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THE CHANGING CULTURE OF FATHERHOOD AND GENDER
DISPARITIES IN JAPANESE FATHER'S DAY AND MOTHER'S DAY COMIC
STRIPS: A 55-YEAR ANALYSIS

by

SAORI YASUMOTO

Under the Direction of Ralph LaRossa

ABSTRACT

LaRossa, Jaret, Gadgil, and Wynn (2000, 2001) conducted a content analysis of 495 comic strips published on Father's Day and Mother's Day in the United States from 1945 to 1999 in order to determine whether the culture of fatherhood and gender disparities in the media had changed over the past half-century. Drawing on their research, I conducted a similar kind of analysis of 246 comic strips published on Father's Day and Mother's Day in Japan from 1950 to 2004. By comparing and contrasting the results in the two studies, I show how comic portrayals of families have changed in Japan and in the United States, and demonstrate the value of analyzing comic strips in cross-national research.

INDEX WORDS: comic strips, Father's Day, Mother's Day, cross-national research, humor, the culture of fatherhood, gender disparities, Japan

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ANALYSIS

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SAORI YASUMOTO

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2005

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Saori Yasumoto
2005

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

After World War II, Japan adopted many Western holidays such as Father's Day, Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, and Christmas, but developed characteristics of the holidays that were all their own. For instance, although both Japan and the United States practice Valentine's Day on February 14, the holiday means very different things in the two cultures. In Japan, Valentine's Day is traditionally a day during which women have the opportunity to confess their affection for men by giving them chocolate. Never is it the other way around. (Japanese celebrate White Day on March 14, which is a day men give cookies to women in return.) In the United States, however, friends and lovers alike give Valentine's Day gifts, regardless of gender. Although researchers can investigate the culture of Valentine's Day between two countries, it may not be appropriate for scholars to compare how people use the holiday to build a relationship because the two societies do not apply the same meaning to the holiday. On the other hand, Japan and the United States celebrate Father's Day and Mother's Day on the same days of the year and share a similar definition, which is to appreciate fathers and mothers. Conducting a cross-national analysis, with a focus on Father's Day and Mother's Day, thus can contribute to an understanding of the social meaning of parenthood in Japan and the United States.

LaRossa, Jaret, Gadgil, and Wynn (2000, 2001) examined 495 comic strips published on Father's Day and Mother's Day in the United States from 1940 to 1999 to determine whether the culture of fatherhood and gender disparities in the media had

changed over the past half-century. The aim of my study also is to investigate whether, in Japan, the culture of fatherhood and gender disparities had changed by examining Japanese comic strips published on Father's Day and Mother's Day from 1950 to 2004. By comparing my findings with those of LaRossa et al. (2000, 2001), I will demonstrate the similarities and differences between the culture of fatherhood in Japan and the United States.

STUDYING CULTURE

“Culture” is a term that people often use in conversation; however, defining culture is difficult because it can take various forms, according to Griswold (1994). For instance, national customs, such as styles of greeting and eating habits, are one aspect of culture. However, culture also can represent activities done by a more specific group of people within the broader society. For example, the elite rich are more likely to enjoy opera than the working class because this method of entertainment is a part of the culture of wealth. In addition, Griswold said that cultures are defined by “mass produced forms of entertainment” (1994:1), such as comic strips, music, and movies. Griswold also added a fourth characteristic of culture: symbolism. While an octopus is a symbol of omnipotence for some groups, others consider it merely a delicacy. Although culture can be material (objects such as furnishings and clothing) or non-material (intangibles such as national customs and beliefs), culture is always closely related to human experience. In forming her own definition of culture, Griswold (1994) pulled from the large number

of social scientists who, over the years, also have tried to define it. For instance, she quoted English anthropologist E.B. Tylor, who stated, “Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a members of society” ([1871] 1958:1). Although Tylor introduced his definition of culture a long time ago, Griswold (1994) said that the idea of culture as people’s way of life in a given society is still used in sociology and many sociologists have developed ideas of culture based on Tylor’s concept. For instance, Berger (1969) said culture is “the totality of man’s products,” whether they are material or non-material objects, suggesting that culture is what people encounter in everyday life. Although this definition of culture helps avoid ethnocentric evaluations that assume one culture is superior over another, Griswold (1994) argued that social scientists need a more focused definition.

Griswold (1994) noted that researchers recently have tried to narrow the concept of culture, depending on the cultural objects they are observing. A *cultural object* is “a socially meaningful expression that is audible, or visible, or tangible, or can be articulated” (p. 11). Embodiments of cultural objects include language, art, plays, novels, and films, music, how-to-guides, newspaper and magazine articles, and comic strips. Griswold (1994) also viewed culture as “the expressive side of human life — behavior, objects, and ideas that can be seen to express, to stand for, something else” (p. 11). She noted that it was important for researchers to distinguish culture from social structure, but also to understand how the two are related. Because cultural objects both have cultural

meaning and are representative of the larger social system, they form a meeting point between culture and social structure. For instance, comic strips produced in Japan and the United States have diverse humor and storylines because they are influenced by different world views, customs, and politics. Davies (1998) pointed out that the Japanese are less likely to appreciate humor related to race and ethnicity because only slight racial and ethnic diversity occurs in the country. He argued that the Japanese may even have a sense of hostility toward ethnic humor. Goldstein (1976) conducted cross-national research on humor in Japan and the United States and discovered that, compared to the Japanese, Americans are more likely to enjoy antagonistic humor — that which contains a sense of aggression or violence. In addition, researchers need to be aware that cultural objects have creators and audiences who determine its characteristics. According to Griswold (1994), the relationships among the cultural object, its creator, its recipient, and the social world may be viewed as a cultural diamond. Consequently, scholars who would understand certain cultural objects sociologically must examine the conditions and effects of the other three points in the cultural diamond.

Focusing specifically on fatherhood, LaRossa (1988) stressed the importance of distinguishing culture from conduct, noting that they may not always be in sync. The culture of fatherhood is made up of “the norms, values, and beliefs surrounding men’s parenting” (p. 451). How fathers actually behave constitutes the conduct of fatherhood. This distinction is especially important in studies of cultural objects. Cartoonists may have the power to alter the culture of fatherhood — by portraying fathers attending PTA

meetings or yelling at their children, for example — and viewers may start to believe a positive or negative change has occurred based on what the cartoonists have drawn. But what the cartoonists draw and what may be occurring in actuality are two different things.

COMIC STRIPS AS CULTURAL OBJECTS

Based on the importance of cultural objects in Griswold's definition of culture, many American researchers have examined comic strips to understand how people interpret meaning in everyday life. In a series of studies, Brabant and Mooney used family-oriented Sunday comic strips to investigate gender stereotypes in 1974, 1984, and 1994 (Brabant 1976; Brabant and Mooney 1986, 1997; Mooney and Brabant 1987, 1990). Comparing their results, Brabant and Mooney found that stereotypical depictions of men and women have generally decreased over time, but comic strip characters in 1984 were the least stereotypical. Thus, the researchers determined that gender disparities fluctuated during the last three decades. The authors provided one possible reason for these fluctuations, saying that a media "backlash" appeared during the 1980s, making men and women less likely to be portrayed in traditional ways (see Faludi 1991).

Day and Mackey (1986) analyzed how cartoons depict stereotypical images of parental roles based on comic strips published in the *Saturday Evening Post* from 1922 to 1968 and 1971 to 1978, and found that the image of fathers in cartoons shifted in the 1970s. LaRossa, Gordon, Wilson, Bairan, and Jaret (1991) partially replicated Day and Mackey's study, examining family comic strips published in the *Saturday Evening Post*

from 1924 to 1944. They found a shift in the 1930s, similar to the shift that Day and Mackey (1986) reported for the 1970s, which led them to propose that the image of paternal roles had changed twice during the twentieth century.

LaRossa, Jaret, Gadgil, and Wynn (2000) conducted further research, based on humorous comic strips published on Mother's Day and Father's Day from 1945 to 1999. The authors referenced studies indicating paternal behavior had changed, positively in some ways and negatively in others. For example, Pleck (1997) suggested that today's fathers spend more time with their children because an increase in the number of dual-earner couples has created new opportunities for them to share childcare duties. However, Furstenberg (1988) said the rising divorce rate has increased the number of nonresident fathers who have very limited interaction with their children on a daily basis.

LaRossa, Jaret, Gadgil, and Wynn (2001) later used the same sample to examine gender disparity patterns in comic strips published on Mother's Day and Father's Day from 1945 to 1999. The authors examined, among other things, the ratio of female to male characters in comic strips and noted whether a character (mother/father) was shown outside of the home, reading something, sleeping, or wearing an apron. Besides outlining these trends, they found "patriarchal gender disparities in the fictional families were at their highest between 1945 and 1959" (p. 693).

In the comic strip studies, the researchers discovered various relationships between depictions of fictional families and changing American society; however, none of the researchers conducted a cross-national analysis. If comic strips are a reflection of

people's experiences in a certain country, are they not a valuable resource for cross-national study? My research is a comparative analysis based on LaRossa et al.'s most recent studies (2000, 2001). I will endeavor to determine whether the culture of fatherhood and gender disparities have changed since the 1950s in Japan and contrast my findings with those of LaRossa et al. (2000, 2001) for the United States.

WHY STUDY COMIC STRIPS?

Audiences often devalue comic strips by seeing them simply as a source of entertainment and separating the storyline from people's everyday experience. Many scholars, however, have claimed that comic strips are a reflection on society. (Chavez 1985; Day and Mackey 1986; Brabant and Mooney 1997; LaRossa et al. 2001; Giarelli and Tulman 2003). For example, Barcus (1963) suggested that comic strips are a "major means of conveying information about the culture" (P. 191). Reitberger and Fuchs (1972) argued that, of all mass media, comics mirror the American collective subconscious most faithfully.

Comic strips often use clothes, hairstyles, and terms that are popular at a given time; as a result, they represent social norms and trends. Additionally, comics depict customs and morals based on readers' racial/ethnic background. For this reason, editors select comic strips that are most appropriate for their readers and may choose not to publish a comic if it is deemed too controversial or difficult to understand for their audience (Giarelli and Tulman 2003). Not all comic strips are humorous to everyone

because the reader must understand the language and culture behind the storyline — the comic is not funny without knowledge of its context. For instance, irony or cultural references in Japanese comic strips may not make sense to Americans who can speak Japanese but have a limited understanding of Japanese culture.

The popularity of comic strips also is due to storylines that relate to readers' experiences. Berger (1973) and Houts and Bahr (1972) contended comics reach a wide audience because many people are familiar with their subject matter. According to LaRossa et al., "more than 100 million people read comic strips every day" (2000: 377); thus, comics play an important role in representing a nation's collective consciousness and can provide ideas of how people think and behave (2001). The storylines of comics also reflect a society's broader political climate, according to Day and Mackey (1973). Thus, comic strips represent both a society's macro level (large-scale social structure) and micro level (individual lives).

WHY CONDUCT A CROSS-NATIONAL STUDY?

Many scholars maintain that comics are closely linked with the cartoonists' and editors' perspectives. The media focuses on entertaining a certain group of people based on the age, gender, and/or political inclinations of a publication's audience. Thus, many comic strips represent the culture of the specific group of people who read the magazines or newspapers in which they are published. For instance, researchers could analyze comic strips in a parental magazine geared toward African American readers to understand the

culture of fatherhood and motherhood among African Americans; the same study could be done using comic strips aimed at an audience of primarily white parent's readers. Scholars then can compare and contrast the two studies, resulting in a deeper understanding of the similarities and differences between the culture of parenthood in African American and white families.

In their studies, LaRossa et al. (2000, 2001) used nationally syndicated comic strips published in a newspaper. Because the comics are created to be appealing to many Americans, the samples are a reflection of the United States' collective consciousness and its culture of parenthood. Therefore, the research findings of LaRossa et al. (2000, 2001) are a good foundation from which to build a cross-national analysis.

