Department of Language and Intercultural Education

“Crafting” Masculinity: Negotiating Masculine Identities in the Japanese Workplace

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ABSTRACT

Underlying the process by which Japan emerged as a global industrial power in the twentieth century was a particularly powerful ideology of gender and sexuality which equated masculinity with the public/work sphere and femininity with the private/household sphere. Within this ideological framework, the archetypal male citizen – indeed, the ‘ideal’ male citizen – over the post-World War Two decades came to be represented by the ‘salaryman’ (sarariiman, in Japanese). The term referred to permanent, predominantly white-collar, male private-sector employees, who were seen as being the foot-soldiers, the kigyō senshi (‘corporate warriors’) of Japan’s high-speed economic growth over the 1960s, 1970s, and even into the 1980s. Even after the slowing down of economic growth from the 1990s, the salaryman, and all that the discourse of masculinity built up around him represented, has continued to exert a powerful presence on the social landscape. This is despite the fact that, even at the high-point of economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s, only a minority of men would have fallen within the strictest definitional parameters of the term. However, it was the discourse associated with the salaryman – one infused with the gender ideology of the male breadwinner – that was far more extensive in its reach. In this respect the form of masculinity associated with the salaryman may be regarded as what R.W. Connell terms ‘hegemonic masculinity’.

This thesis explores the ways in which the discourse of salaryman masculinity became the hegemonic form of masculinity in Japan over the postwar decades, and the ways in which it continues to operate in present-day Japan. In exploring the dynamics at work, the thesis draws attention to the fact that rather than being some kind of immutable, biologically determined ‘given’, masculinity is a constantly shifting process. Indeed, rather than a single overarching masculinity, there are multiple masculinities at work. It is within the context of this matrix of masculinities that one particular form – the hegemonic masculinity – has the greatest ideological power. However hegemonic masculinity itself has to be constantly ‘crafted’ and ‘re-crafted’ through engagements
with other masculinities. This occurs both at the wider societal level, and at the level of the individual.

Consequently the discussion in this thesis is carried out at both the ‘macro’ societal level, and at the ‘micro’ level of the individual. The former level of analysis situates the emergence of the discourse of salaryman masculinity within the historical framework of Japan’s modernization and nation-building project, and also examines the ways in which socio-cultural spaces such as popular culture were, and continue to be, significant in the process. The second level of analysis explores the dynamics of the ‘crafting’ of hegemonic masculinity at the level of the individual male. The discussion draws upon intensive interviews carried out with young male employees of two private sector organizations, during an eighteen-month period of fieldwork. It explores the ways in which these informants negotiate with the ideological expectations of salaryman masculinity vis-à-vis their own masculine identities, expectations which encompass various aspects of their lives. The discussion at both the ‘macro’ and micro’ level of analysis reveals that the dynamics of ‘crafting’ masculinity, rather than being a tidy, easy-to-categorize process, are infused with ambiguity, contradictions, richness, and nuance. It is through these contradictions that the contours of hegemonic masculinity are shaped and re-shaped.
Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

Signed:

Date:
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STYLISTIC CONVENTIONS

The following conventions have been adopted in this thesis:

- Double quotation marks (""") are used when quoting directly from reference materials or when quoting the words of informants.
- Single quotation marks (‘’) are used for emphasis and to mark out specific words or phrases, or for quotes within direct quotes.
- Japanese names are listed in family name/first name order, except in instances where the individual her/himself uses a first name/family name order to refer to themselves.
- Extended vowels in Japanese are marked by a circumflex (as in ‘ō’), except in the case of an extended ‘i’ (as in ‘sarariiman’). Circumflexes are not used in the case of Japanese words commonly used in English (for instance, place names like ‘Tokyo’), and in names where the authors themselves have romanized their names without extended vowels.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

The ‘JTB-Man’

Societies and nations come to be associated with particular tropes in the global imagination. These associations may relate to specific symbols, landmarks, events, or cultural institutions and practices along lines not dissimilar to the all-too-familiar notion of the nation as an “imagined community”, suggested by Benedict Anderson. These tropes of nations may also be signified by particular types of citizens collectively embodied in a particular figure; thus we get stereotypes such as the figure of the shrouded, veiled woman signifying Middle Eastern/Islamic womanhood in its entirety, or the figure of the bronzed, blonde-haired surfer/lifesaver/AFL footballer acting as a metonym for Australian masculinity. While such embodied stereotypes of nations and cultures are extensively criticized and/or caricatured, both in popular culture and within academic discourse, they do exert a powerful influence on the collective imaginings of nations and societies.

In the case of Japan, a particular figure has come to be associated with Japan’s transformation from a war-devastated society in the years following defeat in World War Two to the world’s second largest economy within a period of three decades, and with the subsequent ‘souring’ of this economic success story since the 1990s. This figure has been that of the ‘salaryman’ (or, in Japanese, sarariman), the sober, besuited, white-collar office-worker/business executive, who works for an organization that offers such benefits as secure lifetime employment guarantee for permanent employees, and a promotions and salary-scale linked to seniority within the organization (Miller 1995: 20). Typically, the salaryman would be a middle-class, university-educated middle-aged man, with a dependent wife and children to support. He would spend long hours commuting to the office in a jam-packed train, from a house or apartment in a public housing estate in the suburbs. After spending the day toiling away at the desk, or visiting customers and suppliers on sales rounds, the salaryman would stop by a Japanese-style izakaya bar for a couple of drinks with

1 For a discussion of the veiled woman as a metonym of Islamic femininity, see, for instance Mackie (2003a), Tseon Khoo (2003: 230, 231) discusses the work of Asian-Australian visual artist, Hou Leong, who parodies and disrupts popular culture metonyms of (white) Australian masculinity, such as the sportsmen, bushmen, and the ANZACs, (the Australian/New Zealand soldiers who fought in World War One, and whose attributes of bravery combined with ‘mateship’ and ‘larrakianism’ subsequently became associated with [white] Australian masculinity in general).
2 Emphasis dropped henceforth, unless specifically marking out the term.
colleagues, before returning to his home in the suburbs long after his children have
gone to bed. This is a figure who has come to be regarded as something of an
‘everyman’ of Japan’s postwar social landscape, the ‘corporate soldier’ (kigyō
senshi) for ‘Japan Inc.’, the government-bureaucracy-private industry collaboration
which ostensibly powered the postwar industrial success. Even after the unraveling
of the ‘Japan Inc.’ paradigm since the 1990s, the imagery of the salaryman has
continued to exert a powerful influence on imaginings of Japan, both within the
country, and outside of it. The anthropologist James Roberson notes that “the
salaryman image constitutes a sort of ‘folk model’ among the Japanese” (Roberson
1998: 14). Indeed the ubiquitous salaryman has come to signify both Japanese
masculinity, and Japanese corporate culture. In this sense, the salaryman could well
be considered to be “the archetypal citizen … [someone who] is a male, heterosexual,
able-bodied, fertile, white-collar worker” (Mackie 2002: 203).

The significance of this figure can be appreciated if we consider that among the
Japan in Your Pocket! introductory pocket-guides issued for visitors by the Japan
Travel Bureau (JTB), is one entitled Illustrated Salaryman in Japan. Some of the
other guides in this fourteen-volume series include such titles as, Festivals of Japan,
Living Japanese Style and Eating in Japan. The Illustrated Salaryman in Japan
guide was first published in 1986, and was into its seventh edition in 1996, well into
the economic slowdown of the 1990s mentioned above. The Foreword to the volume
highlights to readers that it “is a historical fact that salarymen and the companies they
work for have been the driving force behind the economic rise of postwar Japan”. Accordingly, it entreats readers who are “tired of fragmentary or over intellectual
reports of Japanese business … [to] take a stimulating journey into the practical
workaday world of the salaryman – a journey guaranteed to deepen your
understanding and enjoyment of Japan” (Japan Travel Bureau [JTB]1996:
Foreword).

The main text of the guide opens with the declaration: “‘Salaryman’ is a word coined
in Japan, used to refer to all white-collar workers who receive a salary” (JTB 1996:
10). This is accompanied by a sample illustration of a ‘typical’ salaryman (see Figure
1). The figure depicted is that of a bespectacled ‘Mr. Everyman’-type with a neat,
‘seven-three’ haircut,3 dressed, according to the accompanying caption, in a dark
blue or grey suit with a white dress shirt, carrying a brief-case in one hand and a
rolled-up newspaper in the other (JTB 1996: 10). On the facing page we are told,

3 The ‘seven-three’ (shichi-san) haircut, referring to a style where the hair is parted neatly at the side in
a seventy-thirty proportion, is considered to be the hallmark of sober, non-pretentious
respectability.
once again through illustrations, what the salaryman should not look like. A “definite ‘unspoken code’” (11) the reader is told, discourages such forms of appearance as colourful, flashy attire, long hair, or even any kind of noticeably fashionable hairstyle, fashionable clothes and accessories, sunglasses, and even ‘traditional’ Japanese dress (which would supposedly “scare all customers away”) (11). Subsequent discussion (reinforced with accompanying illustrations) gives the reader a whole range of information about the salaryman. This includes typology according to generation – the “workaholics” in their fifties for whom “the company is the battlefield”, the “newcomers” in their twenties who “are an enigma to the older generations”, and “in-between” generation “born in the babyboom years ... caught in the middle” (JTB 1996: 89). Readers are also told about the various types – by appearance and personality/lifestyle – of salarymen. Thus, we have the “unmarried rank-and-file ... who has no responsibilities either at work or at home and wears a relaxed, easy-going expression”, the “middle-management type” who always “wears a harassed expression and has no time to worry about fashion or other non-essential concerns”, the “executive type” who, having survived the challenges of middle management, has made it into upper management and consequently is “brimming with confidence” and the “researcher type” who is “quiet, serious, even rustic”, someone “good at his job but much less skillful at socializing” (JTB 1996: 88). In terms of personality types we have “Mr. Elite” who goes straight home after work to study for in-house tests, versus “Mr. Normal”, who stops off for a drink or two after work and finds “his furious wife has locked him out” when he staggers home in the middle of the night (44).

The guide covers virtually every aspect of the salaryman’s lifestyle. These include his daily schedule – how he commutes to work, what he reads while commuting, morning calisthenics when he arrives at work, what he eats for lunch, working overtime, his after-work nightlife. The reader is enlightened about his leisure activities and pastimes (typically pachinko, mahjong,¹ and horse-racing), what he does on seasonal holidays such as O-Bon,² New Year, or ‘Golden Week’,³ his conduct when attending weddings or funerals, what constitutes required reading for

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¹ Pachinko is a form of pinball, that is an extremely popular leisure pastime in Japan, among diverse sections of the population. Brightly-lit, garish pachinko parlours are a standard feature of the urban landscape in virtually every part of the country. Although in theory, winners trade their winnings for token prizes, in actual fact, these are often subsequently exchanged for money (Buckley 2002c: 382, 383). Mahjong, a board game of Chinese origin, is also a popular form of gambling, particularly among men (Buckley 2002c: 292, 293).

² O-Bon is the mid-summer ‘All Souls Day’ when many individuals and families return to their hometowns to clean the family grave sites and/or pay respects at household altars (Buckley 2002d: 368, 369). Although not an ‘official’ holiday, many employees take their annual leave during this period.
the salaryman, and even the various health problems that plague him (headaches from hangovers and a weakened liver from drinking too much, hemorrhoids and stiff shoulders from sitting at the desk for too long, stomach ulcers from irregular diet and stress) (JTB 1996: passim). Even the woman the salaryman typically marries is depicted in some detail. Usually, she would be an ‘OL’ (Office Lady), the generic term for young female clerical employees who typically (in terms of the way they are collectively depicted in popular representation) enter the workforce upon graduation from junior college or university, and after working for a few years quit in order to get married (see Ogasawara 1998: 23–28). As the JTB guide notes:

Most female employees marry within three or five years after entering the company, upon which they resign …. The company is like a temporary seat for these women, who leave to be replaced by others, who will also be gone in a few years.


Ideally, it will be a salaryman from her own organization who will be her husband. The guide tells us that *shanai kekkon* – marriage between a salaryman and an OL working in the same organization – “is a very popular pattern in Japan … [and] is a reflection of the nature of life within Japanese companies” (JTB 1996: 108).

The packaging of the salaryman in this way points to the culturally iconic position occupied by the salaryman (and for that matter, the ‘OL’ who becomes a ‘fulltime housewife’ married to him). Moreover, it is a deliberately crafted projection of the salaryman as being the embodiment of ‘Japanese culture’, in much the same way that the other cultural icons in the series (traditional food, architecture, the ancient imperial capital of Kyoto) are presented. This is reflected in the Afterword accompanying the guide, where the authors declare that, “the ‘salaryman society’ is a realm possessing its own special rules and ethics, much like the worlds of politics or student life in Japan” (JTB 1996: 186). Attempting to “explain why such a diverse range of people can be grouped together under the ‘salaryman spirit’ heading” we are told is futile. Rather, ultimately, “the old standby – ‘oriental magic’ – may have something to do with it after all” (187).

**Demarcations and Delineations**

6 ‘Golden Week’ is a period in late-April/early-May, when a number of public holidays occur in close proximity to each other, allowing many company employees and government workers to take time-off, particularly if a week-end falls in the midst of the public holidays.
“Oriental magic” notwithstanding, the reality is that even at the zenith of the ‘Japan Inc.’ model during the 1960s and 1970s, only a minority of men would have fallen within the strictest definitional parameters of the category of ‘salaryman’ – full-time white-collar permanent employees of organizations offering benefits such as lifetime employment guarantee, salaries and promotions tied to length of service, and an ideology of corporate paternalism characterizing relations between the (permanent, male) employee and the organization. The reality on the ground was (and continues to be) a situation where the employment sector is not overwhelmingly dominated by the elite banks and trading companies and automobile manufacturers of which the typical salaryman was seen to be the archetypal employee. Rather, it is firms in the medium-small business sector (chūshō kigyō) that account for the bulk of employment for Japan’s workforce, male and female (Kondo 1990: 50; Roberson 1998: 7, 8). In 1986, according to Roberson, this sector of the economy accounted for over 80 percent of all employment (Roberson 1998: 7). Firms that fall within the medium-small business category are those in the wholesale sector employing less than 100 employees, less than 50 in the retail and services sector, and fewer than 300 for firms in other areas of business (Roberson 1998: 7). Obviously such firms would hardly be in a position to offer the type of benefits (such as long-term employment guarantee) associated with firms at the top end of the industrial structure (Allison 1994: 92; Cheng and Kallenberg 1997: 29).

