者（私と指導教官）が厳重に守ります。インタビューでのあなたの発言から、あなたや他人や組織が明らかになるような記述はいたしません。メモについても偽名を使用いたします。その偽名は私の論文や調査に関わる出版物に使用されます。

この研究が終了するまでの間、いつでも参加を辞退することができます。また、何らの強制はなく、答えたくない質問には答える義務は一切ありません。話したくない事柄についても同様に話す義務は一切ありません。辞退する場合に理由を述べる必要も全くありません。

インタビューでの会話を録音したいのですが、もし録音を拒否される場合は喜んでメモのみ取らせていただきます。録音の賛否については同意書に示してください。あななの本名をテープに表示することなく、使用が済み次第テープは直ちに処分いたします。

この調査は、アデレード大学の倫理委員会の承認を得ています。  
調査について、さらに詳しく聞きたい方は、下記までご連絡ください。

アデレード大学 ジェンダー研究 & アジア研究学部 博士課程 研究生 樋高知子 電話： 61 (08) 8303 8253 (オーストラリア) 099 281 5530 (日本) Fax： 61 (08) 8303 3345 (オーストラリア) Email： tomoko.hidaka@student.adelaide.edu.au	アデレード大学 ジェンダー研究学部 教授 チラ ブルベック 電話： 61 (08) 8303 4864 (オーストラリア) Fax： 61 (08) 8303 3345 (オーストラリア) Email： chilla.bulbeck@adelaide.edu.au
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樋高知子

## APPENDIX 4

### COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE  
HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

*Document for people who are subjects in a research project*

CONTACTS FOR INFORMATION ON PROJECT AND INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS  
PROCEDURE

The Human Research Ethics Committee is obliged to monitor approved research projects. In conjunction with other forms of monitoring it is necessary to provide an independent and confidential reporting mechanism to assure quality assurance of the institutional ethics committee system. This is done by providing research subjects with an additional avenue for raising concerns regarding the conduct of any research in which they are involved.

The following study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Adelaide Human Research Ethics Committee:

Project title: "Corporate Warriors or Company Animals?": An investigation of dominant Japanese salarymen masculinities in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century

1. If you have questions or problems associated with the practical aspects of your participation in the project, or wish to raise a concern or complaint about the project, then you should consult the project co-ordinator:

Name: Tomoko Hidaka  
PhD candidature in Discipline of Gender Studies and Centre of Asian Studies

Telephone: 61 (08) 8303 8253 (Australia)  
099 281 5530 (Japan)

2. If you wish to discuss with an independent person matters related to
  - making a complaint, or
  - raising concerns on the conduct of the project, or
  - the University policy on research involving human subjects, or
  - your rights as a participant

contact the Human Research Ethics Committee's Secretary on phone 61 (08) 8303 6028

## APPENDIX 4

### CONSENT FORM (English)

#### CONSENT FORM

I \_\_\_\_\_ (please print your name)  
hereby consent to take part in the research project entitled:

**“Corporate Warriors or Company Animals?”: An investigation of  
dominant Japanese salaryman masculinities in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>1</sup>**

I acknowledge that I have read the attached Information Sheet on the above project and understand that I am being asked to be interviewed if I am willing to do so.

I have had the project, so far as it affects me, fully explained to my satisfaction by the researcher. My consent is given freely.

Although I understand the purpose of this project is to examine how salarymen construct their masculinities, it has been explained to me that my involvement in the project may not be of any direct benefit to me.

I have been informed that while information gained during the study may be published, a pseudonym will be used for my name and no information that could identify me will be used.

I also understand that, if I do not wish the interview to be tape-recorded, the researcher will only take notes of the interview.

I do/do not (circle one) wish to be tape-recorded.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.

I understand there will be no payment for taking part in this study.

I understand that I will be provided with information about the results of the study if I wish.

I do/do not wish (circle one) to be provided with information about the results of the study.

If you answered in the affirmative to the above question, please provide your contact details.

Your address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

I am aware that I should retain a copy of this Consent Form, when completed, as well as the Information Sheet.

Signature (Participant) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

#### WITNESS

I, Tomoko Hidaka, have described to \_\_\_\_\_ (name of participant)  
the nature of the interview to be carried out. In my opinion she/he understood the explanation.

Signature (Interviewer) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> This is the initial title of this thesis, to which minor changes were made after interviews.

## APPENDIX 4

### CONSENT FORM (Japanese)

#### 同意書

私、\_\_\_\_\_は、下記の調査に参加し協力することに同意いたします。

#### 日本における支配的サラリーマンの男らしさについての調査

私は「調査への参加と協力をお願い」を読み、以下のように理解いたしました。

もし私にその意志があるならば、インタビューに応じるように依頼されていること。

調査について研究者により十分な説明を受けること。

この調査の目的は、サラリーマンがどのように男らしさを形成するのかを探るものであり、私の調査への参加は私にとって直接利益となるものではないこと。

この調査の結果が出版されても、私の名前が公表されることはなく偽名が使用されること。

私がインタビューの録音に応じられない場合は、研究者はメモのみ取ること。

私はインタビューの録音に応じます／応じられません。(丸を付ける)

たとえ同意書にサインをした後でも、インタビュー後三ヶ月以内なら、いつでもこの調査から辞退できること。

この調査への参加、協力への報酬はないこと。

この調査の結果について知りたい場合は情報(英文)を提供されること。

「同意書」と「調査への参加と協力をお願い」を保持すべきこと。

以上を理解したうえで、私はこの調査に参加し協力することに同意します。

署名(サイン)：\_\_\_\_\_ 2004年\_\_\_\_月\_\_\_\_日

#### 証人

私、樋高知子は\_\_\_\_\_にインタビューについての説明を行いました。インタビュー参加者は私の説明を了解したものと理解します。

署名(サイン)：\_\_\_\_\_ 2004年\_\_\_\_月\_\_\_\_日

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