Many sociology scholars have conducted cross-national research between Japan and the United States. Ishii-Kuntz, Makino, Kato, and Tsuchiya (2004) explained that the analysis is fascinating because the two countries share similar economic structures but very different cultural backgrounds. Honoyama (2000) and Koikari (1999) focused on the significant impact of American culture on Japanese families since World War II. Because Japan was under United States occupation from 1945 to 1952, the authors argued that Japan changed various laws related to families based on American practices. For instance, Sugimoto (2003) discussed that the Japanese used to practice the patrilineal *ie* system that represents "a quasi-kinship with a patriarchal head and members ties to him through real or symbolic blood relationship" (p. 147). However, the traditional *ie* system was abolished after World War II and Honoyama (2000) claimed it was because the Japanese

were exposed to American lifestyles through television shows, movies, and other forms of media that support the conjugal family system as the ideal form of modern family. Even so, today's Japanese still practice many unique familial customs that differ from Americans. For instance, the Japanese maintain three-generation households. Ishii-Kuntz et al. (2004) cited a 1995 Japanese census that states 13 percent of Japanese people live with their extended family (grandparents, parents, and children), compared to 3.3 percent of white households in the United States. The researchers suggest that family dynamics vary in three-generation households because a couple has extra assistance from the elder generation in terms of household chores and childcare. As a result, Japanese fathers' participation in childcare varies depending on the household structure — less assistance is required in three-generation households, while more is needed in households where the grandparents are not present.

Based on this knowledge, many cross-national studies between Japan and the United States compare and contrast the culture of fatherhood in the two nations. For example, Makino (1995) suggested that American fathers spend much more time with their children than Japanese fathers; however, Ishii-Kuntz et al. (2004) suggested that today's Japanese fathers show more interest in their children's lives than did the previous generation. According to the authors' report, *Asahi Shinbun* (1989) stated that although "only 23 percent of Japanese men in 1978 reported that 'family' was the most important aspect of their lives, the figure doubled in 1989" (p. 779). Doi (1973) pointed out that postwar Japanese media almost encouraged the absence of the fathers in the household by

spreading the humorous slogan “A father is most appreciated when he is healthy and out of the home.”

However, recently Japanese media have started to promote a different image of fathers. For instance, Ishii-Kuntz et al. (2004) cited a 1999 promotion by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare that encouraged the father’s role at home, stating, “A man who does not raise his children can’t be called a father,” and using a celebrity to endorse this new vision of fatherhood. Since the decline of birth rate is a serious national issue today in Japan, Ishii-Kuntz et al. (2004) believe the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare was actually encouraging couples to have more children. More Japanese women today desire a career after marriage, but many feel the traditionally rigid division of labor between husband and wife makes it too difficult to balance career and parenthood. Therefore, the organization assumed that encouraging husbands’ support in childcare would ease the women’s burden and encourage them to have more children. The Japanese government’s concept of “New Fatherhood” has a counterpart in the United States — the “New Fatherhood” that emerged in the 1920s, 1970s, and 1980s (LaRossa 1997; LaRossa et al. 2000). This parallel is very interesting because both countries have had tremendous economic achievements over the last 50 years, yet parenting expectations differ so greatly between the two countries that this trend did not take effect in Japan until eight decades later.

Muramatsu (2002) also discussed that researchers started to study media through the lens of feminists in the 1970s in Japan. For instance, the author observed how female

characters were portrayed in television dramas in the 1970s, and suggested that women were often portrayed as happy while in a domestic sphere, however, but faced difficulties in the workplace. Muramatsu then explained, through research conducted in the 1980s, that portrayal in the media started to change because “hero shows” for children and girl-targeted novels began to display alternative gender roles for women. Finally, in more recent years, the author stated that a Japanese feminist media study reported female characters holding more non-traditional values, such as being a breadwinner, although the Japanese media still sends the message that traditional women’s roles are valuable for females. Although these studies focused on women and revealed an interesting shift in the media’s depiction of women, examining the portrayal of men also would support a deeper understanding of gender role expectations within a certain media.

FATHER’S DAY AND MOTHER’S DAY IN THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN

LaRossa (1997) offered a history of Father’s Day and Mother’s Day in the United States. According to official records, Sonora Louise Smart Dodd of Spokane, Washington conceived of Father’s Day in the early 1900s. Because her mother died due to a complication of childbirth, her father William Jackson Smart raised six children by himself. Dodd appreciated her father’s work and in 1910 she suggested creating a special day to honor all fathers in the United States. Although she wanted to have the holiday on June 5, her father’s birthday and the first Sunday in June that year, it was too soon to prepare an event; as a result, she postponed it for two weeks and had the first Father’s

Day on June 19. Ever since, Americans have been celebrating Father's Day on the third Sunday in June. LaRossa noted, however, that the American public did not begin to truly embrace Father's Day until the late 1930s and early 1940s. A popular custom was that people wore red roses if their fathers were alive, white roses if they were dead.

Mother's Day was established by Anna M. Jarvis of Grafton, West Virginia. She organized a local committee to create "Mother's Friendship Day" "to reunite families that had been divided during the Civil War" (Hatch 1978, as cited in LaRossa 1997:172) in 1868. Her mother, Anna Reeve Jarvis, wished to develop the friendship holiday into a special day to honor mothers but died before realizing her dream. Jarvis introduced the idea two years after her mother's death and people began celebrating the holiday in 1908 on the second Sunday in May — the closest Sunday to her mother's death. Pink carnations signified that one's mother was alive, white carnation that she was dead.

Afterward, Christian ministers from America introduced Mother's Day and Father's Day to Japan, but the holidays did not become popular until after World War II (*Asahi Shinbun* 1955 and 1992). Like the United States, Japan celebrates Mother's Day on the second Sunday in May and Father's Day on the third Sunday in June. The Japanese use a carnation to symbolize Mother's Day. Many children give a red carnation to their mothers and wear a white carnation if their mothers are deceased. In addition to flowers, research of a department store in Tokyo in 1979 suggested that aprons, blouses, and sportswear are popular Mother's Day gifts (*Mainichi Shinbun* 1979). Compared to Mother's Day, the popularity of Father's Day did not grow as fast.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS

In this chapter, I address the methods that I used in my research. First, I talk about how I selected the data. Then, I explain the coding procedures. Finally, I discuss the way I measured each variable.

DATA COLLECTION

I photocopied all humorous comic strips published between 1950 and 2004 in Japanese newspapers on Mother's Day and Father's Day. Although LaRossa, Jaret, Gadgil, and Wynn (2000, 2001) focused on one specific newspaper (*Atlanta Journal and Constitution*), I decided to gather samples from two diverse newspapers (*Asahi Shinbun* and *Mainich Shinbun*). Unlike American newspapers, Japanese comics are distributed across several pages, with only two to five comic strips in the entire newspaper; therefore, I suspected I would not collect a sufficient number of comic strips if I concentrated on one newspaper alone. In addition, the two newspapers I chose have been published for a long period of time and are distributed nationwide, together reaching a wide range of readers in Japan. *Asahi Shinbun's* audience is more likely to be educated and have a higher socioeconomic status, while *Mainich Shinbun* tends to report more liberal opinions (*The Social Science and Journalism* 2005).

Entire comic strips were carefully examined and classified by whether the comic explicitly discussed Mother's Day or Father's Day, mentioned parenthood in general, or

discussed a setting other than the home. After much thought, I decided to analyze 246 comics published on Mother's Day and Father's Day. Although I found comic strips used themes of Mother's Day, Father's Day, motherhood, or fatherhood on Saturday right before the holidays, I decided to use only Sunday comic strips because one of the goals of my study was to compare my findings with these of LaRossa et al. (2000, 2001). Only one out of the entire sample of comics had a white American character and all other characters in the sample comic strips were Japanese, reflecting the racial homogeneity of the society. Similar to what LaRossa et al. found, almost all families in Japanese comics were depicted as middle class; therefore, variation of socioeconomic status was not shown. Although LaRossa et al. did not analyze household structure in the American comic strips; I added a question to examine this because much literature points to the percentage of three-generation households as one main difference between Japan and the United States.

CODING

I developed a coding sheet based on the one LaRossa et al. (2000, 2001) used in their study. Each question was carefully phrased and I conferred with LaRossa to make sure I asked the same questions that were asked in the previous studies to avoid confusion during my coding process (see Appendix).

To increase the reliability of the findings, the coding process was separated into two steps: 1) pre-coding and 2) coding and test-retest.

Pre-Coding

Two other coders were involved in the first stage. Because the coding sheets were created in English and I was conducting a cross-national analysis, I sought supportive coders who understood both the English language and Japanese society. Both coders and I worked together to establish a reliable coding sheet before starting the coding process. Sample comic strips used for the pre-coding process were published on the Saturday preceding Mother's Day and Father's Day, so I could omit the comic strips during the final coding process without affecting the results. The coders individually examined 10 comics and answered all 96 questions on the coding sheet. During the process, coders were unaware of the date of publication or the name of the newspaper for each comic strip, so they could focus on storylines rather than be swayed by the social background of the particular cartoon. For example, the feminist movement in Japan may have affected a comic published in the 1980s and this knowledge had the potential to influence a coder's interpretation of the images.

I also asked coders to seriously consider the possibility of multiple interpretations of the comic strips. Since the coders and I have unique backgrounds as people who understand two languages and societies, we may interpret the comics differently than someone who has never left Japan. To avoid any resulting bias, we took extra care not to make confusing interpretations based on our knowledge learned from Japan and the United States and consulted other people to focus on Japanese understanding when any confusion arose.

After pre-coding, I carefully compared the three coders' results, analyzing whether they matched and discussing disagreements on the comic strips' story lines or the coding questions' wording. As a result of these discussions, I rewrote some of the coding questions to be clearer and more straightforward, and created a list of specific points on which to use when examining the strips. We repeated the pre-coding process three times, which resulted in a 98 percent rate of agreement among the coders after the third pre-coding session.

Coding and Test-retest

After developing reliable coding sheets, I coded the 246 comic strips. When I was unsure of the content of the comic strips, I stopped coding and requested suggestions from my supportive coders. During this stage, I selected every 5 out of 25 comic strips to test at least 10 days later to check the test-retest reliability of the coding process. Because I was already familiar with the questions and had developed the list of points on which I needed to be careful, the answers were very consistent at an average of almost 98 percent.

MEASURES

To examine how the culture of fatherhood has changed in Japan, I measured five variables: (1) How much attention is given to Father's Day and Mother's Day? (2) How often are fathers and mothers depicted as incompetent? (3) How often are fathers and mothers mocked? (4) How often are fathers and mothers depicted as supportive parents focusing on four specific activities? (5) How often are fathers and mothers depicted as

supportive parents, focusing on seven activities including the previous four? To investigate how gender disparities have changed in Japan, I measured six variables: (1) How often are females and males pictured or referenced? (2) How often are fathers and mothers depicted outside the home? (3) How often are fathers and mothers depicted reading a newspaper, magazine, or book? (4) How often are fathers and mothers depicted sleeping? (5) How often are fathers and mothers depicted wearing an apron? (5) How often are fathers and mothers depicted as doing traditionally feminine household chores?

How Much Attention is Given to Father's Day and Mother's Day?

To measure how much attention is given to Father's Day (FD) and Mother's Day (MD) in the Japanese comic strips, I was asked to note whether, in the comic, (1) FD is explicitly mentioned; (2) MD is explicitly mentioned; (3) Both FD and MD are explicitly mentioned; (4) FD is not explicitly mentioned, but is implicitly the theme of the comic; (5) MD is not explicitly mentioned, but is implicitly the theme of the comic; (6) FD and MD are not explicitly mentioned, but both are implicitly the theme of the comic; (7) FD is not explicitly mentioned, nor is it implicitly the theme of the comic, but fatherhood or fathering is the subject; (8) MD is not explicitly mentioned, nor is it implicitly the theme of the comic, but motherhood or mothering is the subject; (9) Neither FD nor MD is explicitly mentioned, nor is either implicitly the theme of the comic, but fatherhood and motherhood or fathering and mothering are the subject; (99) Do not know. I counted the number of comic strips that are coded as (1), (3), (4), or (6) for FD, and separated them

according to a half-decade scale. For MD, I counted the comics coded as (2), (3), (5), or (6), and divided them based on the year of publication.

How often are Fathers and Mothers Depicted as Incompetent?

To determine how frequently fathers and mothers are depicted as incompetent in my samples, I reviewed 27 activities to determine whether the father or mother in the comic (pictured or not) is enacting any of the activities and whether he or she is depicted as incompetent in the activity. I analyzed each comic, coding them as one of following: (0) Not applicable (father/mother is not in the comic and no reference is made to him/her or about him/her); (1) Activity not enacted (father/mother is in the comic or referenced in the comic, but is not involved in the activity); (2) Incompetent (father/mother is in the comic or is referenced in the comic, and he/she is depicted as incompetent on this particular issue. (To be judged “incompetent” on an issue, the father/mother had to be depicted as either ignorant, inadequate, incapable, ineffectual, inefficient, inept, stupid, unable, unfit, or weak); (3) Activity enacted completely or enacted such a way that competent or incompetent is not an issue (FD/MD/Central father is in the comic or referenced in the comic, is involved in the activity, and is competent in his performance or the question of competence or incompetence is not relevant in this particular activity); and (9) Do not know. I counted the number of comic strips coded as (2) and separated them according to a half-decade scale. For this question, as well as for this questions that follow, I looked first at the fathers and then at the mothers.