In this sense, Roberson’s criticism that the focus (particularly in English-language studies of Japanese organizations) on the large-enterprise sector of the workforce leading to a lopsided view of the actual picture of Japanese workers’ everyday realities, is justified (Roberson 1998: 6, 7; also Kondo 1990: 49, 50). However, the term ‘salaryman’ can (and is) interpreted and deployed in a variety of ways, often well outside the narrow, and even not-so-narrow definitions of the term as a white-collar, middle-class employee (see Okamoto and Sasano 2001; also Roberson and Suzuki 2003b: 6, 7). The term, as we will see in this thesis when discussing research informants’ voices, is often applied by employees engaged in blue-collar or technical work, who see themselves as salarymen because they are employed by an

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7 As I discuss in more detail in Chapter Three, the terms ‘white collar’ and ‘middle-class’ are themselves fraught with definitional inconsistencies. White collar, in terms of a broad categorization refers to workers engaged in ‘managerial or intellectual work’ (Levson cited in Southern 2000: 193; see also Mills 1956). Conversely, the label blue-collar is applied to workers performing physical/manual labour. However, as Southern points out, such water-tight distinctions are far from rigorous. This is particularly the case in the context of Japanese companies where the same individual may be classified as ‘blue-collar’ or ‘white-collar’. For example, some of my informants who were performing technical/manual work, still considered themselves salarymen, since they were regular employees of an organization, and received a monthly salary.
organization and receive a monthly salary. However, it was (and continues to be) the discourse surrounding the salaryman and his lifestyle that has extended out to encompass large numbers of men “into the totalizing image of the white-collar salaryman” (Roberson 1998: 6). In other words, the ideology associated with, indeed embedded in, the discourse of the urban middle-class salaryman is far more extensive and pervasive in its reach. In this respect – regardless of what the reality might be – large swathes of Japanese men identify with, and define themselves against what the salaryman is considered to embody. In particular, it has been the centrality of work, of being the family provider, in constructing salaryman identity that has contributed to this sense of the attributes of the salaryman being applicable across the board.

The ‘Man’ in ‘Salaryman’

Given the visible profile of the salaryman in imaginings of post-World War Two (hereafter, ‘postwar’) Japan, it is no surprise that over the years a not insubstantial body of popular and academic literature has emerged around the salaryman and all that he stands for (see, for example, Hazama 1996, Takeuchi 1997; Umezawa 1997; Tanaka and Nakamura 1999; Okamoto and Sasano 2001). Moreover, the salaryman was a visible presence in some of the early postwar studies of Japan to have an impact on academic and research circles in Anglophone countries. These included works such as Ezra Vogel’s Japan’s New Middle Class, originally published in 1963, and Ronald Dore’s City Life in Japan, originally published in 1958, which went on to become ‘classics’ within the emerging field of ‘Japan studies’ in the West. Subsequent works, including those by Plath (1964, 1983a), Ballon (1969a), Rohlen (1974), Clark (1979), van Helvoort (1979), Fruin (1980), Hamabata (1990), Allison (1994), Beck and Beck (1994), Ogawara (1998), and Sakai (2000), have been concerned in one way or another with the salaryman.

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5 A friend who is a reporter/newscaster with a broadcasting network used to refer to himself as a salaryman. I have also heard university academics apply the label to themselves. Indeed, Okamoto and Sasano in their discussion of media representations of the salaryman over the postwar era, mention the brief media appearance of the term “female salaryman (joshi sarariman)” in the 1950s (Okamoto and Sasano 2001: 24).

9 Thus, while the stereotype of Japan being a ‘ninety-percent middle-class society’ has no substance in reality (see Steven 1983), it is the “wide-appeal, not universal attainment of this ideal” (Kelly 1986: 605) that accounts for such a high rate of middle-class self-identification. In this regard, Roberson and Suzuki note that “as long as one is critically aware of the tensions and distinctions among ideology, ideal and reality, extending the discourse on/of men as salarymen beyond the middle class can be an important exercise” (2003b: 7).

10 I discuss some of this literature in subsequent chapters (particularly Chapter Three). As I point out, in addition to academic and journalistic texts dealing with various aspects of the salaryman, there is also a substantial body of popular culture (novels, manga comics, movies, television serials) revolving around the salaryman.
However, until quite recently most studies and accounts have been silent on one crucial aspect of the salaryman – the ‘man’ within salaryman. In other words, the salaryman as a *gendered* construct has not received any significant attention. Several factors account for this oversight. Among them, a primary reason as to why the salaryman and all that he stands for has not been adequately addressed through the prism of gender has to do with the fact that until recently in Japan (as in other countries) the concept of ‘men’ as a category needing to be teased-out and problematized, was not given serious consideration. ‘Men’ were the default against which all other ‘variants’ – women, trans-gender persons, non-heterosexual men – were measured. Given the salaryman’s position as a metonym for all Japanese men, the extension of the ‘men as default’ logic meant that the salaryman was studied from virtually every angle conceivable (class, income, age, lifestyle patterns, work habits, consumption patterns) save from the angle of his gender.

This situation started shifting from the late-1980s and into the 1990s. There were several factors at work here. First, a growing body of academic and non-academic work, both in Anglophone and European countries, as well as in Japan, interrogating and problematizing ‘masculinity’ as a construct, started to become visible. Many of these works, both in the West and in Japan, emerged from, or were influenced by critiques of patriarchy by feminist scholars in the 1960s and 1970s (see for instance, Brod 1987; Connell 1987, 1995; Kaufman 1987; Hearn and Morgan 1990; Brod and Kaufman 1994; Morgan 1992 Itô 1993, 1996; Inoue, Ueno, and Ebara 1995). Many of these were also influenced by the theoretical and empirical work carried out in the emerging field of lesbian and gay studies, and subsequently queer theory, particularly in relation to the pivotal role of homophobia and heterosexism in informing dominant gender ideologies (see Sedgwick 1986; Edwards 1990; Kimmel 1994; Connell 1995, 2000; D’Emilio 1997; Inoue, Ueno, and Ebara 1995: 235–262). What these studies had in common was their highlighting of the fact that masculinity, rather than being a biological given, constant over time and space, “is historical … created in culture … [and] means different things at different times to different people” (Kimmel 1994: 120). Moreover, while many of these early works focusing on masculinity fully acknowledged the stake in patriarchy that many men have, they also drew attention to the fact that different men had differing degrees of access to

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11 This applies even to works such as Ogasawara (1998) and Sakai (2000) which at first glance appear to focus on the salaryman as a *gendered* construction. However, they only skirt around the core problematic of the gendering of the salaryman. However there are exceptions. Anne Allison’s ethnographic study of a hostess bar, explores the ways in which the salarymen frequenting the establishment engaged with dominant discourses and ideologies surrounding gender, sexuality, and corporate masculinity (Allison 1994). Some of the Japanese works emerging from the interrogations of masculinity (discussed below) among scholars and community activists from the 1990s, also addressed issues related to the model of masculinity embodied in the salaryman (Nakamura 1996; Toyoda 1997 91–156; Inoue, Ueno, and Ebara 1995: 215–233).
the dividends of patriarchal power. Thus, in addition to unequal power hierarchies between men and women, there was a need to acknowledge "hierarchies of power among different groups of men and between different masculinities" (Kaufman 1994: 145). Men can (both collectively and as individuals) be as much ‘victims’ of patriarchy, as they can benefit from patriarchal privilege. Thus, what the growing body of research and theorizing on masculinity in the late-1980s and 1990s brought to attention was the fact that we need to recognize the plurality and diversity in men’s lives and experiences – the existence of masculinities in the plural, rather than a singular masculinity extending across all men, throughout the globe. At the same time, as Australian sociologist R.W. Connell highlighted, at any given time in any one society a particular form of masculinity is culturally privileged, and occupies a position of power vis-à-vis women and other forms of masculinity. Connell applied the term, ‘hegemonic masculinity’ to refer to this privileged form of masculinity. As we will see, this concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ can be applied to the discourse of masculinity within which the salaryman is located, and as such, constitutes the major underlying theoretical current within this thesis.

In the context of Japan, these theoretical and academic framings of masculinity cross-fertilized with indigenous scholarship to define the shaping of a body of research which came to be referred to collectively as ‘*danseigaku*’ (literally, ‘the study of men/males’). Today there is a reasonably substantial body of academic and semi-academic literature focusing on the construction and interrogation of masculinities (Ito 1993, 1996; Toyoda 1997; Inoue, Ueno, and Ehara 1995; Murata 2000; Asai, Ito, and Murase 2001; Taga 2001b).  

The growing visibility of studies problematizing masculinity from the 1990s was situated within a wider framework of significant socio-economic and cultural shifts which were impacting on the everyday reality of men’s lives. First, increasing affluence and prosperity had allowed for greater diversity and flexibility in people’s lifestyle choices. In particular, the 1980s’ speculation-driven ‘bubble economy’ boom had been characterized by the growing visibility of areas of employment which emphasized qualities such as short-term creativity and individual flair, rather than the long-term consistent dedication demanded by the model of employment with which the salaryman was associated. These areas of employment included such sectors as advertising, hospitality, tourism, fashion, leisure-related industries, information, and

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12 I define some of these key theoretical concepts (such as ‘patriarchy’ and ‘masculinity’) in Chapter Two.

13 For an excellent discussion of the genealogy of research into men and masculinities in Japan, see Taga (2003a); also Taga (forthcoming) for works in English focusing on masculinities in Japan, see Louie and Low (2003), Roberson and Suzuki (2003a).
media, all areas which were characteristic of an affluent late-capitalist society. The opening up of these employment sectors had meant that for young men (and women) entering the workforce from the 1980s, the options for employment were more varied, and allowed them a greater degree of flexibility. Coupled with this was a growing community awareness of some of the social and personal costs that were seen to be associated with the salaryman and his lifestyle. These included such issues as the pressures of work leading to health problems and sometimes even death (karōshi, literally ‘death from excess work’), the phenomenon of tanshin funin, whereby salarymen would be forced to live away from their families for extended periods of time due to job transfers, and overall lack of communication with family members leading to such phenomena as kitaku kyōhi (an aversion to going home). With the collapse of the ‘bubble’-driven economic boom in the early 1990s, many of the underpinnings and guarantees associated with the salaryman and his lifestyle became increasingly tenuous. As companies were forced to cut costs and ‘re-structure’, guarantees such as lifetime employment and promotions based on seniority rather than performance started to be re-assessed and dismantled, even by large-scale elite organizations. As mentioned above, even at the zenith of Japan’s economic success, only a limited proportion of the male workforce was covered by the lifetime employment model. However, it was the dissipation of the ideology associated with it that appeared to have far-reaching ramifications for the national psyche, for the way that Japanese corporate culture had been constructed in the popular imagination, both within the country and overseas.

Yet, at the same time, while the external contours and characteristics of the model of masculinity embodied in the salaryman were undeniably being challenged and re-shaped, certain core underpinnings remain largely unaltered. Among these is the centrality of paid work, and being the primary provider (the daikokubashira, literally central pillar of the house) for a dependent wife and children. In other words, the hegemonic ideal of the male as producer, husband, and father remains firmly entrenched. The research in this thesis hinges around this apparent contradiction – the simultaneous strength of the ideology and discourse of the salaryman and the apparent weakness of it, as evidenced in the critiques and challenges mentioned above.

Mappings of the Thesis

The above contradictory juxtaposition makes sense if we examine the salaryman and all that he represents using the notion of hegemonic masculinity, a concept, drawing
upon Gramsci’s notion of hegemony, deployed by R W. Connell in the realm of gender, specifically masculinity (Connell 1987, 1995, 1996, 2000, etc.). I argue in this thesis, that masculinity, rather than being a fixed, biologically determined essence, is constructed, shaped, ‘crafted’ in response to socio-cultural, economic, political, and other conditions. This ‘crafting’ which occurs both at the ‘macro’ societal level, and at the level of the individual male person, is an ongoing process. Furthermore, rather than a singular form of masculinity, just one way of ‘being a man’, there are a myriad masculinities, at any one time, both within society and within an individual. These are constructed, represented, talked about, written about, given shape, embodied by individuals, as discourses of masculinity in society. These various masculinities do not just “sit side-by-side like dishes on a smorgasbord” (Connell 2000: 10). Rather, there are hierarchies of power defining the relationships between these various masculinities. Of the various masculinities the discourse of masculinity that has the greatest ideological power and hold may be conceived of as the hegemonic form of masculinity. The hegemonic form may be conceived of as a cultural ‘ideal’ or ‘blueprint’ which, by-and-large, cannot be perfectly attained by most men. As Connell highlights, it need not be the most common form, nor the “most comfortable” (Connell 2000: 11). However, it does “exert a powerful and often unconscious presence” (Kaufman 1994: 144) in the lives of men (and others). What hegemonic masculinity does have in its favour is power, over femininity and other forms of masculinity. These other masculinities interact and intersect with the hegemonic form in a variety of ways – being subordinated, marginalized, and/or appropriated by the hegemonic form, or, as I argue in this thesis, at times resisting it, subverting it, or even playfully engaging with it through such strategies as parody. Thus, I argue, it is through these engagements that hegemonic masculinity is constantly ’crafted’ and ’re-crafted’, both at the ‘macro’ societal level, and at the level of the individual male.

In the case of Japan, the discourse of masculinity within which the salaryman is situated can be regarded as the hegemonic form of masculinity. Despite the fact, as outlined above, that only a limited number of Japanese men would have ever fallen within the definitional parameters of the term, the ideology (of gender, of class, of sexuality, indeed of citizenship) embodied in the salaryman was far more extensive. The core of this ideology is the equation of masculinity with the public work-sphere and femininity with the private, household sphere. Moreover, within this ideological framework, the two sides of the binary are linked together through the institution of publicly acknowledged and sanctioned heterosexual marriage. The discourse built around the salaryman represents, in a sense, the visibly hegemonic apex of these ideological expectations.
In light of the above, this thesis sets out to explore the ways in which the dynamics through which the discourse of masculinity embodied by the salaryman became the hegemonic form of masculinity in Japan over the postwar decades, and the ways in which these dynamics of engagement between hegemonic and non-hegemonic forms of masculinity continue to operate in contemporary Japan. The thesis explores these dynamics at both the 'macro' societal level, and at the 'micro' level of the individual. The former level of analysis situates the emergence of the discourse of salaryman masculinity (and the gender ideology underpinning it) within the context of Japan's project of industrial-capitalist modernization and nation-building embarked upon in the final decades of the nineteenth century, and continued over the course of the twentieth century, and into the twenty-first century. I look at the ways in which instruments of state and society (the education system, the employment system, spaces of popular culture) were (and continue to be) significant in terms of disseminating and reinforcing the ideological expectations of hegemonic salaryman masculinity. This is done through reference to a variety of primary and secondary archival and textual materials, including academic and research texts, contemporary and historical popular culture texts, and official government publications.

The second level of analysis – in many respects the 'core' of the thesis – explores these dynamics of the 'crafting' of hegemonic masculinity at the level of the individual. While this process of 'crafting' occurs over the entire life-course of the individual, I focus on the period in the individual's life when it is particularly pronounced. This period covers the first months and years following entry into the workforce, when the individual male is negotiating his transition to the status of a responsible adult, shakaijin (literally 'social being', but more generally, the term used to refer to an individual's entry into adult society through the taking on of the responsibilities of adulthood, such as entry into the full-time workforce). The discussion draws upon intensive interviews carried out over an eighteen-month period, with young male employees of two private sector organizations. It explores the ways in which these informants negotiate with the ideological expectations of salaryman masculinity, vis-à-vis their own masculine identities, expectations which encompass various aspects of their lives – work practices, consumer habits, lifestyles, articulations of sexuality, imaginings of their future plans and dreams. As the discussion of my conversations with these informants will reveal, the dynamics of 'crafting' masculinity, rather than being a tidy, easy-to-categorize process, are infused with ambiguity, contradictions, richness, and nuance.
Chapter Construction

Given the two levels of analysis informing this thesis, the chapters can broadly be divided into two sections. Chapters Two, Three, and Four focus on the abstract, ‘macro’ level. In Chapter Two I expand on some of the theoretical underpinnings informing the research, mentioned above. This includes elucidating core concepts such as ‘gender’, ‘masculinity’, ‘hegemonic masculinity’, as well as expanding upon my choice of the term ‘crafting’ as an underlying thematic current within this thesis. Having clarified the key terminology, the chapter maps out the theoretical and conceptual contours of the thesis. The second half of the chapter reflects on some of the methodological issues related to the research. In particular, I discuss the logistics of conducting a multi-pronged/multi-layered research which adopts a variety of methodological approaches. As I outline, the approach adopted when conducting the research, was essentially a bricolage, drawing upon a variety of research methods and disciplinary areas. Apart from discussing the logistics of the research process, this section of the chapter also reflects on the position of the researcher vis-à-vis the research. This was particularly pertinent in the case of my research for a number of reasons. First, as mentioned above, intensive interviews with informants were an integral part of the project. This meant having to negotiate the complexities of the researcher/informant relationship, where both sides come to the research with previous personal baggage. In my case, as I explain in the chapter, I was returning to a part of Japan I was familiar with, and where I had extensive and close personal and social networks. This positioned me as both an ‘insider’ and an ‘outsider’ and added an extra layer of complexity and richness to the research.

Chapter Three sets out the historical framework within which the discourse of salaryman masculinity was situated. Specifically, it explores the ways in which the emergence of salaryman masculinity as the hegemonic form of masculinity in the postwar period was inextricably linked to the project of nation-building and modernity that Japan embarked upon in the late-nineteenth century. It looks at the ways in which state-sanctioned ideologies of nation, gender, family, work, and citizenship put in motion in the late-nineteenth century worked in combination with socio-cultural and economic shifts to account for the emergence of a visibly articulated discourse of masculinity shaped around the salaryman. Thus, although it was only in the postwar period that the salaryman became the embodiment of hegemonic masculinity, the forces shaping this emergence were already in operation over the pre-war decades.
Chapter Four explores one of the channels through which the discourse of salaryman masculinity circulates through society – popular culture. Through reference to a variety of media, such as *manga* comics, magazines aimed at the salaryman, internet sites, and 'pop-management' type training guides and self-improvement manuals, the chapter looks at the ways in which popular culture may simultaneously be a channel for the inscription and reinforcement of the ideological expectations of hegemonic masculinity, and a space where the very same expectations and ideals may be resisted, subverted, challenged, or appropriated.

The second half of the thesis, Chapters Five to Nine, shifts the focus to the ‘micro’ level of the individual. These chapters draw upon the fieldwork interviews conducted with the young male informants, mentioned above. Chapter Five focuses on the ways that the informants constructed and imagined the process by which they ‘came into masculinity’. In other words, the chapter explores the informants’ recollections of the process by which they ‘became boys’, as a precursor to becoming adult men, being ‘crafted’ into salaryman masculinity.

Chapter Six discusses the informants’ transition into adult, salaryman masculinity, in the first weeks and months after entering the workforce. Specifically, it explores the ways in which informants negotiate this transition in the context of very pronounced efforts on the part of the employers to inculcate the ideological expectations of the organization and mould the informants to conform to these expectations. This process of inscription of the ideals of salaryman masculinity and inculcation of the ideology of the organization is at its most intense during the staff induction training new employees undergo. Consequently, this chapter draws upon observations of the induction training of one of the organizations involved in the research, to look at the ways in which this crafting is carried out at this significant point in the individual’s life-course. The chapter also draws upon discussions with informants who have undergone similar induction training, to assess the extent to which, in reality, the organizations are able to craft ideal employees who embody all the expectations of salaryman masculinity.

Chapter Seven draws upon the informants’ accounts to explore the connection between the work/masculinity nexus. As mentioned above, the core axiom of salaryman masculinity is the notion of the male as provider, of the *daikokubashira* (mainstay) of the family. Consequently, this chapter looks at the ways in which the informants constructed their sense of masculinity in relation to work. It explores notions of what constitute ‘masculine’ and ‘un-masculine’ occupations in the views of the informants, and where they situate the salaryman on that scale. The chapter
then explores, through the voices of the informants, the diverse strategies adopted in the day-to-day engagements with the workplace demands of salaryman masculinity.

Chapter Eight looks at the ways in which sexuality intersects with salaryman masculinity — specifically, the ways in which my informants engaged with the expectations of needing to publicly conform to a particular discourse of regulated heterosexuality centring around the man as husband and father. Both single and married informants expand upon their views of what marriage and fatherhood mean to them. Moreover, the informants also reflect on the importance of these markers in defining access to the privileges of hegemonic masculinity. The chapter also explores, through the voice of an informant who identified himself as non-heterosexual, the ways in which individuals who do not conform with the assumptions of publicly acknowledged heterosexuality negotiate with these expectations, in the context of the workplace.

Chapter Nine, the final chapter drawing upon the voices of my informants, explores some of the engagements with an aspect of organizational culture which has seldom been explored through the lens of masculinity — the significance of same-sex homosociality in the context of salaryman masculinity. Just as an ideology of publicly proclaimed heterosexuality articulated through marriage and fatherhood has been instrumental in the operation of hegemonic masculinity, so too have same-sex bonds within the organization. This chapter examines the role that such bonds play in the informants’ day-to-day engagements in the workplace, and the ways in which such relationships intersect with the other expectations of salaryman masculinity.

Finally, the Conclusion returns to some of the issues covered in this Introduction, and suggests possible areas for future research.
Figure 1: The Japanese Salaryman according to the Japan Travel Bureau's *Illustrated Salaryman in Japan*.

*Source: JTB 1996: 10.*

"Salaryman" is a word coined in Japan, used to refer to all white-collar workers who receive a salary. In a very real sense, salarymen are the driving force behind Japan's phenomenal postwar economic growth.

Metal frame, square-rimmed glasses

Short hair parted at the side in the "seven-three" style.

Dark red necktie with diagonal stripes

White cutter shirts

In the coat pocket: Address/schedule book, wallet, name card case, commuter train pass, etc.

Dark blue or gray suit.

Black leather shoes

A Salaryman's Uniform
CHAPTER TWO

MAPPINGS OF THE RESEARCH

As mentioned in the Introduction, this research project looks at the process of ‘crafting’ and ‘re-crafting’ at a point in history when many of the assumptions and mainstays of salaryman masculinity are being challenged and interrogated. The focus is on the dynamics at both the ‘macro’ level of society and the ‘micro’ level of the individual. The former examines the historical framework within which the emergence of salaryman masculinity is situated and the processes through which the ideological apparatuses of state and society have reinforced its power, and continue to do so. The latter level of discussion, then, explores the ways in which individual males negotiate with the expectations of salaryman masculinity, at the point in their lives when they are most consciously engaging with its demands.

However, before embarking on a detailed discussion of these issues, we need to unpack and clarify some of the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the research, as well as discuss some of the considerations which informed the process – the methodology – of research. Accordingly, this chapter will focus on some of these issues concerned with the foundational framework of the research. I will start off by setting out and clarifying some of the terminology surrounding and informing the discussion in the thesis. This will help elucidate the ways in which specific terms and concepts axiomatic to the discussion have been deployed through the course of this thesis. As part of this discussion, I will also draw attention to some of the problematics of working across two languages, and the (at times) complicated task of rendering key expressions and concepts – such as ‘male’, ‘man’, ‘masculine’, ‘masculinity’ – from one language into another. Clarifying some of these key concepts and terms will allow for an appreciation of the theoretical contours and underpinnings of the thesis. The second half of the chapter will go on to address some of the issues and concerns surrounding the actual process of the research. Specifically, I will draw attention to the various aspects of a multi-dimensional research project such as this one. Engaging with some of these theoretical, conceptual, and methodological concerns will then allow a deeper insight into the various issues discussed in subsequent chapters.
SECTION 1: TRACING THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL CONTOURS

A useful entry into the discussion in this section would be to remind ourselves of the 'core' concern of this thesis, the 'spine' which runs through and undergirds all the chapters, and brings together all the contours of the research. This core research question revolves around the dynamics whereby hegemonic masculinity – the discourse built around the salaryman – has historically been, and continues to be, 'crafted' and 're-crafted'. The exploration of these 'crafting' and 're-crafting' dynamics is both in the wider context of the Japanese nation-state, and in terms of the everyday reality of individual males. Feeding into and intersecting with this research question are various concepts and theoretical constructs which need to be disentangled and clarified at this point.

Disentangling and Delineating Key Concepts and Terminology

Crafting

We first need to consider my choice of the expression 'crafting', as in the title of this thesis. 'Crafting', as I deploy it in this thesis, draws upon Dorinne Kondo's use of the term in her book, Crafting Selves (1990). Her work was concerned with the ways in which notions of identity, or rather, identities, are constructed – 'crafted' – with reference to everyday practices of work and community. As Kondo notes, explaining her choice of title: "... identity is not a static object, but a creative process; hence crafting selves is an ongoing – indeed lifelong – occupation." Moreover, she continues, "crafting selves implies a concept of agency: that human beings create, construct, work on, and enact their identities, sometimes creatively challenging the limits of the cultural constraints which constitute both what we call selves and the ways those selves can be crafted" (Kondo 1990: 48).

My use of the term 'crafting' refers to one particular facet of 'identity', namely gender identity, specifically a masculine gender identity which is not identical to being sexed male. Following on from Kondo's reflections on the crafting of identity, I argue that the identity built around being gendered as masculine is similarly a constantly shifting, re-shaping, re-enacting process occurring at the intersections of
individual agency and discourses and ideologies circulating within and through society. These encompass both those specifically concerned with gender and sexuality, as well as other discourses and ideologies, such as those pertaining to social class or regional identity, which exert a shaping influence. It is through these engagements, that masculinities (including hegemonic masculinity) are crafted. Gender — masculinity and femininity — in this sense is, an ongoing project (Connell 2002: 81, 82; see also Connell 1996: 160, 161). Thus, in order to appreciate the dynamics of this ‘crafting’ project of gender, we need to unpack the term ‘gender’ itself, and its often complex relationship with the associated term ‘sex’.

Gender and Sex

At one level, the term ‘gender’ may come across as one of those everyday, ‘common sense’ terms needing little explanation. However, in reality, gender is a richly complex term which eludes overly simple explanation; as one discussion on gender begins, it “is now one of the busiest, most restless terms in the English language, a term that crops up everywhere, yet whose uses seem to be forever changing, always on the move, producing new and often surprising inflections of meaning” (Glover and Kaplan 2000: ix). As the authors highlight, while the genealogy of the term in the lexicon of the English language may be traced back several centuries, its application as a reference for the social and cultural aspects of sexual difference appears to be of relatively recent origin, possibly as recent as sometime in the 1950s (xix). In contrast to the biologically determined (through genitalia or chromosomal differences) category of ‘sex’, gender “refers to sociocultural and historical conventions of deportment, costume, voice, gesture, and so on, attributed and ascribed to females and males” (Robertson 1997: 17). While in the broadest sense, this is the definition of gender I use through this thesis, we need to be wary, as Robertson cautions, of an overly simplistic view of the sex/gender binary, whereby sex is unproblematically equated with the biological, and gender with the social/cultural, and both (categories) are neatly divided into binaries of male/female, masculine/feminine (18; see also Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994c: 34–39).

The potential disjunctures in assuming a simplistic binary correspondence between sex and gender have been highlighted by writers such as Moira Gatens (1991, 1996) and Judith Butler (1990). Butler, for instance, in her teasing-out of these terms in Gender Trouble, opens up whole new areas of possibilities for the dis-entangling of the linkages between these various terms (sex, gender, male, female, man, woman, masculine, feminine, etc.). For this reason it is worth quoting her at some length on this:
If gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes, then a gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way. Taken to its logical limit, the sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders. Assuming for the moment the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that the construction of ‘men’ will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that ‘women’ will interpret only female bodies. Further, even if the sexes appear to be unproblematically binary in their morphology and constitution ... there is no reason to assume that genders ought also to remain as two. The presumption of a binary gender system implicitly retains the belief in a mimetic relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it. [However] When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine a male body as easily as a female one.¹

(Butler 1990: 6; italics in original)

This questioning of seemingly ‘common sense’ assumptions such as the neat binaries of male/ female and masculine/feminine, is also reflected in Connell’s discussion of the term gender. As Connell points out, despite the fact that “images of gender are often dichotomous … the reality is not” (Connell 2002: 8). What is ignored and overlooked in such dichotomized and deterministic renditions of the concept (which tend to accent differences between the genders), are the differences, hierarchies, and messiness that may exist within a single gender category, and the similarities across the gender categories. Rather than focusing on the difference between genders, as tends to be the predominant pattern, it makes greater sense to shift the focus to the relational aspects of gender – to the hierarchies and power relations that exist between men and women. In this sense, as Connell notes, gender needs to be regarded as a social structure (9,10). Moreover, this is a structure mediated through the body, be that a body gendered and marked out as ‘male’, ‘female’, or (in societies allowing for the possibility) categories between (or outside) the male and female binary (Nanda 1990; Kulick 1998, ten Brummelhuis 1997; Graham 2001, 2004). However, what needs to be borne in mind is that while at times “cultural patterns do express bodily difference” (Connell 2002: 9), at other times they do not, or else significantly alter the link between the bodily differences and expressions in culture.² Rather, as

¹ Indeed an extension of Butler’s contention is that sex too is as much a product of discursive construction as gender, despite a common belief – even among theorists working in the area of gender/sexuality – which sees sex as a biological ‘given’ not open to the possibility of discursive construction (Butler 1990: 6,7).

² For instance, Connell notes that social practices may sometimes exaggerate the distinction between male and female bodies (as in the case of maternity clothes), or minimize or even deny them (as with some employment practices, claiming to be ‘gender-free’), or alternately, mythologize the differences (Connell provides the example of computer games), or complicate them (as in the case of ‘third genders’) (Connell 2002: 10). This notion of the diversity present in the ways cultural patterns may express bodily differences is brought out distinctly in Christina Helliwell’s discussion of the Gerai people of Kalimantan in Indonesia. The marking of male and female in Gerai culture is determined
Connell suggests, "society addresses bodies and puts reproductive difference into play". This takes place within the context of what he terms the "reproductive arena" where "bodies are brought into social processes, in which our social conduct does something with reproductive differences" (10). Following on from this, we can then arrive at a definition of gender which takes into account, but is not determined by, bodily differences, and the ways in which bodily differences are deployed through social structures. Gender, according to Connell's definition,

is the structure of social relations that centres on the reproductive arena, and the set of practices (governed by this structure) that brings reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes.³ (Connell 2002: 10; italics in original)

What a definition such as this takes into account is both the constraining power of gender as a social structure and the possibility of shifts and change. In the context of the present research, it is a definition of gender such as this, that best allows for an exploration of the complex and often contradictory processes at work in the crafting of hegemonic masculinity.