The 27 activities are related to five dimensions of family life. There are 15 questions related to child-care activities (i.e., verbal or physical expressions of affection toward child/ren), three questions about marital activities (i.e., “negative” emotional interactions with spouse), and another three cover household activities (i.e., traditionally feminine chores such as cooking and cleaning). Activities relevant to the work status also are examined (i.e., employment or unemployment), two questions concern gender socialization activities (i.e., activities attempting to show child/ren “what it means to be a man”), and, finally, Mother’s Day and Father’s Day activities are observed (i.e., of a Father’s Day or Mother’s Day gift).

How often are Fathers and Mothers Mocked?

To create amusing storylines cartoonists sometimes mock characters in comic strips, so I analyzed whether the comic deliberately makes fun of the father or mother based on a question LaRossa et al. (2000) used for their study. Although I was asked to note which character in the family is mocked (i.e., father, mother, son, daughter), I only report how often the mothers and fathers are mocked in the entire sample. I clarified that a character is being mocked if he or she is depicted as being ridiculed, belittled, derided, humiliated, insulted, made fun of, or made to seem a fool.

How often are Fathers and Mothers Depicted as Supportive Parents (I)?

In the study by LaRossa et al. (2000), the authors used four questions in the 27 activities that Coltrane and Allen (1994) utilized for their analysis of television advertisements. These questions show supportive parental behavior, such as whether mother or father in the comic strip is (1) verbally or physically expressing affection toward a child; (2) serving or caring for a child; (3) verbally encouraging a child during a task or activity; or (4) comforting child/ren or asking them about their feelings and thoughts. I noted whether the mother or father in the comic strip conducted these the four activities, and counted as a nurturing parent I if they were shown to be doing at least one out of these activities.

How often are Fathers and Mothers Depicted as Supportive Parents (II)?

LaRossa et al. (2000) discovered additional activities other than the above that indicate the mother or father is a supportive parent. As a result, they created further questions to evaluate the characteristics of a supportive parent. A supportive parent (1) praises a child for a completed task or activity; (2) listens to a child's problem; or (3) purposefully teaches a child. These three questions were added to the four questions for the supportive parent (I), and then I counted as a nurturing parent II if they were portrayed as engaging at least one of the seven activities.

How often are Females and Males Pictured or Referenced?

According to LaRossa et al. (2001), many researchers who study comic strips determine the ratio of female to male characters in their samples. As a result, LaRossa et al. also analyzed how frequently men and women are depicted. I adopted the same scheme and noted who is pictured or referenced in the comic, after which I counted the number of mothers and fathers as well as daughters and sons to examine how often characters of different genders were portrayed in Japanese comic strips.

How often are Fathers and Mothers Depicted Outside the Home?

LaRossa et al. (2001) stated that researchers who study gender in comic strips often examine whether male or female characters are depicted outside the home because being outside the home represents independence. Therefore, they analyzed where the mother or father is in the comic strip. In addition, I looked at whether the father/mother in the comic is pictured or merely referenced as outside the home at any time in the strip. I selected one of the following: (0) Not applicable (father/mother is not pictured or referenced); (1) Yes (father/mother is outside the home for a reason other than just going out for a MD/FD meal); (2) No (father/mother remained at home or there is no clear evidence of his being outside the home); (3) Yes (father/mother is outside the home only to go out for a MD/FD meal); and 9) Don't know. Being on a stoop or porch did not qualify as "outside the home," nor did the giving of a gift, by itself, count as "outside the home."

How often are Fathers and Mothers Depicted Reading a Newspaper, Magazine, or Book?

The next question related to the analysis of gender disparities determines whether the mother or father is reading, because reading is a symbol of freedom and intellectual curiosity, according to LaRossa et al. (2001). Thus, I analyzed whether the father/mother in this comic (pictured or referenced) is depicted reading at any time in the strip, selecting one of the following: 0) Not applicable (father/mother is not pictured or referenced); (1) Yes (newspaper); (2) Yes (magazine); (3) Yes (children's book); (4) Yes (book other than a children's book); (5) Yes (homework); (6) Yes (sign or poster); (7) Yes (Father's Day or Mother's Day card or message); (8) Yes (other); (9) No (father/mother is not shown reading or there is no clear evidence of reading); (99) Don't know. I counted answer (1) (reading a newspaper) as the first category and placed answer (2) (reading a magazine) and (4) (reading a book) in the other category.

How often are Fathers and Mothers Depicted Sleeping?

LaRossa et al. (2001) also asked whether the mother or father in the comic strip is depicted sleeping. The authors saw sleeping as a form of relaxation as well as a way to avoid chores. I selected one of the following: (0) Not applicable (no father/mother is not pictured or referenced); (1) Yes (sleeping in bed); (2) Yes (sleeping on the couch); (3) Yes (sleeping in a chair); (4) Yes (sleeping elsewhere); (5) No (father/mother is not shown sleeping or there is no clear evidence of him/her sleeping); and (9) Don't know.

How often are Fathers and Mothers Depicted Wearing an Apron?

LaRossa et al. (2001) pointed out those researchers also study gender disparities in comics by noting whether a mother or father wears an apron. I observed if the father/mother in the comic (pictured or referenced) is depicted wearing an apron at any time during the strip, choosing one of the following: (0) Not applicable (father/mother is not pictured or referenced); (1) Yes (kitchen apron); (2) Yes (barbecue apron); (3) Yes (other apron); (4) No (father/mother is not shown wearing an apron or there is no clear evidence of him/her wearing an apron); (9) Don't know. Although there are many kinds of aprons, LaRossa et al. (2001) argued that a kitchen apron represents domesticity the most. Therefore, I also counted any incidence of the father wearing a kitchen apron.

How Often are Fathers and Mothers Depicted as Doing Traditionally Feminine Household Chores?

To examine how gender disparities occur in terms of household chores, LaRossa et al. (2001) investigated how often comic strip fathers and mothers engage in traditionally feminine housework such as cooking and cleaning. I used the same question to analyze how gender disparities in household chores appear in Japanese comic strips.

DATA ANALYSIS

After analyzing each comic strip, I grouped them by half-decade, as LaRossa et al. (2000, 2001) had done, to make chronological comparisons. Although many researchers — Brabant (1976) and Brabant and Mooney (1986, 1987, 1990, and 1997), for instance

— used a decade-based analysis, LaRossa et al. (2000,2001) suggested that cutting historical phases into ten-year pieces may be too broad.

A chronological content analysis is useful in understanding the pattern of change in a certain period or the influence of a specific historical event. A cross-national analysis is helpful to investigate if countries have similar or varied patterns. If a country has a unique pattern of change, a researcher is tempted to discover the reason. While Japan and the U.S. do not share all of the same historical events, both countries experienced a postwar period at the same time; therefore, comparing the culture of fatherhood during this era would be wise. Moreover, the impact of historical events that occurred at different times in each country, such as the feminist movement, may also be worthy of note to explain a change in the reproduction of gender disparities.

CHAPETR 3

HAS THE CULTURE OF FATHERHOOD CHANGED?

In this chapter, I discuss the results of my analysis based on the question, has the culture of fatherhood changed in Japan? To examine characteristics of comic strip fathers and mothers, I observed whether the father/mother is depicted as incompetent, being mocked, or engaging in nurturing and supportive behaviors.

Traditionally, the Japanese image of a father is someone powerful and to be feared, represented by the popular description, “earthquake, thunder, fire, and father.” When Japan experienced economic prosperity beginning in the 1970s, the new phrase, “A father is most appreciated when he is healthy and out of the home,” emerged because fathers were at work most of the time; as a result, their breadwinner role in the family became more pronounced. As previously mentioned, Japanese fathers in the late 1990s received a third slogan from which to base their behaviors, “A man who does not raise his children cannot be called a father.” Therefore, the image of Japanese fathers was reinvented every twenty years.

It is discussion-worthy that these three phrases do not imply positive views of fathers — quite the opposite. At first, traditional fathers were paralleled with natural disasters such as earthquakes and fire. Twenty years later, hard-working fathers either were not appreciated at home or considered lacking as breadwinners if they were spending time at home with the family. Most recently, as Ishii-Kuntz (2004) discussed, the slogan “A man who does not raise his children cannot be called a father” was spread

not to encourage fathers to participate in childcare for the family's sake but to encourage mothers to bear more children. Thus, the general media's depiction of fathers has not been very supportive. Comic strip fathers have received some credit in last five decades, however.

ATTENTION GIVEN TO FATHER'S DAY OR MOTHER'S DAY

Table 1 displays the number of comics that explicitly mentioned or implicitly alluded to Father's Day and Mother's Day. Overall, 71.1 percent (175 of the 246) of comic strips used Father's Day and Mother's Day as a theme in their storylines, suggesting that the holidays have become central to Japanese customs. Specifically, 54.8 percent (96 out of the 175) of comic strips had Mother's Day as a theme, and 45.1 percent (79 out of the 175) of comic strips had Father's Day as a theme. Generally, more attention was given to Mother's Day than to Father's Day.

A number of additional trends may be discerned. First, the amount of attention given to the two holidays generally has increased over the years until 1990s. Second, prior to 1960, cartoonists did not use Father's Day at all as a theme. After that, Father's Day was routinely mentioned or alluded to, in some years, more than Mother's Day. One possible explanation for this trend is that, because many fathers were absent during and after the war, Japanese comic strip artists were reluctant to showcase Father's Day until the 1960s. Although the war was over in 1945, many Japanese soldiers located in other countries such as China could not come back to Japan very quickly. Hayashi (2003)

described that her mother opened a bookstore to support herself during the war while her husband was missing for nine years. In addition, men may have been perceived more as soldiers than father figures in the 1950s, or the loss of the war may have put Japanese men's masculinity in question like that of German men during that country's post-war period. According to Fehrenbach (1998), German men's masculinity was challenged because of the presence of American men who, as the victors, represented men's power; consequently, fatherhood, which is linked with authority and supremacy, was in jeopardy for German fathers.

Noteworthy, too, is how attention to Father's Day and Mother's Day fluctuated throughout the 50-year period. For instance, the number of comic strips discussing Father's Day jumped from zero in the 1950s to six in the early 1960s. The next big wave occurred from the late 1970s to late 1980s, during which comic strips focusing on Father's Day increased dramatically. Attention given to Mother's Day also showed non-linear patterns because many cartoonists alluded to Mother's Day in the early 1960s, early 1980s, late 1980s, and early 1990s; however, very few comic strips published in the 1970s used Mother's Day as a theme.

Father's Day and Mother's Day were mentioned the most between 1985 and 1989, and there was generally a greater tendency to acknowledge the holidays between 1980 and 1989; however, the results showed a slight decline in the 1990s. This trend may be related to Japanese economic prosperity in the 1980s and the country's decreasing birth rate during the last decades. Under good economic conditions, families can more easily

afford to enjoy Father's Day and Mother's Day by giving presents or going out to eat; consequently, cartoonists may have used these holidays to entertain readers. Another reason many comics may have talked about Mother's Day and Father's Day in the late 1980s is the authors used the holidays to respond to issues focused on during that time. According to Raymo (1998), the Japanese fertility rate started to decrease from 1973 (2.14 per couple) to 1995 (1.43 per couple). To alleviate the situation, Ishii-Kuntz, Makino, Kato, and Tsuchiya (2004) explained, the Japanese government widely spread the slogan "A man who does not raise his children cannot be called a father," assuming women would have more children if they had supportive husbands. In fact, one comic strip used this slogan in the storyline. A father and son are sitting at the dining table and the son asks his father, "Did you take care of me when I was a little baby?" The father's response is, "Not really. I depended on your mother to raise you." In the next scene, the father says to himself, "Well, I probably won't get anything good on Father's Day tomorrow," while thinking about the poster with the slogan on it.

LaRossa, Jaret, Gadgil, and Wynn (2000) reported that the amount of attention given to Mother's Day and Father's Day increased over time because the authors assumed that editors believed readers would enjoy reading family-oriented comics more than other types. For instance, attention toward the two holidays steadily increased from 1965 to 1999 in the United States. By comparison, although generally the two holidays received more attention in Japanese comic strips as time went on, there also was evidence of fluctuation. More Japanese comic strips started to give attention to Mother's Day and

Father's Day after 1975; however, the holidays received the most attention in late 1980s and the occurrence decreased little by little afterward, even though the numbers were still greater than prior to 1975.