Moreover, such a definition also brings out the fact that we are not talking about a static, equal correspondence between the two (or more) genders. Rather, by explicitly linking the definition of gender to "the structure of social relations" (Connell 2002: 10) we are recognizing the operation of power differentials between genders, and within genders. This then brings in the next concept that needs to be clarified – the term patriarchy.

Patriarchy

Like 'gender', 'patriarchy' is a term with a long history. As Ramazanoglu (1989: 33) points out, prior to being integrated into feminist theories, 'patriarchy' had been used by anthropologists to refer to the power of the father over a kinship group (consisting not so much by sexed bodily (specifically genital) differences, but by the types of work performed. She notes that "the reproductive organs themselves are not seen as 'sexed' in GeraI". Consequently, it would be "problematic even to use the English categories 'woman' and 'man' when writing of this community, since the terms are saturated with assumptions concerning the priority of biological (read, bodily) differences. In the Geral context, it would be accurate to deal with the categories of ... 'those responsible for rice selection and storage' and, ... 'those responsible for cutting down large trees to make a ricefield'" (Helliwell 2001: 16). This ethnographic account links into (and supports) Butler's argument, mentioned above, of gender (in this case, the type of work done) foreshadowing and discursively producing sex.

³ Connell notes that the reason he chooses to use the term "reproductive arena" rather than "biological base", is precisely in order to "emphasize that we are talking about a historical process involving the body, not a fixed set of biological determinants" (Connell 1996: 139).
of other — generally younger — men, in addition to women and children).\textsuperscript{4} From the 1970s the concept was taken on board by feminist scholars, broadened to a more general societal (and global) context, and used with reference to men’s power and domination over women. Over the ensuing decades, definitions and interpretations relating to the term have multiplied (see for instance, Scott 1988: 33–35; Ramazanoglu 1989: 33–40). However the notion of male power underpinning patriarchy cuts across the various views. Moreover, recognition and interrogation of patriarchy also became a feature of many of the analyses of masculinity/masculinities from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s (Connell 1985; Lee and Daly 1987; Hearn 1992; Morgan 1992). Of the various ways of defining patriarchy, I find the following definition offered by Connell particularly clear, and appropriate for this research. ‘Patriarchy’, according to this definition,

is a … term for historically produced situations in gender relations where men’s domination is institutionalized. That is to say, men’s overall social supremacy is embedded in face-to-face settings such as family and the workplace, generated by the functioning of the economy, reproduced over time by the normal operation of schools, media, and churches.

(Connell 1990: 514; italics in original)\textsuperscript{5}

In other words, we have a relational situation where men’s power over women is institutionalized. This institutionalization of the power is reinforced through a patriarchal gender ideology which infuses discourses circulating through society. An example would be the discourse of a natural maternal instinct, which is predicated on a hegemonic gender ideology. However, as pointed out above, there are relational hierarchies within masculinity. Thus, a man who is closer to the parameters of what constitutes a socio-culturally privileged (hegemonic) form of masculinity would be able to tap into the dividends of patriarchy to a greater degree than one closer to a subordinated or marginalized form of masculinity. In the case of Japan, a heterosexual, middle-class, married, white-collar salaryman would be in a better

\textsuperscript{4} Rotundo’s discussion of the shifts in fatherhood in the United States from the seventeenth century to the twentieth century, conveys a sense of this original usage of the term in relation to the patriarch of the family (Rotundo 1987: 64–80).

\textsuperscript{5} In this paper, Connell acknowledges the contentions surrounding definitions of patriarchy – particularly problems arising from the blanket application of a term essentially a product of Western modernity across cultures and across history (Connell 1990: 515). Similarly Collinson and Hearn, in reviewing the various definitions and critiques of patriarchy, stress that the concept should be treated with considerable caution, and that rather than being regarded as unified and monolithic, it would be more productive to understand patriarchy as diversified and differentiated (Collinson and Hearn 1996: 63, 64). Sylvia Walby’s Theorizing Patriarchy (1990) goes into a detailed discussion of the term, and summarizes some of the main definitions of the term. Walby herself conceptualizes patriarchy at different levels of abstraction. At a more abstract level, patriarchy exists as a system of social relations. At a less abstract level, it is made up of six inter-connected structures which operate through various patriarchal practices (for instance, compulsory heterosexuality and the sexual double standard). These six structures are: the patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions (Walby 1990: 19–21).
position to reap these patriarchal dividends, than, for instance, a single, day labourer working on a construction site, or even a single, non-heterosexual white-collar salaryman. As I will argue below it is hegemonic masculinity which has the greatest stake in patriarchy. However, before we expand on the concept of hegemonic masculinity, we need to tease out the term ‘masculinity’ itself, and explore the various ways it relates to associated terms like, ‘man/men’, ‘male’, ‘maleness’, and ‘manliness’.

Masculinity and Related Terms

In many respects, masculinity is a term on which the entire thesis hinges. As is the case with gender, masculinity may also initially come across as a self-evident term requiring little elucidation and analysis. At this level, it may be taken as suggesting notions of an intrinsic ‘essence’ possessed by ‘biological males’, as indeed is the view held by some sections of the ‘men’s movement’ (see Kimmel and Kaufman 1994: 3–6; Pease 2002: 40–42). While this is a view that has been extensively critiqued in the academic literature on the topic, at the level of popular community understanding it continues to exert an unduly powerful influence. Alternatively, an interpretation more common in academic studies is to see masculinity as the ‘cultural wrapping’ that goes with being a male. In other words, masculinity – what it means to be a male, ‘manhood’ – rather than being an immutable ‘essence’, constant over time, space, and culture, is, in Michael Kimmel’s words, “a constantly changing collection of meanings that we construct through our relationships with ourselves, with each other, and with our world” (Kimmel 1994: 120).

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6 And as Connell observes women too can have an investment in patriarchy (Connell 1995: 241, 242). Indeed, we could argue that in some contexts the wife of the heterosexual, white-collar salaryman reaps the benefits of patriarchy more than the day labourer or the gay salaryman.

7 Perhaps the most famous example of this body of thought is Robert Bly’s Iron John (1990), the thesis of which, as Michael Kimmel notes quoting Bly’s words, is the proposition that “the structure at the bottom of the male psyche is still as firm as it was twenty thousand years ago” (Bly cited in Kimmel 1994: 120). Clatterbaugh discusses some of the other works that adopt the same (or similar) essentialist (and generally anti-feminist) stance as Bly, in his review of the literature pertaining to the men’s movements in the United States in the feminist journal Signs (Clatterbaugh 2000: 887–892). See also Donovan’s discussion of the Promise Keepers, arguably one of the most prominent of the conservative, men’s rights groups (with a strong evangelical Christian influence) in the mid-1990s (Donovan 1998).

At a deeper level of analysis, as with supposedly ‘common sense’ categories such as sex and gender, masculinity too, has been open to a fair degree of contestation. First, it is overly simplistic to talk of masculinity as a closed, unitary term in itself (see for example, Frank 1987: 160–162; Morgan 1992: 41, 42; Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994b, 1994c; Hearn and Collinson 1994; Connell 1996: 162–164; Kimmel 2001: 21–23; Morell 2001b: 6–11; Beynon 2002: 1–9). As Beynon, for instance, observes with reference to contemporary Britain (and arguably, much of the industrialized ‘West’): “Masculinity is always interpolated by cultural, historical, and geographical location and in our time the combined influence of feminism and the gay movement has exploded the conception of a uniform masculinity” (Beynon 2002: 1). Similarly, Cornwall and Lindisfarne, in a critique of Gilmore’s sweeping cross-cultural study of masculinity, *Manhood in the Making* (Gilmore 1990), draw attention to the problematic notion of a single core ‘masculinity’ that is a constituent component of men throughout the world. As they point out, Gilmore “assume[s] that maleness is unitary, grounded in evolution and innate psychological and biological dispositions, and categorically opposed to that which is female ... [h]e does not enquire how apparently unitary ‘persons’ are constituted and assumes that there is, in any setting, a single way of ‘being a man’” (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994c: 27; see also, Hart 1994: 50, 51). Rather as they (along with the various authors referred to above) suggest, it is more appropriate to talk about masculinities, to reflect the complexity and multiplicities that exist in reality (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994c:12). However, even with a recognition of this plurality, there still remains the danger of each (sub-) masculinity being reified into essentialized discrete units, sitting side-by-side independently of one another. Hence, notes Morgan, the tendency for the lumping together into categories such as ‘black masculinity’ or ‘working-class’ masculinity, with overly simplistic blanket stereotypes to characterize these sub-units of masculinity. To counter the danger of such slippages, it is necessary “to recognize that there is not simply a diversity of masculinities ... but that these masculinities are linked to each other, hierarchically, in terms of power” (Morgan 1992: 45; also Connell 2000: 10).9 It is these relations between different masculinities, that, as I

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9 Moreover, as Tomomi Shibuya, in a review of men’s studies and research on masculinities in Japan, cautions, stressing multiplicity and focusing exclusively on the ‘micro’ level of masculinity diverts attention away from the real issue of structural inequalities between men and women (Shibuya 2001: 454, 455; see also Roberson and Suzuki 2003b: 3; Taka 2003a). Another potential danger of stressing a plurality of masculinities, David Morgan cautions, is the possibility that recognition of this plurality may ironically reinforce notions of an essentialist universal core of masculinity (not unlike Gilmore’s implicit assumption of a common base of masculinity across the globe). Using an analogy of a common alcoholic base for different varieties of alcohol, Morgan suggests that “to talk of a plurality of masculinities seems to imply an array of different statuses each one of which we might call a ‘masculinity’ just as champagne, malt whisky, best bitter and sweet sherry are all alcoholic beverages” (Morgan 1992: 45). He suggests two possible responses for researchers confronted by this dilemma. The first is “to recognize that ‘masculinity’ is a term that is used in our society and that, as sociologists, we need to begin to explore the range of usages” (45, 46). The second “is to recognize
discuss in greater detail later in the chapter, are of particular significance. Of these intersecting and interacting masculinities, at any given point in time, one is “the culturally authoritative or hegemonic pattern of masculinity” (Connell 1996: 164; *italics in original*). The relationship between this hegemonic masculinity and other coexistent masculinities, as Connell has highlighted, can be one of complicity, subordination, or marginalization – or as I argue in this thesis, even a combination of these (see Connell 1995: 76–81; 1996: 164, 165).

The second area of contestation around the term masculinity reflects the unease some writers feel about the deployment of the term, and its ambiguous relationship with terms such as ‘maleness’, ‘manhood’, and the term ‘men’ (see Hart 1994: 50). Specifically, the questionings revolve around the assumption that “if ‘maleness’ is biological, then masculinity is cultural” (Beynon 2002: 2). A related concern on the part of some writers is the generally unchallenged equation of this ‘cultural’ masculinity with the ‘male’ body, and femininity with the ‘female’ body. This links back to some of the reservations expressed by some writers in relation to assumptions of a universal understanding of the sex/gender connection. As Cornwall and Lindisfarne note in relation to the tendency of writers to naturalize this link between a biologically male body and cultural masculinity: “By eliding the terms man/male/masculinity, they ignore the fact that it is not masculinity but *male* masculinity they are describing” (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994c: 20). Rather, they argue, there is no reason why masculinity should only apply to individuals with a body that is marked out as biologically male by the yardsticks of that particular culture. Echoing Helliwell’s observations about the Gerai sex/gender system, they assert that “the possession of an (anatomical) penis may only be contingently linked with the attributions of maleness. Not only ‘being a man’ but ‘being male’ can be interpreted differently in different situations” (37; see also Hart 1994: 50, 51; Beynon 2002: 9). Thus, in this sense, there is no reason why biological females cannot have a masculinity (nor why biological males cannot have a femininity) (Connell 2000: 29). Indeed, many of the recent works on ‘transgressive’ and/or ‘in-between’ sex and gender configurations and practices have highlighted precisely this aspect of the instability of the male/masculinity, female/femininity assumptions.10

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Another concern regarding the use of the terms masculinity/masculinities is the danger of glossing over and obfuscating the actual practices of men, and the power inequalities at work in relations between men and women, when a general, seemingly distant sociological label like masculinity/masculinities is deployed (see Hearn and Collinson 1992: 103–105, passim; see also Hearn 1994, 2004; Clatterbaugh 1998). In seeking to separate out and delineate the two terms, Hearn and Collinson, for instance argue that:

[one powerful way is to see men as existing and persisting in the material bases of society, in relation to particular social relations of production and reproduction; in comparison, masculinities exist and persist as ideology, often in their surface form in terms of elements of production and reproduction .... Particular masculinities are not fixed formulas but rather they are combinations of actions and signs, part powerful, part arbitrary, performed in reaction and relation to complex material relations and emotional demands; these signify that this is a man. Masculinities are thus ideological signs of particular men of the gender class of men ....

(Hearn and Collinson 1994: 104; see also Edley and Wetherell 1996: 106)

A further consideration related to terminology is the distinction between the terms ‘male/s’ and ‘man/men’, and the need to avoid conflating the two (Hearn and Collinson 1994: 100, 101). While ‘male’ carries connotations of biological male sex, ‘man/men’ signifies a specific type of ‘male-ness’ – generally not being a ‘boy’, and outwardly displaying whatever the hegemonic expectations of ‘male-ness’ might be in that particular cultural setting. Thus, for the sake of argument, a ‘cross-dressing’ adult female sexed person may ‘pass’ successfully enough to be considered a ‘man’, without being a ‘biological male’. This example, while side-stepping the thorny issues related to biology/sex, culture/gender binaries explored earlier, serves to underscore Hearn’s point that “not all men are males or vice versa, but men as a gender are predominantly males, and are defined in most direct relation to that sex, male” (Hearn 1994: 51; italics in original).

Men, Males, and Masculinity Across Languages

Such issues of terminology become even more complicated when the discussion moves between languages and cultures. Terms denoting ‘male’, ‘man’, and ‘masculinity’ may have quite different connotations and applications outside of English. Similarly, rendering the nuances of local articulations relating to equivalent terms may alter the original significance of the term or there may even not be equivalents in different languages. Angie Hart in her ethnographic study of the male
clients of female prostitutes in Alicante (Spain) draws attention to this problematic issue. Reviewing the English language ethnographic literature relevant to ‘masculinity’ in Spain, she observes that:

> [g]rappling with discussions of ‘masculinity’ by ethnographers of Spain renders the reader exasperated and bewildered, for they muddle up indigenous uses of the related terms macho, machista, hombre, hombria and masculino … if ethnographers are to discuss Spanish concepts using English words, some clarification is necessary.

(Hart 1994: 50; italics in original)

As Hart points out, the Spanish equivalent of the term ‘masculinity’, masculinidad is rarely used, even in academic discourse; “consequently the two terms cannot be directly translated; the one does not share the intellectual genealogy of the other” (Hart 1994: 51). Hence, to use it with her informants in her field-site would not have made sense. On the contrary, her informants

> … used many different words to talk about men. In general they used the word hombre (man) and other ‘synonyms’ such as tio (bloke), varón (man/bloke) or, somewhat tongue in cheek, chico (boy/lad). Macho referred to an instinctive, animal aspect of male sexuality, rather than to the contrived image of strength to which it refers in British English.

(Hart 1994: 51; italics in original; see also Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994c: 16, 17)

This complexity (and complications) of transposing/ translating the richness and gradations of local expressions into English has been discussed in the works of a number of writers discussing men and masculinities outside of the Anglo-American cultural zone (see for instance, Herzfeld 1985. Loizos 1994; Shire 1994: Gutmann 1996; Vale de Almeida 1996; Louie 2003). In the case of my research there were similar issues related to being able to satisfactorily express concepts and terminology between Japanese and English without significantly skewing the original meaning and implication. This is an issue of particular pertinence as many of the later chapters revolve around informants’ voices. While I reflect on some of the wider methodological issues and concerns in the second half of this chapter, this would be an appropriate place to highlight some these translation ‘fault-lines and disjunctures’ related to concepts such as gender and masculinity.

As Jennifer Robertson points out, among feminist and gender studies scholars in Japan, sex, gender, and sexuality “have been distinguished in principle since around
1970" (Robertson 1998: 18). Sex in the biological sense is denoted by the term (and corresponding kanji Chinese character) sei.11 As far as references to gender as a general concept are concerned, the transliterated term jendâ has become widespread in recent years, particularly in social sciences/humanities literature, and also in terms of everyday discourse (see for instance, Itô and Muta 1998; Taga 2001b; Amano and Kimura 2003). However, gender is also sometimes expressed using either sei, or, seibetsu or seisâ (‘sex difference’) particularly in formal pre-feminist academic or scientific literature.12 Moreover, references to specific genders – the male gender, female gender – continue to be linked to the word sei. Thus, the word dansei, comprised of dan, the Chinese reading for the Japanese word otoko, prefixing sei, connotes either male sex, or male gender (see Robertson 1998: 18). In terms of everyday parlance, otoko is used more commonly than the more formal, academically-sounding dansei, as a noun to denote a ‘man’. Otoko can also have multiple meanings. Nelson’s Modern Reader’s Japanese-English Character Dictionary, for instance, lists the following: “man, male; fellow; adult; manhood; male servant; paramour” (1974: 621). Moreover, otoko may be joined to the word hito (person) to denote an adult male/man (otoko no hito), or to the word ko (child) when referring to a boy/male child (otoko no ko). However, the ¬no ko or ¬no hito is frequently dropped in conversation, and whether the reference is to a child or an adult male needs to be deduced from the context.13 Gender in terms of attributes – ‘masculine’, ‘manly’, and so on – is described by adding the suffix rashii, with, as Robertson points out, “its allusion to appearance or likeness” (Robertson 1998: 18).14 Thus, otokorashii could denote physical appearance, or behaviour, or attributes (such as tone of voice) considered ‘manly’ or ‘masculine’, measured against the hegemonic

11 The Chinese character (kanji) associated with the term has three possible readings, two Chinese readings (on-yomi) and one indigenous Japanese reading (kun-yomi). The two Chinese readings are sei, the English meanings for which Nelson’s authoritative Modern Reader’s Japanese-English Character Dictionary lists as “sex, gender”, and shô, translated as “nature, disposition; quality; purity”. The translation for the Japanese reading, saga is “one’s nature, custom” (1974 rev. edn.: 398). Of the three it is the first, sei, which is used most frequently, in compound words combined with other kanji – as in seikaku, for disposition or personality, seisokу, sexual desire, seibetsu, for sex differences (in terms of male and female), or seibyō, for sexually transmitted diseases.


13 Another – quite explicitly biological – term used to refer to a male is oyu, a term normally used with reference to male animals, but along with the female counterpart, mesu occasionally used as a slang expression for human beings. All of the rules of conjugation for otoko and dansei set out, also apply to the term onna (female, woman, girl) and josei (female sex, female gender). Thus, we would talk about onna no ko, onna no hito, etc.

14 Another suffix used in conjunction with sex/gender labels is teki. Robertson argues that whereas rashii signifies “proximity of a body to a gender stereotype”, teki is used “to draw attention to a body’s resemblance to a particular female or male … joseiteki (like a/that female) or danseiteki (like a/that male)” (Robertson 1998: 18). I, however, do not think teki refers to a specific female or male, but rather a specific female or male body’s resemblance to expectations of femininity and masculinity. Robertson also mentions other suffixes commonly used when talking about sex/gender. These include -ppoi, used, for instance, to refer to a girl/woman/female who acts in a “boyish/mannish” fashion, mitai (like/looks like), and no yō (like, “in the manner of”) (219, n. 22).
ideals of ‘masculinity’ and ‘manliness’. An equivalent term for masculinity would be the term danseisei (literally, ‘the quality of maleness’) (Taga 2001b: 18–20). However, in terms of everyday usage it is the expression otokorashisa which has more resonance, rather than the remote, stiffly academic danseisei. For instance, Itō Kimio, the scholar responsible for bringing studies on men and masculinities into the mainstream in the 1990s, uses otokorashisa in his discussions of hegemonic masculinity (Itō 1993, 1996: 88–125). Strictly speaking, however, otokorashisa refers to ‘manliness’ (or even, ‘macho-ness’, in the sense of the English usage of the Spanish original), rather than masculinity (danseisei), despite a tendency to conflate the two terms. While the above may come across as little more than an intellectual exercise in semantic dexterity, in actual fact these nuances and subtleties of expression do have a bearing on actual ‘on-the-ground’ research, and the way this gets written up in English. In the context of my own research, in discussions with my informants it was often difficult to untangle the subtle differences between terms like dansei, otoko, otoko no hito, otoko no ko. For instance, when an informant used an expression such as ‘otoko toshite’, did he mean ‘as a (biological) male’ or ‘as a (social) man’. Or, although the distinction between adult and child status is marked by the addition of ~no hito or ~no ko after otoko, in conversation these are often dropped. Thus, in a situation where an informant was reminiscing about his childhood, a reference to ‘otoko’ could equally be ‘male’, ‘boy’, or even (depending on the context) ‘man’, in English. I raise these issues here to signal the complexity underlying what may initially come across as simple, unproblematic terms, requiring simple mechanistic translation from Japanese to the English ‘equivalent’. I will return to some of these issues again later in the chapter, when discussing the methodological and ethical concerns related to this research.

15 This notion of otokorashisa as a hegemonic standard against which each individual’s masculinity is measured is not dissimilar to the concerns in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Britain with appropriate ‘manliness’ (see, Roper and Tosh 1991a; Sinha 1995). This concern with appropriate ‘manliness’ is brought out, as Lunsing discusses, in the expression “otoko rashiku shinasi: behave like a man”. Consequently, he continues, “men who discover feelings, behaviour or ... physical features in themselves that do not fit the idea of otoko rashisa are obvious candidates for dissenting with what their surroundings expect of them” (Lunsing 2003: 33).

16 For a discussion of some of the academic semantics surrounding terminology in men’s studies (danseigaku) and research into men and masculinities (dansei kenkyū) in Japan, see Ōyama and Ōtsuka (2001), Taga (2001a, 2003, forthcoming); also Shibuya (2001).

17 The technically ‘accurate’ translation for masculinity, ‘danseisei’, drew a blank from most informants when mentioned during the interviews, and even otokorashisa, whilst familiar to most, generally evoked a response only after some deliberation.

18 For further discussion of some of the complexities and problematic surrounding translation, see Venuti (1995, esp. 8–30, 158–189), Besemer (2002: 9–35); in the context of fieldwork research, see Borchgrevink (2001).
Defining Masculinity

While I believe that drawing attention to some of these prickly issues surrounding terminology is important, it does not mean we should abandon trying to find terminology suitable to the specific research project. For the purposes of this research, I believe masculinity/ies to be the most appropriate umbrella term that encompasses and captures all the dynamics and complexities at work. The ways in which my informants constructed and articulated their views on being a male/being a man were crucial to the research. However, there is another layer which is not conveyed unless we deploy a conceptual construct like ‘masculinity’, rather than just labels like ‘being a male/man’. As Connell notes, cautioning against abandoning use of the term ‘masculinity’ in favour of talking just about men or men’s practices:

... we might want to talk about a lot more than ‘men’. We might want to talk about democracy in gender relations, the many-layered resistances to equality, and how to form alliances to move towards it. We might want to talk about desire, its intractabilities, complexities and reversals. We might want to talk about work and its relations to consciousness, or about education and its vicissitudes. In all these cases we will need concepts that go beyond the categories of ‘men’ and ‘women’ to the many forms of practice through which they are involved in the world of gender.

(Connell 2000: 17)

Thus, he points out, there is “a need for concepts that name patterns of gender practice, not just groups of people” (Connell 2000: 17).19 The definition he provides (elsewhere) for ‘masculinity’ adequately meets this demand:

‘Masculinity’, to the extent the term can be ...defined at all, is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality, and culture.

(Connell 1995: 71)

Moreover, one significant advantage of using the term ‘masculinity’ is that it allows us to conceptualize ‘masculinity’ as a collective whole, as a structure at the macro level which is linked to, and overlaps with, other structures such as class and race. Furthermore, just as is the case with gender, conceptualizing masculinity as a collective whole allows for us to dismantle it and examine the dynamics taking place within that collective structure – to think in terms of a collectivity, or rather a matrix of diverse masculinities, intersecting and interacting in varied ways. Moreover, this

19 Abandoning the use of the term, Connell warns, would merely result in the need to create “other gender concepts that perform the same tasks” (Connell 2000: 17). Connell’s caution is a response to
matrix of masculinities is also infused with dynamics of power relations circulating through the intersections and interweavings. One particular form of masculinity — in the case of Japan, for instance, the discourse of masculinity built around the salaryman — becomes the "culturally authoritative or hegemonic pattern of masculinity" (Connell 1996: 164; italics in original). This hegemonic masculinity intersects and interacts with the other co-existing masculinities, which may be subordinated, marginalized, or complicit with the hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995: 78–81; 1996: 164).

**Hegemony and Hegemonic Masculinity**

This would be an appropriate point to clarify the concept of hegemonic masculinity, and its connection to the term it draws upon, 'hegemony'. Given the centrality of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, it would be useful at this juncture to flesh out the term. The concept is closely associated with the work of Australian sociologist, R.W. Connell. Connell drew upon the concept of 'hegemony' as originally applied by Marxian theorist Antonio Gramsci in relation to "how a dominant (economic) class controls society, pressing its definition of the situation" (Hearn 2004: 54). Connell applied this use of hegemony in the context of gender (specifically masculinity). It is primarily his conceptualization of the term that I apply in this thesis. The genesis of the concept's application to gender goes back to Connell's early critiques of sex role theory due to its inherent conservatism (with the potential for slippages into essentialist notions of male and female roles) and neglect of concepts of power relations and change (see Carrigan, Connell, and Lee 1987; Demetriou 2001: 337–340). It gained wide currency following the publication in 1987 of Connell's groundbreaking monograph, *Gender and Power*, and has since been elaborated upon and deployed by a range of writers, occasionally in quite loose and opportunistic ways (Martin 1998: 473; also, Donaldson 1993: 645, 646; Chen 1999: 586, 587; Demetriou 2001: 347; Hearn 2004: 58). However, notwithstanding the various uses and abuses the concept may have been put through, hegemonic masculinity continues to remain an important analytical tool, not least due to its recognition of the embeddedness of power hierarchies within the schema of gender relations. Before critics like Clatterbaugh (1998), and Hearn (1994, 1998; also 2004), who question the usefulness of the term.

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20 See Morrell (2001b: 6–11) and Beynon (2002: 16, 17) for a clear, concise outline of the key aspects of the concept of hegemonic masculinity. For a sample of the various ways the concept of hegemonic masculinity has been deployed in the literature, see, for instance, Hanke (1990), Nilan (1995), Bird (1996), Pyke (1996), Vale de Almeida (1996: in particular, 159–170), Chen (1999), Kendall (2000), etc. Connell himself recognizes the criticisms aimed at the term as a consequence of the elasticity it has sometimes taken on — in one of his recent works, *The Men and the Boys*, he notes that there has been "a tendency to reify this term" so that it ends up becoming a "fixed character type, something like the once-famous "Type A personality"" (2000: 23; see also Connell 1998: 475, 476; Martin 1998: 473; Morrell 2001b: 10; Hearn 2004: 58).
exploring the notion of hegemonic masculinity as deployed in this thesis, it would be useful to set out the main features of the concept of hegemony, in its original Gramscian sense.

*Hegemony*

An appropriate starting point would be the definition of hegemony provided by Connell. Hegemony, Connell tells us,

>[m]eans ... a social ascendancy achieved in a play of social forces that extends beyond contests of brute force into the organization of private life and cultural processes. Ascendancy of one group of men over another achieved at the point of a gun, or by the threat of unemployment is not hegemony. Ascendancy which is embedded in religious doctrine and practice, mass media content, wage structures, the design of housing, welfare/taxation policies and so forth, is.

(Connell 1987: 184)

What is significant is that the achievement of hegemony goes beyond the use of brute force (although as Connell points out it does not necessarily *preclude* the use of force [Connell 1987: 184]). Rather hegemony works in more subtle, pervasive ways through ideologies and discourses circulating through society. As Donaldson points out, hegemony

>is about winning and holding power and the formation (and destruction) of social groups in the process .... Hegemony involves persuasion of the greater part of the population, particularly through the media, and the organization of social institutions in ways that appear ‘natural’, ‘ordinary’, ‘normal.’

(Donaldson 1993: 645)

Thus, what is significant about hegemony is its *ordinariness*, that although force and coercion *may* be part of the process, its efficacy is far more powerful when it circulates through society invisibly and unproblematically. In other words, “the term describes the historical process of establishing a commonsense *Weltanschauung* (worldview) that functions to secure the consent of the oppressed in their own oppression” (Chen 1999: 586; see also Scott 1985: 314–318; Komter 1991: 57, 58). However, it is important to note that hegemony is never total. Connell points out that

>‘hegemony’ does not mean total cultural dominance, the obliteration of alternatives. It means ascendancy achieved within a balance of forces, that is a state of play. Other patterns and groups are subordinated rather than eliminated.

(Connell 1987: 184)
At stake in these complex dynamics of hegemony is the role played by the ideology of the dominant group in attempting to ‘naturalize’ its ‘worldview’. Thus, it would be useful at this juncture to expand on the notion of ideology, and situate it within the framework of the argument in this thesis.

**Ideology**

The term ‘ideology’ has been deployed in a myriad of ways. One introductory work on the concept lists over ten different definitions of the term. These include:

- a body of ideas, ideals, values or beliefs; a philosophy; a religion; false values to keep people under control; a set of habits or rituals; the medium through which a culture shapes its world; ideas promoted by a specific social class, gender or racial group; the values that sustain dominant structures of power, the process whereby a culture produces meanings and roles for its subjects; the alliance of culture and language; [and] the presentation of cultural constructs as natural facts.