HOW OFTEN FATHERS AND MOTHERS WERE DEPICTED AS INCOMPETENT

Table 2 reveals 26.9 percent of fathers and 17.9 percent of mothers were depicted as incompetent from 1950 to 2004. Overall, fathers were more likely to be portrayed as incompetent than mothers; however, there were three half-decades (early 1950s, late 1970s, and late 1990s) when cartoonists portrayed mothers as more incompetent. In contrast, comic strip mothers were never depicted as incompetent in the late 1950s, late 1960s, and early 1970s.

The percentage of incompetent fathers fluctuated, and the highest rate per half-decade was in the early 1960s (70.0 percent). This is interesting because comic strips finally started to mention Father's Day during this time, yet the majority of fathers were depicted as incompetent. Other peaks were in the late 1950s and early 1970s (both 33.3 percent), and early 1980s (31.6 percent). Although fluctuation occurred less for mothers, incompetent mothers in Japanese comic strips greatly increased in the late 1970s (from 0 percent in the late 1960s and early 1970s to 29.4 percent in the late 1970s) and decreased from the early 1980s to early 1990s before the number increased again in the late 1990s (29.6 percent).

When I compared the findings of LaRossa et al. (2000) and my study, the most

distinctive difference between the two countries is the overall percentage of incompetent fathers and mothers in comic strips.¹ For instance, LaRossa et al. (2000) found that 11.6 percent of American fathers and 5.6 percent of American mothers were depicted as incompetent; by contrast, 26.9 percent of Japanese fathers and 17.9 percent of Japanese mothers were portrayed as incompetent. These findings mean that Japanese fathers were depicted as incompetent more than twice as often as American fathers, and Japanese mothers were represented as incompetent more than three times more than American mothers. If, as LaRossa et al. (2000) suggested, comic strip artists in the United States chose to honor fathers and mothers by not portraying them as incompetent on these holidays, mothers and fathers in Japan were being shown less respect on Mother's Day and Father's Day. However, it is important to note that the sense of humor in the two countries may be different. Japanese cartoonists who depict parents as incompetent on Mother's Day and Father's Day may not be showing disrespect, but may simply be trying to be funny.

The next question is why more fathers than mothers were shown to be incompetent in the two countries. One answer is that cartoonists and readers both in the United States and Japan believe incompetent fathers are entertaining. It would be interesting to see if this is because, in both countries, mothers, more so than fathers, are closely linked with parenthood. LaRossa et al. (2000) reported that American comic strip

¹My discussion pertains to the updated figures and data as corrected by LaRossa and Jaret(2005), not the information contained in the original publication (LaRossa et al. 2000).

fathers were depicted as incompetent primarily when they were showing a child what it means to “be a man,” doing feminine household chores, non-physically disciplining a child, and playing sports. Mothers were shown to be incompetent when they were physically and non-physically disciplining a child, giving a Father’s Day gift, and comforting a child. Japanese were more likely to portray fathers as incompetent when the father characters were giving or about give a Mother’s Day gift, physically abusing a spouse, and giving money to family members. Mothers were more likely to be shown to be incompetent when they were physically disciplining or punishing children, physically abusing spouse, and giving or about to give a Father’s Day gift. Thus, American cartoonists depicted fathers as incompetent when they were doing activities related to childcare; in contrast, Japanese comic strip fathers often were shown to be incompetent in their relationships with their wives. Both American and Japanese comic strip mothers were pictured as less reliable disciplinarians for their children. The findings also suggest that mothers in American and Japanese strips were depicted as incompetent when giving a Father’s Day gift. It would be interesting to closely analyze the storylines in the comics to look for other similarities and differences between the two countries.

HOW OFTEN FATHERS AND MOTHERS WERE MOCKED

The second row in Table 2 explains the percentage of mothers and fathers who were mocked in Japanese comic strips from 1950 to 2004. Overall, 51.5 percent of fathers and 36.2 percent of mothers were made fun of in storylines. Although fathers were

teased more often in total, mothers were depicted as more foolish than fathers in the early 1950s, late 1970s, and early 1990s. In early 1960s, the percentage of fathers who were mocked in storylines spiked from 33.3 percent to 60.0 percent and the numbers remain this high or higher until the early 1970s, after which percentages show fluctuation.

Comparison between my findings and those of LaRossa et al. (2000) revealed interesting patterns. First, Japanese fathers and mothers were much more likely to be mocked than U.S. comic strip fathers and mothers (51.5 percent vs. 20.2 percent and 36.2 percent vs. 6.6 percent). In the case of mothers, Japanese mothers were teased almost six times more than mothers in American comic strips. Similar to the discussion of incompetence, there is a possibility that Japan and the United States construct humor in different ways; therefore, deeper analysis of storylines would be necessary.

Another difference is that fathers were almost always mocked more often than mothers in American comic strips; however, mothers in Japan were depicted as more foolish than fathers during three time periods: the early 1950s, late 1970s, and early 1990s when Japanese media promoted slogans guiding the behavior of fathers. For instance, in the 1950s, the image of fathers was “Earthquake, thunder, fire, and father”; during the economic prosperity of the 1970s, it was “A father is most appreciated when he is healthy and out of the home”; and in the 1990s, fathers were accused of not participating in childrearing with the statement, “A man who does not raise his children cannot be called a father” (although the aim of the slogan was to encourage women to have more children). Interestingly, the three slogans did not necessarily support a positive

image of fathers; however, comic strips published during these periods gave fathers more credit, as they were less likely to be lampooned than mothers.

HOW OFTEN FATHERS AND MOTHERS WERE DEPICTED AS SUPPORTIVE PARENTS (I) (II)

Table 3 displays the percentage of fathers and mothers who engaged in nurturant and supportive parenting activities in Japanese comic strips from 1950 to 2004. The first row in Table 3 (Nurturant and Supportive Parenting Behavior I) indicates that 29.3 percent of fathers and 27.5 percent of mothers overall were shown verbally or physically expressing affection toward a child, serving or caring for a child, verbally encouraging a child, comforting a child or inquiring about the child's feelings and thoughts. This result is interesting because, contrary to the popular slogans suggesting Japanese fathers were not strong parental figures, comic strip fathers were portrayed as just as nurturant and supportive as, if not more nurturant and supportive than, mothers. For instance, whereas the 1950s' image of fathers was "Earthquake, thunder, fire, and father," fathers in 1970s were appreciated more if they were at work. Then, in the late 1990s, fathers were encouraged to be more supportive husbands. Comic strips contradicted these images of fathers, however. For example, in the late 1950s, early 1960s, late 1960s, late 1970s, early 1980s, early 1990s, late 1990s, and early 2000, fathers were more likely to be depicted as nurturing and supportive than mothers.

The second row in Table 3 (Nurturant and Supportive Parenting Behavior II) looks at the same three questions as the first row but adds whether a comic strip

father/mother praised a child for a completed task or activity, listened to a child's problem, or purposefully taught a child. Overall, 35.3 percent of fathers and 30.4 percent of mothers engaged in this broader set of nurturant and supportive activities. Again, slightly more fathers were shown being nurturant and supportive. Comic strip fathers in the late 1950s, early 1990s, late 1990s, and early 2000s were frequently depicted as nurturant and supportive; mothers in the late 1950s, late 1980s, early 1990s, and late 1990s were also often illustrated as such. Because, in general, mothers seem to be seen as more caring parent than fathers, I started to wonder whether it was because fathers were engaged in nurturing and supportive behaviors but their effort failed resulting in their being shown as incompetent or being mocked. If that were the case, the depiction of nurturing and supportive fathers may not always credit fathers, but rather may present the image of inadequate parents. Because the number of comic strip portrayals of nurturant and supportive father increased between 1990 and 2004, I selected all comic strips that showed fathers to be nurturant and supportive during that period to examine if there was any correlation between the depiction of nurturant and supportive fathers and their being mocked or incompetent. Overall, 43.5 percent (10 out of the 23) of these comic strips mocked fathers when they were engaged in nurturing and supportive behavior, while 15.4 percent (2 out of the 13) of these comic strips depicted incompetent fathers. Thus, during the past three half-decades, comic strip fathers who were shown to be nurturant and supportive typically were not mocked or depicted as incompetent. Stated in the reverse, nurturant and supportive fathers, more often than not, were positively portrayed.

In contrast, LaRossa et al (2000) found that American comic strip fathers generally were less likely than mothers to be depicted as nurturant and supportive parents. This was true for both measures-- Nurturant and Supportive Parenting Behavior I (23.0 percent of fathers vs. 31.6 percent of mothers) and Nurturant and Supporting Parenting Behavior II (36.4 percent of fathers vs. 42.9 percent of mothers) analysis. Although fathers in American comic strips occasionally were shown to be more nurturant and supportive than mothers (in the late 1940s, early 1950s, early 1980s, and late 1990s in Nurturant and Supportive Parental Behavior I, and in the late 1940s, early 1950s, late 1960s, early 1980s, and late 1990s in Nurturant and Supportive Parental Behavior II), portrayals of nurturant and supportive fathers never lasted long. In the case of Nurturant and Supportive Parent Behavior I, fathers were depicted more positively than mothers in the late 1940s and early 1950s; however, fathers were not shown to be more nurturant and supportive for the next 25 years, until in the early 1980s. In the late 1980s, portrayals of nurturant and supportive fathers decreased again, and fathers were not represented as more nurturant and supportive than mothers until the late 1990s. When it came to Nurturant and Supportive Parent Behavior II, fathers were shown to be more nurturant and supportive than mothers for five half-decades (in the late 1940s, early 1950s, late 1960s, early 1980s, and late 1990s).

In this chapter, I analyzed 246 comic strips published on Father's Day and Mother's Day from 1950 to 2004 and discussed how the culture of fatherhood has changed, based on five questions: (1) How much attention is given to Father's Day and

Mother's Day? (2) How often are fathers and mothers depicted as incompetent? (3) How often are fathers and mothers mocked? (4) How often are fathers and mothers depicted as supportive parents by doing four specific activities? (5) How often are fathers and mothers depicted as supportive parents when three more activities are added to the previous four behaviors? Generally, the examination suggests that the Japanese culture of fatherhood exhibited a fluctuating pattern during the 55 years. Also, although the government's image of Japanese fathers was often unidimensional ("Earth quake, thunder, fire, and father," "A father is most appreciated when he is healthy and out of the home," and "A man who does not raise his children can't be called a father."), the image of Japanese fathers in the comics I studied was complex. Especially surprising is the fact that Japanese comic strip fathers were sometimes depicted as more nurturing and supportive than mothers.

CHAPTER 4

HAVE GENDER DISPARITY PATTERNS CHANGED?

To further analyze how men's and women's roles were depicted in Japanese comic strips, I now report the percentages of comics that pictured or referenced: fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters; fathers and mothers outside the home, reading a newspaper, reading a magazine, reading a non-children's book, or sleeping; and fathers and mothers wearing a kitchen apron or performing traditionally feminine household chores. Finally, I combine the questions above to calculate the sum of gender differences over the years.

HOW OFTEN MALES AND FEMALES WERE PICTURED OR REFERENCED

Table 4 summarizes the percentage of Japanese comics that pictured or referenced fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters from 1950 to 2004. Overall, 67.9 percent of the comic strips pictured or referenced fathers, while 84.1 percent pictured or referenced mothers. In contrast, 83.3 percent and 42.7 percent of comics pictured or referenced sons and daughters, respectively. Similar to LaRossa, Jaret, Gadgil, and Wynn (2001), Japanese mothers and sons were more likely to be pictured than fathers and daughters.

The results in Table 4 are noteworthy in three respects. First, although the half-decade analysis revealed that the popularity of comic strip mothers has been greater than fathers in last 55 years, the gap was much greater before the mid 1960s. As already discussed, one explanation is that Father's Day started to gain recognition in Japan in the early 1960s. Also, mothers may have been more likely to be the main characters in family

comic strips during the postwar period because many fathers had been absent during the fighting.

Second, the percentage of comics that pictured or referenced fathers and mothers reversed in the late 1960s, so that fathers were shown 72.2 percent of the time and mothers 44.4 percent. Then, fathers and mothers were equally mentioned in Japanese comic strips during the 1970s. Although the gender gap generally decreased from the early 1980s to early 2000s, these three half decades (late 1960s, early and late 1970s) seem to be a turning point for equalizing the appearance of fathers and mothers in comic strips. According to Matsui (1990), many social movements, such as the anti-Vietnam War, anti-pollution and feminist movements emerged in Japan during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The author discussed the importance of a feminist movement especially during this period because Japanese feminists for the first time adopted Western notions of feminism, which seeks women's self-expression and self-realization. Since my sample newspapers were distributed nationwide during these 10 years of upheaval, editors and cartoonists may have been sensitive to the balance of mothers and fathers in comic strips, in response to the feminist movement.