(Cavallaro 2001: 76; see also Eagleton 1991: 1, 2)

As Cavallaro points out, these definitions encompass both those that define the term “neutrally, as a set of ideas with no overt political connotations, and critically, as a set of ideas through which people fashion themselves and others within specific socio-historical contexts, and through which the prosperity of certain groups in concerned” (Cavallaro 2001: 76). Ideology in relation to the Gramscian concept of hegemony, is situated in the latter framework. As Eagleton points out, “hegemony is ... a broader category than ideology: it includes ideology, but is not reducible to it” (Eagleton 1991: 112; *italics in original*). Rather, ideology is one of the ‘tools’ through which hegemony is achieved. ²¹

It is ideology in this sense that I deploy in this thesis – the mediums and processes whereby cultural meanings are produced, inflected by (but not entirely determined by) the “values that sustain dominant structures of power” (Eagleton 1991: 76). Thus, ideology, as I see it, is not about ‘false consciousness’ in the sense employed by some Marxists, with an implication that a true ‘scientific’ reality is its flip-side (Mills 1997 32, 33; Gluck 1985: 7, 8). Nor is ideology a closed semiotic discourse-system, independent of social, political, and economic institutions and practices; as Connell

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²¹Several authors caution against conflating the two terms, ideology and hegemony (see for instance, Mumby 1988: 86, 87; Gutmann 1996: 19, 20; Cavallaro 2001: 78, 79). Hegemony “speaks to the dominant ideas and practices that are so pervasive as to constitute common sense for members of society . . .” whereas “ideology . . . describes the outlook and conscious beliefs of particular social groups as distinguished from other social groups” (Gutmann 1996: 19). Thus, ideology is far more open to challenge and contestation, although, as I argue later, if we consider hegemony as a process, it too, may be far more open to contestation and challenge, than is often made out to be the case.
cautions, “neglecting institutions, economics and the routines of politics means that analyses of ideology are often parked on top of crude categorical assumptions about power and the relations between person and group” (Connell 1987: 242). Rather, as Carol Gluck stresses, ideological formations are “tied to the social groups that produce and are produced by them”. Ideology, she reminds us, “does not march disembodied through time, but exists in a concrete and particular social history that has not only dates but also names and faces” (Gluck 1985: 8). Indeed, it might be useful, as Terry Eagleton suggests, “to view ideology …as a particular set of effects within discourses” (1991: 194; italics in original).

Discourse

The term discourse, as I deploy it in this thesis, is neither in the sense of a ‘post-modern’ replacement for the term ‘ideology’, nor in the sense of the two terms being mutually exclusive. Rather, while I see the two terms as distinct constructs, they are nevertheless intertwined with each other, and both are implicated in the concepts of hegemony and hegemonic masculinity. I use ‘discourse’ in the Foucauldian sense of a body of knowledge built around specific culturally and historically produced meanings: “how things are written about, spoken about and thought about in a given society at a given time” (Beynon 2002: 159, 160). Thus, when I refer to salaryman masculinity as a discourse in this thesis, I am referring to all the meanings, associations, and practices that have been built up around the term – the particular way of living, working, ‘playing’, relating to women and other men, and so forth, of the individual men who fall within the parameters of being a salaryman. For instance, the cultural equation of the term salaryman with the middle-class, married, heterosexual, grey-suited white-collar worker commuting to a full-time home-maker wife and two children is an illustration of the power of the discourse of salaryman masculinity (see Roberson and Suzuki 2003b: 6, 7).23

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23 Roberson and Suzuki, drawing upon Kelly’s discussion of the middle-class in post-war Japan (see Chapter Three) note that “the salaryman/middle-class image as ideal, is influential in the identities and lifestyles of many others.” Moreover, as they continue as long as one is critically aware of the tensions and distinctions among ideology, ideal and reality, extending the discourse on/of men as salarymen beyond the middle class can be an important exercise” (Roberson and Suzuki 2003b: 7; italics in original). This relates back to the point raised in the previous chapter, that the association of the salaryman with the ‘middle-class’ (indeed the widespread notion of Japan as a predominantly ‘middle-class’ society, in itself), reflects the class ideology at work in the discourse of the salaryman. This discourse of the salaryman as the embodiment of ‘middle-class’ masculinity is premised, as pointed out in the introductory chapter when defining the term ‘salaryman’, on a relatively broad
Additionally, discourses are processes, which may (and often do) have ideologies—of gender, of class, of nationalism, for instance—embedded within them. In this respect, as Steinberg points out a discourse is not only a process in and of itself, but is also an ideological process (Steinberg 1991: 187). Moreover, discourse can be

a hegemonic process because it orders collective understandings of the world in particular ways, privileging some meanings and precluding others that are potentially subversive.

(Steinberg 1991: 188; see also Purvis and Hunt 1993: 497)

Thus, both ideology and discourse are interrelated concepts, and both in turn are elements within the concept of hegemony outlined above. Having clarified these underlying concepts, we can now focus on the notion of ‘hegemonic masculinity’, and its application to the present research.

Hegemonic Masculinity and Its Complexities and Contradictions

From our discussion of hegemony above, it follows that when we talk about hegemonic masculinity, we are talking about similar dynamics whereby in a given context, among various masculinities, one particular form occupies a position of hegemony. As Connell notes:

[i]n any given social setting there is rarely just one masculinity. There are usually multiple masculinities. What used to be called ‘the male role’ is best understood as the culturally authoritative or hegemonic pattern of masculinity.

(Connell 1996: 164; italics in original)

While this hegemonic form of masculinity may be the cultural ‘ideal’, by no means need it be “the most common pattern of masculinity” (154). Co-existing with hegemonic masculinity are other masculinities which may be subordinated, marginalized, or implicit with the hegemonic masculinity. Indeed, as Connell argues, hegemonic masculinity

is always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women. The interplay between different forms of masculinity is an important part of how a patriarchal social order works.

(Connell 1987 183)

definition of (social) ‘class’, which (along the lines of Bourdieu) places as much (if not greater) weight on the ‘cultural capital’, as on the ‘economic capital’, of a particular class (see Roberson 1998: 13, 14; Ashikari 2003: 8, 9; also Bourdieu 1987).
Hegemonic masculinity, then, can be considered to be the dominant or socio-culturally privileged way of ‘being male’ in a particular society, at a particular point in history. In some senses we can think of it as an ‘ideal’ or a ‘blueprint’ which is by-and-large unattainable for many (if not most) men, but nevertheless exerts a “powerful and often unconscious presence in our lives” (Kaufman 1994: 144). Indeed, as Connell himself points out, the hegemonic form need not be the most common form of masculinity, nor the “most comfortable” (Connell 2000: 11). What hegemonic masculinity does have in its favour is power — over femininity as well as over other subordinated forms of masculinity. However, as I argue further on, it is also important to recognize that while the power balance may be in favour of the hegemonic form of masculinity, the flows of power are not necessarily unidirectional at all times. There may be occasions when hegemonic masculinity itself is subject to alterations and modifications, as a consequence of pressures and challenges from women, and from other masculinities.

This reflects the point raised above, that hegemony is not all-encompassing and total. This incomplete hold of hegemonic power, Connell argues, is what accounts for the “everyday contestations that … occur in social life … [as well as] historical changes in definitions of gender patterns on the grand scale” (Connell 1987: 184). It is these undercurrents of contestation that account for the shifts that take place in hegemonic discourses and ideologies.

### Hegemonic Masculinity as ‘Hybrid Bloc’

The way these contestations work to shape and ‘craft’ hegemonic masculinity can be better appreciated if we further dissect the concept of hegemony along the lines suggested by Demetrakis Demetriou in his discussion of Connell’s deployment of the term ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (Demetriou 2001).

Demetriou identifies two constituent elements within hegemony, which he labels ‘external’ and internal’ hegemony. ‘External’ hegemony, according to Demetriou, “is connected to the institutionalization of men’s dominance over women”, as evidenced in the structures of the state, labour market, and the family. ‘Internal’ hegemony, on the other hand, refers to “hegemony over other masculinities …a social ascendancy

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24 For discussion of the nexus between gender and power, see Connell (1987: 107–111); also Davis, Leijenaar, and Oldersma (1991) for a selection of a range of writings from different standpoints.
of one group of men over another ... best exemplified by the hegemony of heterosexual men over gay men" (Demetriou 2001: 341). The two are linked in the sense that "internal hegemony or dominance over other masculinities ... seems to be a means for the achievement of external hegemony rather than an end in itself" (344). Demetriou points out that there are parallels between the external/internal binary in Connell’s work, and Gramsci’s original notion of hegemony. Although, according to Demetriou, Gramsci never explicitly distinguished between an external and internal hegemony, the notion is implicit in his distinction between the leadership and domination duality within class hegemony. The former, whose objective is to form a “historic bloc” that unites all allied groups under the umbrella of the group seeking hegemony by making their conception of the world homogeneous and consistent with the project of domination” (344, 345), may be considered analogous to internal hegemony, and the latter (domination) with external hegemony. Moreover just as internal hegemony is a means towards external hegemony, leadership is also “a precondition and a means to ... [domination] but not an end in itself” (345).

Of the two constituents within hegemonic masculinity, it is internal hegemony – the relations of power between hegemonic masculinity and other masculinities that it intersects and interacts with – that this thesis focuses on. Demetriou, claiming to draw upon Gramsci’s understanding of the processes of internal hegemony, contends that rather than the dominant hegemonic masculinity simply dominating, suppressing, or marginalizing other masculinities, the relationships at work are far more dialectic in nature, involving both “reciprocity and mutual interaction” (Demetriou 2001: 345). Gramsci saw this dialectic resulting in a “historic bloc”, where “elements of the ‘kindred groups’”, rather than being “totally subordinated or eliminated ... are appropriated and ... become essential constitutive elements” (345). Demetriou suggests that, in a similar fashion, rather than conceptualizing the engagement between hegemonic masculinity and non-hegemonic masculinity as a “dualism, as two distinct and clearly differentiated configurations of practice” (347; italics in original), it should be seen as a “hybrid bloc” wherein hegemonic masculinity takes on board and incorporates (selective) aspects of non-hegemonic masculinities (Demetriou 2001: 348). Consequently, what we get is a situation where the ideology of hegemonic masculinity, and the shape its discourse takes, may actually be altered quite significantly, possibly leading to a conclusion that it is no

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25 Demetriou points out that on a theoretical level Connell recognizes that different masculinities always interact, and that hegemonic masculinity may be influenced and shaped by subordinate or marginalized masculinities; for instance, through processes of “authorization”, such as black athletes in the United States becoming exemplars of hegemonic masculinity. However, he contends that Connell fails to explore these dynamics further and tends to see the interaction, not in terms of “a hybrid historic bloc, as in Gramsci’s account, but a hegemonic masculinity that is clearly demarcated from subordinated and marginalized ones” (Demetriou 2001: 346).
longer hegemonic. However, as Demetriou points out, this process actually strengthens hegemonic masculinity and reinforces patriarchy, which has also been modified and re-shaped. A similar observation is made by Robert Hanke with reference to depictions of more 'sensitive' masculinities on American television. Hanke argues that such representations may represent some shift in the cultural meanings of masculinity without an accompanying shift in social structural arrangements, thereby recuperating patriarchal ideology by making it more adaptable to contemporary social conditions and more able to accommodate counterhegemonic forces, such as liberal-feminist ideology and gay/lesbian politics.

(Hanke 1990: 245).

The above is indeed what I am suggesting in this thesis too – that while the discourse built around salaryman masculinity is crafted and re-crafted in response to shifting socio-cultural and economic conditions, the core assumptions (the centrality of the work/masculinity nexus, the pivotal role of heterosexual performance) remain basically unchanged. Thus, as I discuss in Chapter Four, popular culture icons like Salaryman Kintarō, who on the surface may appear to be the very antithesis of salaryman masculinity, actually work to strengthen (as well as modify) salaryman masculinity through incorporation of elements from a rougher, working-class masculinity associated with bōsōzoku biker gangs.

However, at the same time, my argument is slightly different from Demetriou's in that I suggest that the processes at work in shaping this hybrid masculine bloc may incorporate not just appropriation and integration by hegemonic masculinity, but also dynamics of resistance, subversion, and playful engagement vis-à-vis the discourse of hegemonic masculinity. Hence, we are faced with a situation whereby the hegemonic masculinity is shaped by (and in turn shapes) other masculinities, and importantly, by surrounding social, cultural, economic, and political institutions, structures, and practices. Thus, the shape of the ideology and discourse of hegemonic masculinity is an ongoing project, whereby

[n]ew groups may challenge old solutions and construct a new hegemony. The dominance of any group of men may be challenged ... Hegemony, then, is a historically mobile relation. Its ebb and flow is a key element of the picture of masculinity ...

(Connell 1995: 77, 78)

This negotiation takes place both at the level of the individual, as various different masculinities may (and often do) coexist within one person and also at the wider

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26 See also Donovan's discussion of the Promise Keepers (Donovan 1998).
societal level where the hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities interact.\footnote{Indeed, as Cornwall and Lindisfarne argue, we could talk of hegemonic masculinities as "in different contexts, different hegemonic masculinities are imposed by emphasizing certain attributes."

Moreover, as stressed above, within these engagements underlying the constructing and sustaining of hegemonic masculinity there may be the concurrent occurrence of both compliance \textit{and} resistance, both at the macro societal level, and at the micro level of the individual male.

\textbf{Resistance and Hegemonic Masculinity}

This leads us to the next concept intertwining with my argument. This is the notion of ‘resistance’ to the power of hegemony – a refusal/reluctance to take on board and be dominated by the hegemonic ideology. Resistance can take varied forms, from active, violent acts of insubordination and revolt, to quieter, more subtle acts of non-conformity. It is the latter that James Scott in his ethnographic study of a peasant community in Malaysia, termed ‘everyday forms of resistance’ (Scott 1985). Scott’s work was specifically concerned with everyday forms of resistance as a manifestation of class struggle among the peasantry against exploitation – by landlords and wealthier landowning farmers, as well as by the state and institutions of the state. In explaining his use of the expression, he notes that much of the historical work on the peasantry was slanted towards instances of ‘open’, often spectacular forms of resistance/rebellion when the peasantry made it into historical and archival records, usually due to uprisings and insurrections which threatened the state and power elites. However, these displays were few and far between. Scott draws attention to far more mundane, but ongoing everyday forms of resistance (what he refers to as “typical ‘garden variety’ resistance” [1985: 241]) which “require little or no coordination or planning … and … typically avoid any direct symbolic confrontation with authority or with elite norms” (Scott 1985: 29). These ‘everyday forms of resistance’ are typically “informal, often covert” (33), and often take the form of mundane (and even symbolic) acts of resistance; in the words of Scott (bearing in mind that his object of study is specifically the peasantry), “the prosaic but constant struggle” that takes the form of “the ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups: foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage” (Scott 1985: 29).