To compare the percentages of comics that mentioned sons and daughters suggests a third interesting point. As Table 4 shows, sons were always pictured or referenced more often than daughters during each half-decade; the percentage difference was highest in the late 1950s, at 86.7 percent. Although the gap narrowed from the early 1980s to the early 2000s, sons were still pictured or referenced more often. LaRossa et al.

(2001) also found a similar pattern in the U.S. In their study, gender parity between sons and daughters narrowed from the late 1970s to the late 1990s. For a closer analysis, I examined the types of families that were represented in the comic strips over the years. For instance, cartoonists often depicted a family with a single boy child, before the early 1980s (i.e., *Kuri-chan*, *Fuku-chan*, and *Gutara-mama*). In one case, the family structure in *Hi, Attuko-desu*, which changed over the years, had only a boy child in its earlier years, and then had a second child who was a girl. Cartoonists started to depict families of four (father, mother, son, and daughter) more often during the 1980s. However, it is worth noting that a boy child was almost always the first child born in a comic strip family (i.e., *Hi, Attuko-desu*, *Asattute-kun*, and *Fuji Santaro*). Interestingly enough, this is also the ideal form of Japanese family structure. Japanese society emphasizes the value of male children who maintain their family names for posterity, unlike female children who eventually leave their original families when they marry and change their family names to their husbands'.

FATHERS AND MOTHERS OUTSIDE THE HOME OR READING OR SLEEPING

Table 5 shows the percentage of fathers and mothers depicted outside the home (except going to restaurant); reading a newspaper, magazine or book; or sleeping.

LaRossa et al. (2001) suggested that engaging in such activities would represent a comic strip father's or mother's independence, intellectual curiosity, or leisure time.

Overall, fathers were portrayed outside the home 38.3 percent of the time, while

mothers were outside the home in 28.5 percent of the comic strips. Although comic strip fathers were more likely in general to be depicted outside the home than mothers, one noticeable change occurred in the early 1970s, during which mothers were more likely to be portrayed outside the home than fathers. This is the time period, according to Matsui (1990) that the women's social movement occurred in Japan. Therefore, I carefully examined storylines to see whether mothers were outside to seek independence. However, I found that they were shopping for the holiday, gossiping in front of the house with neighbors, or taking a walk with family. Although many fathers were also depicted out of the home for shopping and playing sports with children, fathers were also occasionally pictured just coming back from work, which was not an option for mothers in the comics I analyzed. Thus, my examination suggests that comic strip mothers were not very liberated characters, even though calculation of my data analysis supports a fluctuated pattern of gender disparities in terms of being outside the home. Similar to my findings, LaRossa et al. (2001) discovered that comic strip fathers were more often depicted outside the home than mothers (33.4 percent vs. 23.9 percent). When fathers were outside, they were shown in the yard, at the golf course or at the playground. On the other hand, when mothers were outside, they were either in a pub, theater, or in front of the house with family members. In general, fathers in both countries were outside the home more often than mothers; however, a closer look suggested that American comic mothers were shown as more liberated because they went to public places such as a pub or theater, while Japanese mothers outside the home were gossiping with neighbors or walking with

the children.

The second and third row in Table 5 represents the percentage of fathers and mothers who were shown reading a newspaper, magazine or book. Overall, 14.4 percent of fathers and 0.5 percent of mothers were reading a newspaper. This is similar to the findings of LaRossa, et al. (2001), who found only 10.5 percent of fathers and 3.3 percent of mothers reading a newspaper. Next, Japanese comic strip fathers and mothers were depicted reading a magazine or book very infrequently: 1.8 percent of fathers and 3.0 percent of mothers. Although slightly more mothers than fathers were reading magazine or book, many half-decades have zero occurrences of mothers and fathers reading a magazine or book. Likewise, LaRossa et al. (2001) discovered that mothers (3.1 percent) were about as likely as fathers (2.2 percent) to be reading magazine or book in American comic strips.

The fourth row in Table 5 represents how often fathers and mothers were portrayed sleeping. Since the futon is popular among the Japanese, I added it to the list LaRossa et al. (2001) had created (which included bed, couch, chair, and hammock). Although the sofa seems a typical napping spot for people who live in America, having a big couch on which one can lie down is a privilege for many Japanese families because of limited housing space. The couch is imported from Western culture, so it sometimes contradicts with the Japanese *tatami* room. Therefore, if a father or mother was sleeping in a comic strip, it was almost always on a futon. Overall, 6.0 percent of fathers and 5.8 percent of mothers were sleeping. This shows gender parity. LaRossa et al. (2001)

reported 10.2 percent of the fathers and 7.1 percent of the mothers sleeping in U.S. comics. The fathers and mothers in Japanese comic strips were not shown to be sleeping at all from the late 1950s to early 1970s. This is an interesting pattern because the Japanese economy started to prosper during this time and fathers were supposed to be working very hard, as the slogan “A father is most appreciated when he is healthy and out of the home” suggested. At the same time, women were expected to be a good wives and wise mothers. Therefore, napping was not an option for either father or mother even on Father’s Day or Mother’s Day, especially during these periods.

LaRossa et al. (2001) hypothesized that the amount of sleeping in U.S. comics would have been higher if they had expanded their sample to beyond Father’s Day and Mother’s Day, because children in the comics sometimes stopped fathers and mothers from taking a nap to do something special. However, I hypothesize that the percentage of those sleeping in Japanese comics would have been *lower* if I had expanded my sample and included comic strips published on days other than holidays because Japanese comic strip children/spouses sometimes let their parents/partner sleep on Father’s Day and Mother’s Day. For example, the father and two children in *Asatte-kun* decide to go out on Mother’s Day, so that mother could take a nap. The mother mutters, “Taking a nap is my routine after I send my husband and children off to work and school,” with wry smile at the end of the story line. In another comic, *Gutara Mama*, mother and son brought three meals and a Father’s Day present to the side of father’s futon, so that the father could take a rest all day long.

FATHERS AND MOTHERS WEARING A KITCHEN APRON OR DOING FEMININE HOUSEHOLD CHORES

Table 6 shows a summary of the percentages of mothers and fathers wearing a kitchen apron or doing traditionally feminine household chores. Overall, 9.6 percent of fathers and 17.9 percent of mothers were wearing a kitchen apron. Although 16.7 percent of comic strip fathers in the early 1950s and late 1950s were in a kitchen apron, no fathers during the early 1960s to early 1970s wore an apron. After that, the percentage suddenly jumped in the late 1970s to 17.6 percent; however, it gradually declined until it reached 0 percent again in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The percentage of comic strip mothers wearing an apron was highest in the early 1950s (63.6 percent) and the percentages remained stable (about 30 percent) from the late 1950s to early 1970s. Mothers were less likely to be wearing a kitchen apron from the late 1970s to late 1990s; however, the numbers increased to 20.8 percent in the early 2000s.

LaRossa et al. (2001) also found a similar pattern in that American comic strip mothers were more likely than fathers to be wearing a kitchen apron (8.7 percent vs. 1.9 percent). In addition, they noted declining percentages of mothers wearing an apron, which I likewise discovered in my analysis. Whereas American comic strip fathers were seldom associated with a kitchen apron, the highest level of occurrences being in the late 1960s (10.5 percent), I found that Japanese comic strip fathers occasionally wore a kitchen apron.

As for the percentages of fathers and mothers engaging in traditionally feminine

household chores, 15.0 percent of fathers and 18.8 percent of mothers were depicted doing these chores. Mothers in the early 1950s were the most likely to be doing housework (81.8 percent). Although the percentages of mothers cooking or cleaning decreased after that, mothers were still doing more chores than fathers during the post-war period.

A sudden change occurred, however, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, during which time neither mother nor father engaged in any household chores. In the late 1970s, the percentage of fathers engaging in cooking or cleaning jumped to 29.4 percent, the highest overall. Percentages slowly decreased after this point. The percentage of mothers depicted as engaging in feminine household chores also increased in the late 1970 but only from zero to 5.9 percent. Unlike fathers, the percentages of mothers from the late 1970s to the early 2000 showed fluctuation; yet, mothers were more likely to be pictured doing housework than fathers from the early 1990s to the early 2000s.

Overall, LaRossa et al. (2001) reported that 8.3 percent of fathers and 19.1 percent of mothers were shown doing feminine household chores. Although my results also suggested that mothers were more likely to be cleaning and cooking than fathers, American comic strip mothers were conducting such activities two times more than fathers. Additionally, LaRossa et al. mentioned declining percentages of mothers engaged in household chores over the years, and further noted that the patterns of fathers' involvement in such activities stayed the same. This pattern is dissimilar to my results, which showed the percentage of Japanese comic strip fathers doing feminine household

chores as large during some half-decades (in the late 1970s and early and late 1980s) and the percentages of mothers' participation in such activities fluctuating over years.

LaRossa et al. (2001) compared their findings on traditionally feminine household chores with their findings on nurturing and supportive parenting behavior (reported in LaRossa, Jaret, Gadgil, and Wynn 2000) and suggested that “men in Mother’s Day and Father’s Day comic strips were less likely to perform housework than child care; and that over time, men were less likely to increase their share of household labor than their share of parenting labor” (pp. 709, - 711). My analysis also indicated a similar pattern of Japanese comic strip fathers being nurturing and supportive parents over the years, while their engagement in household chores was less likely to be displayed.

PATRIARCHAL GENDER DISPARITIES

Similar to LaRossa et al. (2001), I tried to understand how cartoonists depicted fathers and mothers in Father’s Day and Mother’s Day comic strips and what the gender disparity patterns in Japanese comic strips were from 1950 to 2004 by summarizing several activities (whether father/mother is depicted as being outside the home, reading, sleeping, wearing a kitchen apron, doing traditionally feminine household chores). The results of their combined analysis are now used to report a set of gender disparity scores, using the same strategy as LaRossa et al. (2001).

The first row in Table 7 shows the calculation of the gender differences related to a specific set of behaviors (Who is outside the home? Who is reading a newspaper? Who

is reading a magazine or book? Who is sleeping?). Then, for the second row in Table 7, I calculated gender differences, based on a second set of behaviors (Who is wearing a kitchen apron? Who is performing traditionally feminine household chores?). Finally, I combined the numbers of the two sums to create a set of gender disparity scores. A plus sign means, in general, the comic strips favored fathers; conversely, a negative sign means, in general, the comic strips favored mothers. The larger positive numbers indicate higher occurrences of *patriarchal* gender disparities in a specific half-decade.

LaRossa et al. (2001) pointed out that they chose not to include the question whether fathers, mothers, sons, or daughters were pictured or referenced in this final calculation. Their reasoning was two-fold: (1) they believed the visibility of fathers and mothers in the comic strip sample was primarily related to the fact that the comics were published on Mother's Day and Father's Day; and (2) the visibility of sons and daughters seemed irrelevant because the study was about mothers and fathers. Therefore, I also eliminated this specific question from my final calculation of gender disparities.

The bottom of Table 7 represents the summary of patriarchal gender disparities in Japanese comic strips published on Mother's Day and Father's Day from 1950 to 2004. I also created Figure 1 to graphically show the gender disparities created in Father's Day and Mother's Day comic strips. The X-axis indicates each half decade and the Y-axis shows the differences between father's and mother's scores for a specific half-decade. A bar in the positive suggests that the comic strips generally favored fathers and a bar in the negative asserts that comic strips generally favored mothers.

Fig. 1 shows that gender disparities in Japanese comic strips have fluctuated over the years. The patriarchal disparity score was at its highest in the early 1950s (134.7). Although patriarchal gender disparity scores generally decreased in the late 1950s (59.0), and early 1960s (69.1), the gaps were still large compared to later years. The sign of scores reversed in the early 1970s (-0.1) and late 1970s (-17.6). The score positively increased in the early 1980s (36.8), and narrowed in the late 1980s (0.2) and early 1990s (23.1). In the late 1990s, the score jumped to 51.8 but decreased again in the early 2000s to 36.7.

To compare gender disparity patterns in comic strips published on Father's Day and Mother's Day between Japan and the United States, I reproduced the figure that LaRossa et al. (2001) created, placing my scores along side theirs (see Figure 1). They also found fluctuating patterns of patriarchal gender disparities. For instance, although American cartoonists favorably depicted fathers during the post-war period, the gap was the greatest in the late 1950s. Gender disparity differences kept decreasing for the next three decades: in the early 1960s (52.3), late 1960s (36.1), and early 1970s (13.4). Then percentages jumped again in the late 1970s (48.0) and late 1970s (45.4); however, the pattern reversed in the late 1980s (-4.2). In the early and late 1990s, cartoonists again depicted fathers more favorably than mothers (both scores were 28.7 percent).

LaRossa et al. (2001) said, "The fact that Mother's Day and Father's Day comic strips published from 1945 to 1965 were the most patriarchal is not a shock" because of "a substantial body of research documenting the prevalence of misogynist attitudes

during this period in U.S. history” (p. 714). My analysis also shows that Japanese comic strips were the most patriarchal during the postwar period. Although popular appearances of the comic strips *Sazae-san* and *Kuri-chan* — stories of traditional families with a patriarchal father, housewife mother, and children — may be influencing the percentage of patriarchal gender disparities, these gender roles also represented a well-known pattern at the time. For instance, the traditional fathers’ image was somewhat unpredictable and fearful, as represented by “Earthquake, thunder, fire and father” in the 1950s, and mothers were expected to be a “good wife and wise mother.” Just as LaRossa et al. (2001) reported for postwar United States, misogynist attitudes were prevalent in postwar Japan.

Another similarity is that feminist movements may have influenced Father’s Day and Mother’s Day comic strips published in both Japan and the United States, even though the timing and context of the feminist movements were not exactly the same in the two countries. Fig. 1 indicates that cartoonists depicted Japanese comic strip mothers more favorably than fathers in the 1970s. According to Matsui (1990), Japan experienced many social movements from 1965 to 1980. The author argued that the Japanese feminist movement in the 1970s was based on the American feminist movement, which emphasized women’s oppression in society; as a result, the movement was more vocal than previous feminist movements, which had focused on the development of roles for women. There is a good likelihood that cartoonists were aware of the societal change and reflected this in the fathers’ and mothers’ characters.

As LaRossa et al. (2001) discussed, it is important to note that my discussion is about incidents in comic strips. Researchers who study different cultural objects may produce different findings. For instance, Muramatsu (2002) examined women characters in television dramas in 1970s and reported that many of the characters were home-oriented. In addition, producers reinforced the theme that women can be happy as long as they are at home by depicting women struggling in the workplace. The study focused on women's power struggle within the public and private spheres and emphasized the Japanese patriarchal system, but what about women's power within the domestic sphere? For example, wives' wishes produced the popular slogan "A husband is most appreciated when they are healthy and out of the home." The phrase not only suggests the fathers' role should be the healthy breadwinner, but also implies that wives gained the power to say that they are happier if they do not have to take care of their husbands. It is quite a contrast to the previous image of "good wife and wise mother."

Finally, Fig. 1 shows fluctuating gender disparity patterns from the early 1980s to early 2000s, which may relate to various social changes in Japan. For instance, Japanese economic prosperity did not last long and started to decline in 1990s. At the same time, the country established new laws during this period: equal employment opportunities for men and women in 1986 (Tanaka 1990) and paternity leave in 1992 (Lamb 2000). In addition, Japanese media promoted ideas, such as *hikon jidai* ("age of non-marriage") in the mid 1980s (Hirota 2004) and *Makeinu* ("loser dog") in the early 2000s (Sakai 2003). According to Hirota, the term *hikon jidai* was created in response to the delay of and

decrease in marriage among Japanese women. Sakai also spread the term *Makeinu*, which suggests that Japanese society still sees women in their 30s without husbands as losers. Takeda (2003) also discussed how families in the 1990s were linked with various social problems, such as declining birth rates, delaying marriage, aging society, child abuse, and domestic violence. Although postwar traditional families also had problems, all of the examples above suggest that the modern Japanese family and gender issues are much more complicated than they were before.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Based on the studies of LaRossa, Jaret, Gadgil, and Wynn (2000, 2001), which examined 495 American comic strips published on Father's Day and Mother's Day from 1940 to 1999 to acknowledge how the culture of fatherhood had changed and how gender disparities were reinforced in the United States, I conducted a study of 246 comic strips published on the same holidays in Japan from 1950 to 2004. Although the primary goal of my study was to find out whether the culture of Japanese fatherhood has changed and whether Japanese comic strips reproduced gender disparities, I also was interested in similarities and differences between comic strips published in Japan and the United States.

LaRossa et al. (2000) said that fluctuation characterizes the culture of fatherhood. My analysis also uncovered fluctuating patterns. One noticeable finding is that Japanese comic strip fathers since 1990s were more likely than comic strip fathers in previous decades to be involved in nurturing and supportive behaviors, which suggests that Japan finally recognized "New Fatherhood" in the 1990s, compared to the United States where it had already been talked about many decades before — as early as the 1920s and 1930s (LaRossa, 1997; LaRossa, Gordon, Wilson, Bairan, and Jaret 1991). It is an interesting comparison because both are industrial countries. Japan adopted many aspects of Western lifestyles, but it seems that the Japanese kept their own family values for a long time rather than assimilating Western values. This research made me wonder why it took the Japanese so long to discover "New Fatherhood." Analyzing other cultural objects, such as

popular magazines or radio shows, would contribute to a deeper understanding of the Japanese culture of fatherhood. There, one may not find a similar pattern of fluctuation. Yet, a wider range of objects would provide more detail into how specific sociopolitical events influenced the changing culture of fatherhood in Japan.

Although many cultural sociologists have shown the importance of studying comic strips, clarifying the limitation of the research is necessary. To deeply understand a cultural object such as a comic strip, Griswold (1994) emphasized that researchers need to acknowledge the cultural diamond; that is the relationship among social world, creator, recipient, and cultural object. LaRossa et al. (2000, 2001) suggested that interviewing cartoonists and audiences would contribute to an understanding of how three of the points (creator, receiver, and cultural object) influence one another. In addition, both my study and theirs introduce events to give insight into the social world at a given time and show how historical occurrences relate to cartoonists (creators), audiences (recipients), and comics (cultural object). Although I acknowledge that my study is about cultural objects and not about cultural creators or audiences and the complicated process of societal events, I have tried to offer a credible interpretation of the linkage.

Conducting cross-national analysis can be tricky because researchers cannot be sure that diverse countries ascribe the same meanings to cultural objects. When I compared my results with the results of LaRossa et al. (2000, 2001), I discovered two main similarities. First, ideas about fathers and mothers in both countries were very patriarchal during the postwar period. Second, feminist movements were an important

influence on comic strips, in both Japan and the United States. Similar to LaRossa et al. (2000, 2001), my research would be more in-depth, if I had conducted interviews with cartoonists and readers. Future research ideally would investigate how comics are produced and interpreted. Finally, it appears from my research that Japan and the United States do not always share the same sense of humor because of cultural and language differences. A qualitative analysis of Japanese and American comic strips, with the goal of examining how each country used pictures and dialogues to construct humor, would be an exciting project.

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TABLES AND FIGURE

TABLE 1: Number of Comics That Explicitly Mentioned or Implicitly Alluded to Father's Day or Mother's Day, 1950-2004

	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90-94	95-99	00-04	totals
Father's Day	0	0	6	5	3	7	13	15	11	12	7	79
Mother's Day	5	7	13	6	1	5	11	17	12	10	9	96
Difference	-5	-7	-7	-1	+2	+2	+2	-2	-1	+2	-2	-17

TABLE 2: Percentage of Fathers and Mothers Depicted as Incompetent and Mocked, 1950-2004

	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90-94	95-99	00-04	totals
Incompetent												
Fathers	0	33.3	70.0	15.4	33.3	23.5	31.6	26.7	28.6	18.2	25.0	26.9
Mothers	9.1	0	9.1	0	0	29.4	20.8	21.2	20.0	29.6	16.7	17.9
Difference	-9.1	33.3	60.9	15.4	33.3	-5.9	10.8	5.5	8.6	-11.4	8.3	9.0
Mocked												
Fathers	33.3	33.3	60.0	69.2	66.7	52.9	63.2	50.0	33.3	59.1	45.0	51.5
Mothers	36.4	15.4	13.6	12.5	33.3	58.8	37.5	39.4	52.0	44.4	29.2	36.2
Difference	-3.1	17.9	46.4	56.7	33.4	-5.9	25.7	10.6	-18.7	14.7	15.8	15.3
Ns												
Fathers Pic/Ref	6	6	10	13	3	17	19	30	21	22	20	167
Mothers Pic/Ref	11	13	22	8	3	17	24	33	25	27	24	207
Difference	-5	-7	-12	+5	0	0	-5	-3	-4	-5	-4	-40

TABLE 3: Percentage of Fathers and Mothers Shown to be Nurturant and Supportive Parents in Comics Explicitly Mentioning or Implicitly Alluding to Father's Day or Mother's Day, or Having Fatherhood, Motherhood, or Parenthood as a Theme, 1950-2004

	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90-94	95-99	00-04	total
Nurturant and Supportive Parenting Behavior I												
Fathers	16.7	50.0	30.0	23.1	0	23.5	21.1	23.3	38.1	40.9	35.0	29.3
Mothers	36.4	38.5	22.7	0	33.3	11.8	16.7	45.5	28.0	40.7	12.5	27.5
Difference	-19.7	11.5	7.3	23.1	-33.3	11.7	4.4	-22.2	10.1	0.2	22.5	1.8
Nurturant and Supportive Parenting Behavior II												
Fathers	33.3	50.0	40.0	38.5	0	35.3	21.1	23.3	42.9	45.5	45.0	35.3
Mothers	36.4	38.5	27.3	0	33.3	17.6	20.8	51.5	32.0	40.7	12.5	30.4
Difference	-3.1	11.5	12.7	38.5	-33.3	17.7	0.3	-28.2	10.9	4.8	32.5	4.9
Ns												
Fathers Pic/Ref	6	6	10	13	3	17	19	30	21	22	20	167
Mothers Pic/Ref	11	13	22	8	3	17	24	33	25	27	24	207
Difference	-5	-7	-12	+5	0	0	-5	-3	-4	-5	-4	-40

TABLE 4: Percentage of Comics That Pictured or Referenced Fathers, Mothers, Sons, and Daughters, 1950-2004

	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90-94	95-99	00-04	totals
Fathers	46.2	40.0	38.5	72.2	75.0	85.0	67.9	81.1	77.8	68.9	76.9	67.9
Mothers	84.6	86.7	84.6	44.4	75.0	85.0	85.7	89.2	92.6	84.4	92.3	84.1
Differences	-38.4	-46.7	-46.1	27.8	0	0	-17.8	-8.1	-14.8	-15.5	-15.4	-16.2
Sons	84.6	100.0	80.8	83.3	100.0	100.0	82.1	83.8	81.5	78.1	69.2	83.3
Daughters	38.5	13.3	30.8	33.3	25.0	35.0	46.4	48.6	51.9	56.3	50.0	42.7
Differences	46.1	86.7	50.0	50.0	75.0	65.0	35.7	35.2	29.6	21.8	19.2	40.6
Ns	13	15	26	18	4	20	28	37	27	32	26	246

TABLE 5: Percentage of Fathers and Mothers Depicted Outside the Home (Excluding going to a Restaurant), Reading a Newspaper, Reading a Magazine or Non-children's Book, or Sleeping, 1950-2004

	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90-94	95-99	00-04	totals
Outside Home												
Fathers	33.3	66.7	50.0	53.8	33.3	58.8	31.6	13.3	38.1	40.9	40.0	38.3
Mothers	9.1	53.8	40.9	37.5	66.7	29.4	29.2	9.1	24.0	29.6	33.3	28.5
Difference	24.2	12.9	9.1	16.3	-33.4	29.4	2.4	4.2	14.1	12.3	6.7	9.8
Reading Newspaper												
Fathers	16.7	33.3	10.0	0	0	0	31.6	23.3	14.3	18.2	0	14.4
Mothers	0	0	0	0	0	5.9	0	0	0	0	0	0.5
Difference	16.7	33.3	10.0	0	0	-5.9	31.6	23.3	14.3	18.2	0	13.9
Reading Magazine or Book												
Fathers	0	0	10.0	7.7	0	0	0	3.3	0	0	0	1.8
Mothers	0	0	0	0	0	11.8	5.3	6.7	0	0	0	3.0
Difference	0	0	10.0	7.7	0	-11.8	-5.3	-3.4	0	0	0	-1.2
Sleeping												
Fathers	0	0	0	0	0	11.8	15.8	6.7	0	4.5	10.0	6.0
Mothers	18.2	0	0	0	0	11.8	8.3	3.0	12.0	0	8.3	5.8
Difference	-18.2	0	0	0	0	0	7.5	3.7	-12.0	4.5	1.7	0.2
Ns												
Fathers pic/ref	6	6	10	13	3	17	19	30	21	22	20	167
Mothers pic/ref	11	13	22	8	3	17	24	33	25	27	24	207