Following on from Scott’s work, conceptualizations of resistance highlighting nuances previously ignored or overlooked, have become a focus for numerous
studies across a range of disciplines. Thus, for instance, Yuko Ogasawara’s study of female clerical office workers, (known generically as OLs or ‘Office Ladies’), in Japanese organizations, draws upon Scott’s notion of everyday resistance in discussing the acts of insubordination and power play that OLs employ (both individually and collectively) vis-à-vis ostensibly more powerful male co-workers and superiors (Ogasawara 1998). David Collinson’s discussion of male shop-floor culture in Britain highlights various forms of individual and collective resistance, including humour, employed by the workers to subvert or deflect management power. (Collinson 1992; also Collinson 1988). The uses of humour as an instrument of resistance (or, significantly, subordination) in the engagements between hegemonic and other masculinities is also addressed in Paul Willis’ study in the 1970s of working-class high-school youth in Britain (Willis 1977). Other studies have drawn attention to resistance in socio-cultural ‘nooks and crannies’ often overlooked in grander, more ambitious studies of resistance. Among these are Aihwa Ong’s classic study of hantu ‘spirit possession’ on the shop-floor among female factory workers in Malaysia, Lila Abu-Lughod’s discussion of poetry as a weapon of empowerment among Bedouin women, and Kirin Narayan’s study of songs among women in the Kangra Valley in India (Ong 1987; Abu-Lughod 1986, 1990; Narayan 1996). Indeed, previously unacknowledged spaces of resistance formed the focus of much of the work of two emergent ‘schools’ of theory in the last third of the twentieth century – the writings of researchers associated with the Birmingham School in Cultural Studies, and many of the works associated with subaltern studies in the area of postcolonial theory.

A problem with some of the earlier literature on resistance, including the works of Willis and Scott, was the tendency to treat the complexities of resistance in an overly simplistic manner and/or to excessively romanticize both the acts and the agents. This limitation has been acknowledged and critiqued in more recent works in the area. Collinson, commenting on Willis’ study of working-class youth, raises concerns about essentialist and reductionist assumptions about working-class culture and subjectivity, which “impute an exaggerated radicalism to working class cultural practices ...[and] assume a pre-existing notion of self-hood that is authentic, self-produced and maintained against an objective, oppressive and material world” (Collinson 1992: 224). Aihwa Ong notes the tendency to theorize power in binarized terms: “monopoly of power versus the powerless, domination versus resistance, exploitation versus protest” (Ong 1987: 217).

... over others” (1994c: 20).

28 Willis also discusses resistance through humour (among other practices) among adults as an expression of working-class masculinity in a later work (Willis 1979).
Dorinne Kondo, in her discussion of the practices of ‘resistance’ adopted by her co-workers in the confectionery maker where she conducted fieldwork, also draws attention to the nuances and complexities that need to be taken into account (Kondo 1994). While acknowledging Scott’s contribution in challenging previously held assumptions about resistance as being limited to “formalized organized acts” (187), Kondo also questions Scott’s overly simple assumptions about power. In common with the observations made by Ong (1987) and Collinson (1992), Kondo finds the ways that the individuals she interacted with in the confectionery maker, did not necessarily engage in neatly compartmentalized practices when it came to negotiations of power and resistance. She comments on Scott’s analysis of resistance vis-à-vis her own experience:

Nowhere [i.e. in Scott’s work] do we find that people like my co-workers can be caught in contradictions, that they simultaneously resist and produce, challenge and appropriate meanings of _uchi no kaisha_ as they deploy the different meanings of the idiom in different contexts. That people inevitably participate to some degree in their own oppressions, buying into hegemonic ideologies even as they struggle against those ideologies, is a poignant and paradoxical facet of human life given short shrift in Scott’s schema.

(Kondo 1994: 187, 188).

Kondo stresses that the twists, contradictions, ambiguities, and multiplicities that characterized her informants’ dealings with power can only be adequately conveyed if we move beyond “clean-cut, clearly defined categories that can exhaustively account for the world” (Kondo 1994: 188). Rather, we need to move to a “more complex view of power and human agency” that

would see people as decentered, multiple selves, caught in sometimes wrenching contradictions as they craft themselves and their lives. They may rearrange power relations as they appropriate and redeploy cultural meanings, but they can never escape to a romantic place beyond power and therefore beyond contradiction and irony.

(Kondo 1994 189)

While I would question the notion of a completely decentered and multiple self, the features of power and resistance that Kondo highlights, particularly the notion of a self that may simultaneously (or at different levels) resist and buy into the dominant ideology of power and its diffusion through discursive practices, are of particular significance for my own research.

On one level, Scott’s discussions of Malay peasants’ everyday forms of resistance, and the critiques of it, may appear to have little or no bearing on our earlier
discussion of hegemonic masculinity. Yet, while the specifics may be different, the engagements between hegemonic and other masculinities may in fact take the form of these ‘everyday forms of resistance’ and ‘everyday forms of compliance’. Moreover (and this perhaps is the crux of theoretical argument, the point of convergence of all the lines of the conceptual map), these engagements take place in the in-between, ambiguous spaces between masculinities. They occur both at the level of the individual male, and at the societal level – for example, between hegemonic ‘salaryman’ masculinity and a marginalized and/or subordinated masculinity (working-class, non-heterosexual, student/non-productive, etc.). An example from my fieldwork research, might help illustrate the argument. The attitudes displayed to company-organized induction workshops by the young male employees of corporate sector organizations was indicative of these passive, everyday forms of resistance. These highly formalized, indeed regimented, workshops are in many respects designed to inculcate the values of hegemonic corporate masculinity into the new entrants. This is particularly important since these males are at the transitional interface between two discourses of masculinity – youth/student masculinity and the hegemonic shakaijin (adult, responsible member of society) masculinity; thus the ‘crafting’ project is all the more important. However, virtually all my informants indicated that despite outwardly conforming and going through the appropriate gestures/performances at the time, they regarded these courses as a waste of time, that they had not made them ‘better’ or ‘more loyal’ employees. Indeed, according to many, the only benefit arising out of these programmes was that they were able to make friends with others in their age-cohort inducted into the organization at the same time. There are other instances of similar minor acts of resisting hegemonic masculinity (often simultaneously conforming to it as well) in these ambiguous physical, temporal, and discursive spaces which I will discuss in Chapters Five through Nine.

The Male ‘Life-Path’ and Engagements with Hegemonic Masculinity

It is these constant, ongoing, often contradictory engagements in the spaces between different discourses of masculinity that shape hegemonic masculinity itself. Enmeshed in these matrices of intersecting and colliding ideologies and discourses of masculinity is the individual male, the gendered masculine self, who sits at the crux of the research. Thus, in order to situate the experiences and stories of the individual

29 I provide a detailed account of one such induction workshop (shinryū shain kenshū) I observed during the course of fieldwork in Chapter Six.
males in my research, it might be useful, at this point, to delineate my conceptualization of the 'self'.

As mentioned above, I agree with Kondo's argument that there is the need to problematize comfortable essentialist notions of the self and subjectivity – as evidenced in her (and others') critiques of earlier dominant views of power and agency (Kondo 1994; Ong 1987). However, while it is important to appreciate the multiplicities, contradictions, ambiguities and fluidity inherent in the configurations, in the 'crafting' of selves (Kondo 1990), there is a (shifting) limit to the extent to which identity can be a free-floating, dislocated signifier. James Roberson, in his study of working-class lives in Japan, makes a similar point about much of the literature on concepts of the self. While acknowledging the contribution of recent work within Japanese studies which aims at de-essentializing the 'Japanese self' (Roberson 1998: 190, 191), he nevertheless stresses the problematics of an unquestioning acceptance of this trend. In his words:

I find somewhat problematic recent discussions of 'situated meanings' and the reflexivity of action … and context … in which there is a tendency for actions and meanings to become too situationally enclosed and disconnected from the temporal flows of experience and identity.

(Roberson 1998: 17)

Rather, Roberson stresses the importance of recognizing 'life-course' (or rather, what he terms "life path") "as the ongoing manifestation of the reflexive intersection of individual action and broader contexts – mediated in significant ways by the people with whom and the specific institutions through which one lives one’s life" (Roberson 1998: 16). Expressed in a slightly different way, what

Giddens refers to [as] 'the trajectory of the self' … allows us to recognize that lives, self-identities and selves are constructed (continue and change) across the long course of time, not just in or from one particular situation or interactive context to the next.

(Roberson 1998: 191)

Inherent in this line of thinking is a notion of the 'ever-shifting' self that is continually crafted and re-constituted but is still connected (however tenuously) to some concept of a life-path/trajectory. This life path/trajectory is itself subject to wider historical, social, cultural, economic, and other structures and processes.

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30 A not dissimilar observation was made two decades ago by David Plath in his introduction to Work and Lifecourse in Japan, where he decryes the lack of attention to what he calls the 'biographical timeline' (as opposed to 'historical time' and 'structural time') within studies of Japan (Plath 1983b: 4, 5).
This notion of an episodic, but nevertheless linked, trajectory that the individual crafts and is crafted by is integral to my research on the engagements between hegemonic masculinity and other non-hegemonic masculinities. The process that I concentrate on – the negotiations entailed in the interactions between the hegemonic salaryman masculinity and other masculinities as new male entrants shift from one episode in this lifecourse trajectory (pre-shakaijin, or, responsible, adult ‘member of society’) to another (adult shakaijin status as embodied in hegemonic salaryman masculinity) – is akin to a liminal zone of transition between these episodes, between discourses of masculinity. Thus, at this juncture, the individual male is situated in a particularly ambivalent positioning, a sort of ‘no-man’s land’ between definable life-trajectory episodes (between the binaries of youth/adult, socially insignificant/socially responsible). Indeed, in some respects, this is a position not unlike Zygmunt Bauman’s treatment of Derrida’s notion of the ‘stranger’ – occupying an uneasy space between the familiar binary categories of ‘friend’ and ‘enemy’, ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ (Bauman 1991: 55).31

It is over the course of this unstable episode between the stable episodes of pre-shakaijin and shakaijin/salaryman, that the ambiguities, tensions, and contradictions in the manoeuvres between different masculinities are especially pronounced.

Re-capping the Conceptual Framework

Having traced the main conceptual mappings of the thesis, and having defined and clarified the key concepts, we can now move on to discussing the actual research process – the methodology adopted, and the issues that arose in the course of conducting the research. However, before moving on to discussing these in the second half of the chapter, it would be useful to remind ourselves of the core propositions I have suggested through this chapter. I have been arguing the following in this chapter:

31As Bauman comments: “The stranger is one ... member of the family of undecidables – those baffling yet ubiquitous unities that, in Derrida’s words ... ‘can no longer be included within philosophical (binary) opposition, resisting and disorganizing it, without ever constituting a third term, without ever leaving room for a solution in the form of speculative dialectics’” (Bauman 1991: 55). Some of the examples of ‘undecidables’ provided by Derrida that Bauman cites include, the pharmakon (both poison and remedy), hýmen (signifying both virginity and its violation) and supplement (which in French functions as both the word for an addition, and a replacement). In Bauman’s words, “undecidables are all neither/nor ... they militate against the either/or ... They bring the outside into the inside, and poison the comfort of order with suspicion of chaos ... exactly what strangers do” (55, 56).
that masculinity, rather than being a biologically determined ‘core’, is constructed in social and cultural processes and varies across contexts. Thus it would make sense to talk of ‘masculinities’, in the plural.

- these various masculinities are constructed, represented, talked about, written about, given shape, as discourses in society.

- these discourses are linked with ideologies, and it is the discourse of masculinity with the greatest ideological power and hold, that may be conceived of as the hegemonic form of masculinity.

- hegemonic masculinity, as a culturally exalted ‘ideal’, exerts a powerful force on the lives of all men (and boys, and women and girls). However, there is a constant tension and engagement between hegemonic masculinity, and other masculinities

- it is through these engagements that hegemonic masculinity is constantly ‘crafted’ and ‘re-crafted’

- this ‘crafting’ and ‘re-crafting’ occurs both at the ‘macro’ level of society, and the ‘micro’ level of the individual over his life-course.

- thus, in order to get a rounded sense of the processes involved, it is necessary to explore the dynamics at both the ‘macro’ level, and the level of the individual.

SECTION TWO: RESEARCH APPROACHES

Having traced the theoretical ‘scaffolding’ of this thesis, we can now move on to a discussion of the research methodology adopted and some of the concerns related to the research process. As signalled in the Introduction, this thesis deliberately synthesizes a variety of approaches and methods. One element of the research – largely covered in the discussion in Chapters Three and Four – relies on archival and textual sources. Drawing upon such sources allows us to gain an understanding of the historical processes involved, at a wider ‘macro’ societal level, in the emergence of the discourse of masculinity built around the salaryman, as the hegemonic form of masculinity over the post-war decades. Moreover, through reference to materials such as popular culture texts, we are also able to get an insight into the ways through which, at a societal and cultural level, the ideology of salaryman masculinity is disseminated, reinforced, and then embodied through everyday practices, as well as being resisted, subverted, and/or re-shaped. Thus, the research in these two chapters relies on primary and secondary sources including, but not limited to, academic and research texts; contemporary and historical newspaper, magazine, internet and other
media and popular culture texts; and various related government publications and reports such as White Papers.

However, this research is not just about tracing the historical trajectory of salaryman masculinity, nor is it only concerned with a textual analysis. Such materials (both primary and secondary) are important to the research, in that they allow for a contextual ‘macro’ framework within which to situate the ‘core’ of the research. This ‘core’, drawing upon interviews and discussions with my informants, as well as some participant observation, forms the basis for the discussions in Chapters Five to Nine, exploring the ways in which young men entering the workforce negotiate with the expectations of salaryman masculinity. Thus, in this respect the approach adopted in conducting the research is a multi-pronged one, a ‘bricolage’, drawing on elements of a variety of research traditions and methodologies. These include traditions like oral history (for the interviews and life-stories, for instance), anthropological fieldwork (for observation of some of the ‘rituals’ associated with salaryman masculinity), as well as the archival and textual analysis outlined in the previous paragraph, drawing upon disciplines like history and cultural studies. Rather than detracting from, and diluting the quality of the research, I believe that deploying such a multi-pronged (and indeed multi-layered) approach, actually adds significant strength and richness. What it allows is both access to individual men’s subjective experiences through their ‘voices’, as well as the ability to situate these ‘voices’ within a wider context of the social, economic and cultural dynamics at play. As Connell has pointed out, while “the ‘ethnographic moment’ in masculinity research” (2000: 9) in the late 1980s and 1990s was tremendously valuable, there is now a need to move beyond the specific local setting, and contextualize patterns of masculinity with reference to broader historical and global processes (32, 33). By adopting a multi-pronged/multi-layered approach in this thesis we are able to go beyond the specific ‘ethnographic’ situation (important as this may be), and gain an understanding of the wider context within which hegemonic masculinity gets ‘crafted’ and ‘re-crafted’.

In a very broad sense, the approach I adopt fits into Ken Plummer’s characterization of research methods loosely falling under the rubric of a symbolic interactionist ‘tradition’. In trying to delineate a common strand running through otherwise quite disparate approaches, Plummer identifies four “interweaving themes” which lace through the works of researchers drawing on the tradition (or, elements of it). These are, as identified by Plummer:

- a recognition that human worlds are not just material, and consequently a concern with the ways in which human beings go about making sense of the world.
• a concern with process; the fact that "lives, situations, even societies are always and everywhere evolving, adjusting, emerging, becoming" (Plummer 1996: 224).
• a focus on the interaction between individuals, and between the individual and social structures and institutions, rather than just on the individual, or just on the wider structures.