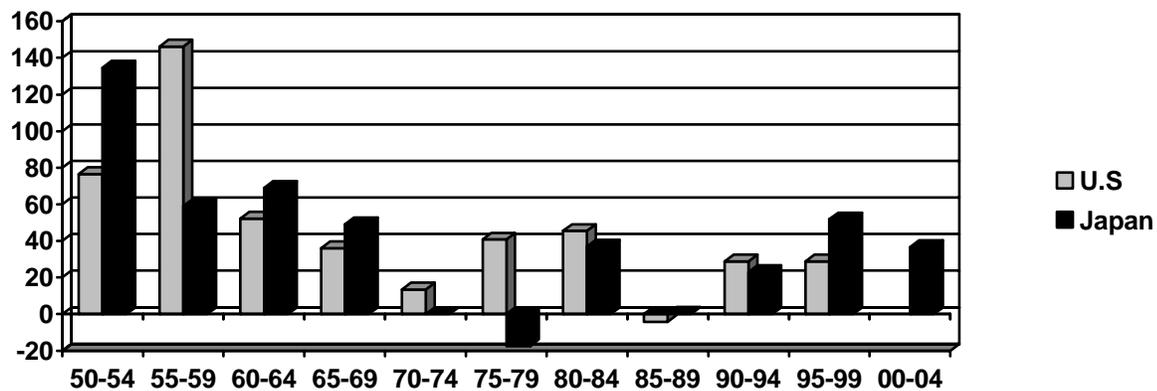
TABLE 6: Percentage of Fathers and Mothers Depicted Wearing a Kitchen Apron or Doing Traditionally Feminine Household Chores, 1950-2004

	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90-94	95-99	00-04	totals
Wearing a Kitchen Apron												
Fathers	16.7	16.7	0	0	0	17.6	15.8	16.7	14.3	0	0	9.6
Mothers	63.6	23.1	27.3	25.0	33.3	11.8	12.5	6.1	16.0	7.4	20.8	17.9
Difference	-46.9	-6.4	-27.3	-25.0	-33.3	5.8	3.3	10.6	-1.7	-7.4	-20.8	-8.3
Doing Traditionally Feminine Household Chores												
Fathers	16.7	16.7	10.0	0	0	29.4	21.1	20.0	19.0	9.1	5.0	15.0
Mothers	81.8	23.1	22.7	0	0	5.9	25.0	3.0	24.0	18.5	12.5	18.8
Difference	-65.1	-6.4	-12.7	0	0	23.5	-3.9	17.0	-5.0	-9.4	-7.5	-3.8
Ns												
Father pic/ref	6	6	10	13	3	17	19	30	21	22	20	167
Mother pic/ref	11	13	22	8	3	17	24	33	25	27	24	207

TABLE 7: Sums of Gender Differences in Father's Day and Mother's Day Comic Strips in Japan, 1950-2004

	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90-94	95-99	00-04	totals
Table 5. Differences												
Outside Home Difference	24.2	12.9	9.1	16.3	-33.4	29.4	2.4	4.2	14.1	12.3	6.7	9.8
Reading Newspaper Difference	16.7	33.3	10.0	0	0	-5.9	31.6	23.3	14.3	18.2	0	13.9
Reading Magazine/Book Difference	0	0	10.0	7.7	0	-11.8	-5.3	-3.4	0	0	0	-1.2
Sleeping Difference	-18.2	0	0	0	0	0	7.5	3.7	-12.0	4.5	1.7	0.2
Sum of Differences	22.7	46.2	29.1	24.0	-33.4	11.7	36.2	27.8	16.4	35.0	8.4	22.7
Table 6. Differences												
Wearing Apron Difference	-46.9	-6.4	-27.3	-25.0	-33.3	5.8	3.3	10.6	-1.7	-7.4	-20.8	-8.3
Traditionally Feminine Household Chore Difference	-65.1	-6.4	-12.7	0	0	23.5	-3.9	17.0	-5.0	-9.4	-7.5	-3.8
Sum of Differences	-112.0	-12.8	-40.0	-25.0	-33.3	29.3	-0.6	27.6	-6.7	-16.8	-28.3	-12.1
Patriarchal Gender Disparities												
Table 5. Sums	22.7	46.2	29.1	24.0	-33.4	11.7	36.2	27.8	16.4	35.0	8.4	22.7
Table 6. Sums (sign reversed)	112	12.8	40.0	25.0	33.3	-29.3	0.6	-27.6	6.7	16.8	28.3	12.1
Total Sums	134.7	59.0	69.1	49.0	-0.1	-17.6	36.8	0.2	23.1	51.8	36.7	34.8

Fig 1. Patriarchal Gender Disparities in Father's Day and Mother's Day Comic Strips in Japan and the United States, 1950-2004



APPENDIX: CODE SHEET

COMIC STRIP # _____ CODER'S INITIALS _____

1. Comic strip # _____
2. Location (Coders: Don't code)
 - 1 Asahi Shinbun
 - 2 Mainichi Shinbun
 - 3 Yomiuri Shinbun
 - 4 Chunichi Shinbun
 - 5 Other (Specify: _____)
3. Year published (4 digits) (Coders: Don't code) _____
4. Published on Father's Day or Mother's Day? (Coders: Don't code)
 - 1 Father's Day
 - 2 Mother's Day
 - 3 Other (Specify holiday or date) _____
 - 9 Don't know
5. Is Father's Day or Mother's Day explicitly mentioned in the comic?
 - 01 Father's Day (FD) is explicitly mentioned
 - 02 Mother's Day (MD) is explicitly mentioned
 - 03 Both MD and FD are explicitly mentioned
 - 04 FD is not explicitly mentioned, but FD is implicitly the theme of the comic
 - 05 MD is not explicitly mentioned, but MD is implicitly the theme of the comic
 - 06 FD and MD are not explicitly mentioned, but both FD and MD are implicitly the theme of the comic
 - 07 FD is not explicitly mentioned, nor is it implicitly the theme of the comic, but fatherhood or fathering is the theme of the comic
 - 08 MD is not explicitly mentioned, nor is it implicitly the theme of the comic, but motherhood or mothering is the theme of the comic
 - 09 Neither FD nor MD is explicitly mentioned, nor is either implicitly the theme of the comic, but fatherhood and motherhood or fathering and mothering are the theme of the comic
 - 99 Don't know (Bring to Dr. LaRossa's attention)

6. Title of the comic (See separate code sheet) _____

7. Gender of cartoonist (Coders: Don't code)

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | Male |
| 2 | Female |
| 3 | Male coauthors |
| 4 | Female coauthors |
| 5 | Male and female coauthors |
| 9 | Don't know |

Questions # 8 through # 21 ask who is pictured or referenced in comic.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 0 | Not pictured in comic and not referenced in comic |
| 1 | Pictured in comic, human |
| 2 | Pictured in comic, animal |
| 3 | Pictured in comic, pictured as "other"
(Specify: _____) |
| 4 | Not pictured in comic but referenced, human |
| 5 | Not pictured in comic but referenced, animal |
| 6 | Not pictured in comic but referenced, pictured as "other"
(Specify: _____) |
| 9 | Don't know |

8. _____ Father(s)

9. _____ Mother(s)

10. _____ Son(s)

11. _____ Daughter(s)

12. _____ Fraternal grandfather

13. _____ Maternal grandfather

14. _____ Grandfather (Fraternal vs. maternal not specified or clear)

15. _____ Fraternal grandmother

16. _____ Maternal grandmother
17. _____ Grandmother (Fraternal vs. maternal not specified or clear)
18. _____ Grandson(s)
19. _____ Granddaughter(s)
20. _____ Other relative(s) (Specify: _____)
21. _____ Other non-relative(s) (Specify: _____)
22. What is the form of household for the central family of the comic?
- 1 Nuclear household (The couple is expecting a baby or the couple has child/ren)
 - 2 Two-generation household (Adult couple and their parents)
 - 3 Three-generation household (Grandparents, parents, and child/ren)
 - 4 Other (Specify: _____)
23. Who is the central father or mother in the comic?
- 1 Father
 - 2 Mother
 - 3 Fraternal grandfather
 - 4 Maternal grandfather
 - 5 Grandfather (Fraternal vs. maternal not specified or clear)
 - 6 Fraternal grandmother
 - 7 Maternal grandmother
 - 8 Grandmother (Fraternal vs. maternal not specified or clear)
 - 9 Other (Specify : _____)
24. What is the Father's Day or Mother's Day gift offered in the comic? Be very descriptive. If there are multiple gifts, list them. (Note: A gift can be tangible, such as a sweater or tickets to an event, or it can be a service such as breakfast in bed or such as "free time" away from the kids, it can be message of affection such as a letter or greeting card. If the concept of a gift is not central to the comic, write "Not applicable" or simply "NA." If the concept of a gift is central to the comic, but you can't tell what the gift is, write "Don't know" or simply "DK.")

25. Does this comic make a deliberate point to mock anyone in particular or in general?
(Mock: ridicule, belittle, deride, humiliate, insult, lampoon, pock fun at, make fun of, make fool of)

- 00 No
- 01 Mocks the FD/MD/Central father
- 02 Mocks the FD/MD/Central mother
- 03 Mocks the child/ren of FD/MD/Central father or mother
- 04 Mocks fathers or fatherhood in general
- 05 Mocks mothers or motherhood in general
- 06 Mocks parents or parenthood in general
- 07 Mocks men or manhood in general
- 08 Mocks women or womanhood in general
- 09 Mocks humans or humanhood in general
- 10 Mocks children or childhood in general
- 11 Mocks other in particular (Specify: _____)
- 12 Mocks other in general (Specify: _____)
- 13 Mocks both father and mother
- 14 Mocks father and child/ren
- 15 Mocks mother and child/ren
- 16 Mocks father, mother, and child/ren
- 99 Don't know

Questions #26 through #53 ask about the FD/MD father or grandfather or central father or grandfather. (Note: The “FD/MD father/grandfather” is the Father’s Day father/grandfather or the male spouse or partner of the Mother’s Day mother/grandmother. The “central father or grandfather” is the father or grandfather who is most central to the comic. The central father or grandfather would be the focus of these questions only if there was no FD/MD father or grandfather.)

Is the FD/MD/Central father or grandfather in this comic (whether he is pictured in the comic or not) enacting any of the following activities? If so, is he depicted as competent or incompetent in the activity? **The activity must be performed in a comic.**

- 0 Not applicable (FD/MD/Central father is not in the comic and no reference is made to him or about him)
- 1 Activity not enacted (FD/MD/Central father is in the comic or referenced in the comic, but is not involved in the activity)
- 2 Incompetent (FD/MD/Central father is in comic or is referenced in comic, and he is depicted as incompetent on this particular issue; to be judged “incompetent” on an issue, the father must be depicted as either ignorant, inadequate, incapable, ineffectual, inefficient, inept, stupid, unable, unfit, or weak)
- 3 Activity enacted competently or enacted in such a way that competence or incompetence is not an issue (FD/MD/Central father is in the comic or referenced in the comic, is involved in the activity, and is competent in his performance or the question of competence or incompetence is not relevant in this particular activity)
- 9 Don’t know

26. _____ Serves or cares for infant (Birth through 11 months)
27. _____ Serves or cares for child/ren (“Child/ren” hereafter means any child/ren more than 12 months old)
28. _____ Verbally or physically expresses affection toward child/ren
29. _____ Neglects child/ren
30. _____ Verbally encourages child/ren during a task or activity
31. _____ Praises child/ren for a completed task or activity or for a “job well done”
32. _____ Comforts child/ren or asks child/ren about feelings and thoughts
33. _____ Listens to child’s or children’s problems
34. _____ Purposefully teaches child/ren
35. _____ Non-physically disciplines or punishes child/ren (Includes chastising, disapproving, imposing “time-out” in the corner, having child/ren do chores as payment for an “offense,” laying down “the law”)
36. _____ Physically disciplines or punishes child/ren (Includes spanking, slapping, paddling, etc.)
37. _____ Plays with child/ren
38. _____ Plays sports with child/ren
39. _____ Engages in “rough and tumble” play with child/ren (Includes rough housing, bouncing on a knee, spinning around, piggyback riding)
40. _____ Tries to be an “equal” or “peer pal” to child/ren (e.g., “getting down on child/ren’s level”)
41. _____ Performs paid work or alludes to paid work
42. _____ Gives money to a family member
43. _____ Does traditionally feminine household chores (“Traditionally feminine” household chores include cooking and cleaning)
44. _____ Does traditionally masculine household chores (“Traditionally masculine” household chores include mowing the lawn, working on the car, etc.)
45. _____ Does household chores that cannot be classified as traditionally feminine or traditionally masculine (e.g., gardening)
46. _____ Tries to show child/ren what it means to “be a man”
47. _____ Tries to show child/ren what it means to “be a woman”
48. _____ Engages in “positive” emotional interaction with spouse (e.g., comforting, hugging, kissing, asking about feelings and thoughts, verbally supportive or encouraging, etc.)
49. _____ Engages in “negative” emotional interaction with spouse (e.g., arguing or yelling)
50. _____ Physically abuses spouse (e.g., slapping, shoving, throwing things at spouse, using knife or gun, or threatening to do any of these things)
51. _____ Gives or is about to give Father’s Day or Mother’s Day gift(s)
52. _____ Receives or is about to receive Father’s Day or Mother’s Day gift(s)
53. _____ Other (Specify: _____)

Questions #54 through #81 ask about the FD/MD mother or grandmother or central mother or grandmother. (Note: The “FD/MD mother/grandmother” is the Mother’s Day mother/grandmother or the female spouse or partner of the Father’s Day or grandfather. The “central mother or grandmother” is the mother or grandmother who is most central to the comic. The central mother or grandmother would be the focus of these questions only if there were no FD/MD mother or grandmother.)

Is the FD/MD mother in this comic (Whether she is pictured in the comic or not) enacting any of the following activities? If so, is she depicted as competent or incompetent in the activity?

- 0 Not applicable (FD/MD/Central mother is not in the comic and no reference is made to her or about her)
- 1 Activity not enacted (FD/MD/Central mother is in the comic or referenced in the comic, but not involved in the activity)
- 2 Incompetent (FD/MD/Central mother is in the comic or is referenced in the comic, and she is depicted as incompetent on this particular issue; to be judged “incompetent” on an issue, the mother must be depicted as either ignorant, inadequate, incapable, ineffectual, inefficient, inept, stupid, unable, unfit, or weak)
- 3 Activity enacted completely or enacted in such a way that competence or incompetence is not an issue (FD/MD/Central mother is in the comic or referenced in the comic, is involved in the activity, and is competent in her performance or the question of competence or incompetence is not relevant on this particular activity)
- 9 Don’t know

54. _____ Serves or cares for infant (Birth to 11 months)
55. _____ Serves or cares for child/ren (“Child/ren” hereafter means any age child/ren more than 12 months old)
56. _____ Verbally or physically expresses affection toward child/ren
57. _____ Neglects child/ren
58. _____ Verbally encourages child/ren during a task or activity
59. _____ Praises child/ren for a completed task or activity or for a “job well done”
60. _____ Comforts child/ren or asks child/ren about feelings and thoughts
61. _____ Listens to child’s or children’s problems
62. _____ Purposefully teaches child/ren
63. _____ Non-physically disciplines or punishes child/ren (Includes chastising, disproving, imposing “time-outs” in the corner, having child/ren do chores as payment for an “offense,” laying down “the law”)
64. _____ Physically disciplines or punishes child/ren (Includes spanking, slapping, or paddling)
65. _____ Plays with child/ren
66. _____ Plays sports with child/ren
67. _____ Engages in “rough and tumble” play with child/ren (Includes rough housing, bouncing on a knee, spinning around, piggyback riding)
68. _____ Tries to be an “equal” or “peer pal” to child/ren (e.g., “getting down on child/ren’s level”)
69. _____ Performs paid work or alludes to paid work
70. _____ Gives money to a family member
71. _____ Does traditionally feminine household chores (“traditionally feminine” household chores include cooking and cleaning)
72. _____ Does traditionally masculine household chores (“traditionally masculine” household chores include mowing the lawn, working on the car, etc.)
73. _____ Does household chores that cannot be classified as traditionally feminine or traditionally masculine (e.g., gardening)
74. _____ Tries to show child/ren what it means to “be a man”
75. _____ Tries to show child/ren what it means to “be a woman”
76. _____ Engages in “positive” emotional interaction with spouse (e.g., comforting, hugging, kissing, asking about feeling and thoughts, verbally supportive or encouraging)
77. _____ Engages in “negative” emotional interaction with spouse (e.g., arguing, yelling)
78. _____ Physically abuses spouse (e.g., slapping, shoving, throwing things at spouse, using knife or gun or threatening to do any of these things)
79. _____ Gives or is about to give Father’s Day or Mother’s Day gift(s)
80. _____ Receives or is about to receive Father’s Day or Mother’s Day gift(s)
81. _____ Other (Specify: _____)

82. What is the FD/MD father's/grandfather's job?

- 0 Not Applicable (Not pictured in comic and not referenced in comic)
- 1 Class I. Evidence of chronic unemployment; reliance on welfare and/or food stamps
- 2 Class II. Employed in a blue-collar or working-class job (e.g., gas station attendant, plumber, truck driver, waitress, low-level sales)
- 3 Class III. Employed in a white-collar job or profession (e.g., accountant, mid-level sales, teacher, lawyer, physician)
- 4 Class IV. Members of the aristocracy
- 5 Homemaker
- 99 Don't know

83. What is the FD/MD mother's/grandmother's job?

- 0 Not applicable (Not pictured in comic and not referenced in comic)
- 1 Class I. Evidence of chronic unemployment; reliance on welfare and/or food stamps
- 2 Class II. Employed in a blue-collar or working-class job (e.g., gas station attendant, plumber, truck driver, waitress, low-level sales)
- 3 Class III. Employed in a white-collar job or profession (e.g., accountant, mid-level sales, teacher, lawyer, physician)
- 4 Class IV. Members of the aristocracy
- 5 Home maker
- 99 Don't know

84. What is the FD/MD father's/grandfather's home condition?

- 0 Not applicable (Not pictured in comic and not referenced in comic)
- 1 Class I. Meager food; furniture shows considerable signs of wear; wall and ceiling cracked or crumbled; does not own car, must depend solely on public transportation
- 2 Class II. Furniture and home functional but modest; may have one car, but it is not a late model
Or furniture, home, and meals indicate some affluence; owns at least one late-model car, maybe more
- 3 Class IV. Evidence of considerable wealth and affluence, very big home, very expensive car(s), possibly servants and chauffer
- 99 Don't know

85. What is the FD/MD mother's/grandmother's home condition?

- 0 Not applicable (Not pictured in comic and not referenced in comic)
- 1 Class I. Meager food; furniture shows considerable sign of wear; walls and ceiling cracked or crumbled; does not own car, must depend solely on public transportation
- 2 Class II. Furniture and home functional but modest; may have one car, but it is not a late model
Or furniture, home, and meals indicate some affluence; owns at least one late-model car, maybe more
- 3 Class IV. Evidence of considerable wealth and affluence, very big home, very expensive car(s), possibly servants and chauffer
- 99 Don't know

86. Is the FD/Central father/grandfather getting or giving a hug or kiss?

- 0 Not applicable (Not ever referenced)
- 1 Yes
- 2 No (But is pictured or referenced)

87. Is the MD/central mother/grandmother getting or giving a hug or kiss?

- 0 Not Applicable (Not ever referenced)
- 1 Yes
- 2 No (But is pictured or referenced)

88. Is the FD/MD/Central father in this comic (whether he is pictured or just referenced) shown or described as outside the home at any time during this strip? (Note: Shown on a stoop or porch does not qualify as “outside the home”; and the giving of a gift is not, by itself, evidence of being “outside the home”)

- 0 Not applicable (No father is pictured or referenced)
- 1 Yes (Father is coded outside the home for a reason other than just going out for a MD/FD meal)
- 2 No (Father remains at home or there is no clear evidence of his being outside the home)
- 3 Yes (Father is coded outside the home only because he is going out for a FD/MD meal)
- 9 Don't know

89. Is the FD/MD/Central mother in this comic (whether she is pictured or referenced) shown or described as outside the home at any time during this strip? (Note: Shown at a stoop or porch does not qualify as “outside the home;” and the giving of a gift is not, by itself, evidence of being “outside the home.”)

- 0 Not Applicable
- 1 Yes (Mother is coded outside the home for a reason other than just going out for a FD/MD meal)
- 2 No (Mother remains at home or there is no clear evidence of her being outside the home)
- 3 Yes (Mother is coded outside the home only because she is going out for a FD/MD meal)
- 9 Don't know

90. Is the FD/MD/Central father in this comic (whether he is pictured or referenced) shown or described as reading at any time during this strip?

- 00 Not applicable (No father is pictured or referenced)
- 01 Yes – Newspaper
- 02 Yes – Magazine
- 03 Yes – Children's book
- 04 Yes – Book other than a children's book
- 05 Yes – Homework
- 06 Yes – Sign or poster
- 07 Yes – Father's Day or Mother's Day card or message
- 08 Yes – Other (Specify: _____)
- 09 No (Father is not shown reading or there is no clear evidence of his reading)
- 99 Don't know

91. Is the FD/MD/Central mother in this comic (whether she is pictured or referenced) shown or described as reading at any time during this strip?

- 00 Not applicable (No mother is pictured or referenced)
- 01 Yes – Newspaper
- 02 Yes – Magazine
- 03 Yes – Children’s book
- 04 Yes – Book other than a children’s book
- 05 Yes – Homework
- 06 Yes – Sign or poster
- 07 Yes – Father’s Day or Mother’s Day card or message
- 08 Yes – Other (Specify: _____)
- 09 No (Mother is not shown reading or there is no clear evidence of her reading)
- 99 Don’t know

92. Is the FD/MD/Central father in this comic (whether he is pictured or referenced) shown or described as wearing an apron at any time during this strip?

- 0 Not applicable (No father is pictured or referenced)
- 1 Yes – Kitchen apron
- 2 Yes – Barbecue apron
- 3 Yes – Other apron (Specify: _____)
- 4 No (Father is not shown wearing an apron or there is no clear evidence of his wearing an apron)
- 9 Don’t know

93. Is the FD/MD/Central mother in this comic (whether she is pictured or referenced) shown or described as wearing an apron at any time during this strip?

- 0 Not applicable (No mother is pictured or referenced)
- 1 Yes – Kitchen apron
- 2 Yes – Barbecue apron
- 3 Yes – Other apron (Specify: _____)
- 4 No (Mother is not shown wearing an apron or there is no clear evidence of her wearing an apron)
- 9 Don't know

94. Is the FD/MD/Central father in this comic (whether he is pictured or referenced) shown or described as sleeping at any time during this strip?

- 0 Not applicable (No father is pictured or referenced)
- 1 Yes – Sleeping in bed
- 2 Yes – Sleeping on couch
- 3 Yes – Sleeping in chair
- 4 Yes – Sleeping in/on other (Specify: _____)
- 5 No (Father is not shown sleeping or there is no clear evidence of his sleeping)
- 9 Don't know

95. Is the FD/MD/Central mother in this comic (whether she is pictured or referenced) shown or described as sleeping at any time during this strip?

- 0 Not applicable (no mother is pictured or referenced)
- 1 Yes – Sleeping in bed
- 2 Yes – Sleeping on couch
- 3 Yes – Sleeping in chair
- 4 Yes – Sleeping in/on other (Specify: _____)
- 5 No (Mother is not shown sleeping or there is no clear evidence of her sleeping)
- 9 Don't know

96. Any other comments about the comic that you would like to make?

YEAR OF PUBLICATION: _____		FD	MD
01	Asattute-kun	22	Uchi no Bawaiwa
02	Big Boy Don-chan	23	Wagahai
03	Bonko-chan	—	_____
04	Brondy	—	_____
05	Dodemo Iikedo	—	_____
06	Fuji Santaro	—	_____
07	Fuku-cahn	—	_____
08	Gutara Mama		
09	Hai! Attuko desu		
10	Kiteretsu Kazoku		
11	Komori no Gattusho		
12	Kuri-chan		
13	Mattupira-kun		
14	Mr. Bo		
15	Nichiyo Papa		
16	Ouchi ga Ichiban		
17	Pe-suke		
18	Princess Mako-chan	Total Family: _____	
19	Samitto Gakuen	Total Non-Family: _____	
20	Sazae-san	Total: _____	