These 'themes' are reflected in the approach adopted in this thesis. However, I need to stress that while I do draw upon the symbolic interactionist tradition, as laid out above by Plummer, the 'bricolage' of approaches and levels of research adopted in this thesis means that I also go beyond the (admittedly, loose) parameters of the symbolic interactionist 'school' of sociology. Hence, in this sense, I would be hesitant to place the symbolic interaction label on this research, and claim full 'membership' within this school of research.

The Research Process

Having established the conceptual contours of the research methodology, we can now move on to discussing the specifics of the research process, especially in relation to the 'fieldwork' carried out in Japan over a period of eighteen months. This is of particular importance as the research carried out during this period constitutes the 'raw material' for discussion in much of this thesis. The discussion that follows will first address some of the 'nuts-and-bolts' logistical aspects of the field research. Once these have been outlined, I will reflect upon some of the more subtle, nuanced issues surrounding the fieldwork research process, which had a bearing on the research.

The 'Nuts-and-Bolts' of the Fieldwork

The 'fieldwork' for this thesis was carried out over an eighteen-month period in 1998 and 1999, in a large prefecture in northern Japan. The focus of the 'fieldwork'

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32 While English-language research on Japan, and in Japan, makes up a substantial body of literature, there is still a paucity of works discussing the process of conducting research on/in Japan. There are a few exceptions. For instance, Lusining (1999) discusses ethical and methodological issues related to
revolved around discussions and interviews conducted with roughly forty informants, the material from which forms the basis of the discussion in Chapters Five to Nine of this thesis. The informants were young male employees of two different organizations who were in the process of making the transition to the status of adult employees. As part of this transition process they were, to varying degrees, dealing with the expectations that go with the discourse of salaryman masculinity which informed their situation. It was these negotiations and engagements between the individual and the various ideological expectations of salaryman masculinity that formed the basis of my interviews with the informants. In this section, I will discuss some of the logistics of conducting these interviews with the informants – who they were, what kind of organizations they were attached to, the process by which they came to be involved in the research, as well as details of the interview format and process. While the discussion here aims only to provide a general profile of the informants as a collective, a more complex picture of individual informants emerges through my discussion in Chapters Five to Nine, which draw directly upon my interviews. Moreover, a profile of individual informants, listing details such as their age, area of work placement, educational background, marital status, and number of years in the workforce, is provided in Appendix 1.

The informants were young men who, at the time of the interviews, had been in the workforce for periods ranging from a few months to a few years – with a couple of exceptions, most had been shakaijin for less than four years. There was a representation of various academic backgrounds among these men – high-school graduates, graduates of technical colleges, university graduates, and even a few with postgraduate qualifications. In terms of age they ranged from nineteen to thirty, with the majority clustered around the mid-twenties. While the majority were still single, there were some who were either married, or planning to marry in the near future. A few of the married informants were also fathers, or became fathers over the period of my interaction with them. With one exception (discussed below) of an individual working in a public-sector organization, all the informants were employed in one of two private sector corporate organizations, which had agreed to assist with my research by allowing me access to their employees. The two organizations were: ‘Northern Energy’, a large-scale corporation in the energy sector, employing several thousand employees in branches throughout the prefecture, and ‘Northern Print’, a

his fieldwork centred around the Japanese gay scene. Another exception which will be of great benefit to future researchers is a recent edited collection of reflections on fieldwork by numerous well-known social science researchers of Japan working across a range of topics (Bestor, Steinhoff, and Bestor 2003a).
medium-small scale firm (chūshō-kyō) in the printing industry, based in a medium-sized regional city, and with around two-hundred employees.\textsuperscript{33}

In many respects, the two organizations the informants were drawn from were representative of the two ‘faces’ of Japan’s industrial structure and organizational culture presented in much of the literature on Japanese organizations. Northern Energy typified the kind of elite, large, bureaucratically structured organization often considered emblematic of Japanese organizations as a collective, particularly outside Japan. Even after over a decade of economic slowdown and industrial re-structuring, Northern Energy like many other large corporations, continued to offer employees many of the guarantees associated with the lifetime employment model. Although not necessarily a major player on the national stage along the lines of giant corporations like Mitsubishi or NTT or the major banks, Northern Energy, at the time of my fieldwork, was among the top three in the prefecture in terms of number of employees. Moreover, it was also one of the top employers as far as graduates’ preferences were concerned. Consequently, it attracted graduates from top-ranked universities throughout the nation. Among my informants at the head office of the firm, for instance, were graduates of elite universities such as Waseda, Keiō, and Hitotsubashi. However, as a firm engaged in the energy sector, it also employed a large number of its staff (particularly those employed in clerical or technical areas) straight from high school, junior college, or technical college.\textsuperscript{34}

Northern Print, on the other hand, was almost the antithesis of Northern Energy. In terms of its size, structure, and organizational culture it was fairly typical of the medium-small enterprise (chūshō-kyō) sector.\textsuperscript{35} It is this sector, rather than the more high profile large organization sector, which forms the ‘backbone’ of Japan’s industrial structure. As Roberson observes, in 1986, medium-small firms accounted for over 99 percent of all firms, and 80.6 percent of total employment (Roberson 1998: 7). Unlike Northern Energy, with its head office in the central precinct of the prefectural capital, branches throughout the prefecture, and sales offices in Tokyo and Osaka, Northern Print was located in a light industrial zone on the fringes of the prefecture’s second largest city. In contrast to Northern Energy’s corporatized,

\textsuperscript{33} The names I use for both organizations are pseudonyms.
\textsuperscript{34} See my discussion of the company’s induction training in Chapter Six for an idea of the gender differences according to educational background. As I point out, in the induction training sessions I observed, whereas the university graduate/postgraduate cohort bound for placement in the managerial stream was overwhelmingly male, the high school/junior college cohort was largely female. The graduates of technical colleges (whose training I was unable to observe) were, I was told, almost all male.
\textsuperscript{35} As Roberson points out, the Small and Medium Business Basic Law of 1963/1973 defines this sector as those firms in wholesale trades with less than 100 employees, less than 50 for firms in the
bureaucratic structure, the organizational structure of Northern Print was firmly in the hands of the Chairperson (kauchô) and President (shachô), sons of the company's founder. At the time of my fieldwork, the son of the current President – who was also one of my informants – was working his way through the different sections of the firm, as part of his grooming towards taking over his father’s mantle in the future. Reflecting this tighter organizational structure, the various sections of the firm – the print shop-floor, the administrative division, the sales and marketing sections – were all within the same premises. This tighter structure also translated into a relative lack of bureaucratic levels of hierarchy. Also in contrast to Northern Energy, Northern Print’s workforce was predominantly locally based. Among my pool of informants for instance, whereas the Northern Energy informants came from various parts of Japan, the Northern Print informants were overwhelmingly local. Moreover, while the Northern Print informant pool did include a number of university graduates, they were all alumni of local or regionally based private universities of not particularly high academic standing.

It was through academic and personal contacts from my previous stays in that part of Japan, and a series of fortuitous circumstances that the management of Northern Energy and Northern Print consented to becoming involved in the research project. Obtaining the final approval from the organizations involved writing formal letters of request, followed by explaining the purposes of the research project to managers in the Human Resources sections of both organizations. My original intention had been to combine interviews with periods of participant observation, where I would be able to interact with the informants over the course of their workdays in the organizations. However, the response I got to this request from both organizations was that while they were happy for me to ask their employees anything at all about themselves and their work, and were willing to offer use of their facilities (such as meeting rooms) for this interaction, they would prefer me to restrict myself to interviews and conversations outside of regular working hours. Although not explicitly stated, the impression I got was that the presence of an 'outsider' in the workplace would distract from the employees' work regime. Given that both organizations had been so accommodating in agreeing to cooperate in my research on the basis of recommendations from personal contacts and friends, I was hesitant to push the point. Nevertheless, as I discuss in the interview chapters, I was able at times to incorporate some 'ethnographic' observation – during the induction training of new employees, for instance, or during a night spent at a company dormitory. In the end though, it was never really my intention to play the 'twenty-four-hour-a-day' retail and services sector, and less than 300 for firms in other areas (including manufacturing, which is the sector Northern Print would fall into) (Roberson 1998: 7).
anthropologist. It is true that my research does draw upon the methodology of anthropological fieldwork, and owes considerable debt to the works of researchers who would generally be included in the category of anthropologist – Lila Abu-Lughod, Anne Allison, Dorinne Kondo, Kirin Narayan, Glenda Roberts, James Roberson, and Thomas Rohn, among others.\textsuperscript{36} However, as pointed out above, the approach adopted in this thesis is deliberately multi-pronged. Consequently, aspects of anthropological methodology, rather than its totality, shaped the research approach, just as aspects of methodologies associated with history, sociology, cultural studies, and even geography,\textsuperscript{37} have also had an influence.

Once the purpose and parameters of the research had been explained to the Human Resources representatives, employees who fell within the target age category were contacted by their staff. Those who indicated interest in being involved in the research came along to an explanation session I organized. At this session, I introduced myself to the potential informants, explained my purpose, the nature of my research, and clarified issues related to confidentiality and ethical concerns of the research.\textsuperscript{38} I made it a particular point to stress that I did not want the interviews to be a top-down, one-way process, where I would ask formal, structured questions to which they would respond. Rather, I emphasized my desire for a mutually interactive engagement, where I would be able to learn from them, from their voices and their stories, and would be able to weave in my own experiences. This is reflected in my choice of the term ‘informant’ rather than ‘respondent’ throughout this thesis. In order to strengthen the rapport with the young men who indicated their willingness to give up their time to participate in my research, I organized a social, ‘ice-breaker’ session with the informants from both organizations. This, as it turned out, proved to be immensely valuable. It gave the informants the opportunity, in a relaxed social setting, to ask me questions about myself, and get to know me, not just as a researcher from overseas, but also as someone whose life experiences overlapped and intersected with their own lives, to an extent they had not anticipated. For instance, the fact that I was familiar with the habits and customs of that particular part of Japan (often far more than some of the informants who came from elsewhere in Japan), or that I had also experienced working in a Japanese organization in the past, helped

\textsuperscript{36} At the same time, this claim in itself may be open to contestation. While it is true that the earlier works of some of these authors, such as Kondo (1990), Allison (1994), and Roberts (1994), could unambiguously be considered part of the body of anthropological literature, this is not the case with their more recent work; see, for instance, Allison (1996a), Kondo (1997), Roberts (2002).

\textsuperscript{37} For instance, my research draws upon, and has commonalities with, the work of Linda McDowell, a human geographer, who has done some excellent interview-based work on masculinity in the corporate world (McDowell 1995), and with young men making the transition to adulthood in the United Kingdom (McDowell 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2003).
lessen the sense of ‘otherness’ towards me.\footnote{As part of the process of entering into doctoral candidature, my research went through the research ethics clearance requirements of my university of enrolment.} I will return to this issue in the next section, when I reflect in more detail upon the more nuanced aspects of conducting research.

Following on from this initial trust building and ‘groundwork laying’, I was able to move towards organizing the actual interviews. The first step undertaken was to obtain written consent from each of the individuals who had indicated a willingness to be involved. Apart from having the research explained to them orally during the explanation session, each potential informant was also given a written statement explaining the research, and a consent form assuring them of anonymity, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from the research at any point.\footnote{I remember being told by one individual at this social gathering that when he and his fellow informants had first been told that a foreign university researcher was interested in interviewing them, they had imagined a tall, bearded, Caucasian ‘professor-type’ who spoke broken Japanese, and would have trouble communicating with them. Hence when they saw me, and heard me speak, their initial anxiety was dissipated. Several factors may have worked towards this. Physically, I was (and am) quite the antithesis of the tall, bearded, ‘professorial’ stereotype – although I do not necessarily look ‘Japanese’, I am close enough in terms of complexion, natural hair-colour, and build, to be able to ‘blend in’ to a degree. Moreover, at the time of the fieldwork, I was only a couple of years older than most of the informants, and having worked as a young ‘salaryman’ myself in the past, could relate to many of their concerns and interests. Furthermore, it was not just fluency in language that was a factor, but rather familiarity with the local specificities of the language. For instance, I recall an incident at one of the other social gatherings, when a friend called me on my mobile phone. Unintentionally, I slipped into local colloquialisms and dialect. This was overheard by some of the informants around me, and one of them remarked that this brought home to him how similar and familiar I was to the rest of them, after all.} Once written consent had been obtained, I was able to embark on the interviews. The interview schedules and other arrangements were done through designated liaison persons among the informants, who were my contact points in both organizations. The first step involved the distribution of a simple questionnaire to individuals who had indicated their willingness to participate, in order to construct a general ‘thumbnail-sketch’ profile of the informants. Following this, before interviewing each of the informants individually, I organized focus group discussions in both organizations. This was valuable, in that it gave me the opportunity to observe interaction and exchange\textit{ between} the individuals. For instance, the dynamics of the senior/junior (senp\textsuperscript{ai}k\text{\=o}hat) hierarchy would often be manifested here in a way that was not apparent in the individual interviews.

The interviews with individual informants were conducted in two separate blocks over the eighteen months I spent in Japan. They were held in a variety of settings. Both the organizations offered use of their facilities (such as meeting-rooms) after-hours, and given that it was easier for the informants to have me go over to where they were, in most cases this offer was taken up. However, in a few instances the
interviews were conducted elsewhere - at the university I was attached to, or public spaces such as hotel coffee-shops. The interview questions followed a semi-structured format. This, on the one hand, allowed for both myself and the informant to focus around certain key themes or 'nodes' of discussion (see Appendix 2 for a sample of the 'key' issues brought up during the interviews). On the other hand, a relatively loose semi-structured format also opened up space for each interview to take twists and turns specific to that particular interview situation, and to the relationship between myself and the specific individual. As Stebbins has argued, "semistructured interviews ...tend towards the development of interpersonal relationships as the interviews unfold" (Stebbins 1991: 250). Given this room for built-in flexibility and fluidity, the interviews varied in length. At one end, one or two of the shorter ones, where the interpersonal rapport between the two sides did not quite 'click', ended after thirty minutes or so. At the other end, was one interview that went on for three hours. Most, however, were of approximately one hour in duration. All the interviews were taped and subsequently transcribed; at the same time, throughout the interviews I also took hand-written notes, which were later written up and summarized. As pointed out earlier, it is these transcripts and notes which constitute the basis of the latter half of this thesis.41

Interviewing each individual on two separate occasions several months apart contributed to the research in a number of ways. First, given the focus on the shift from pre-shakaijin masculinity to adult salaryman masculinity as an ongoing process that has to be negotiated, returning to the same individual a few months after our first meeting allowed me to get a sense of this process at work. These shifts and changes were sometimes quite dramatic. For instance, as I discuss in later chapters, between our first and second interviews, one of my 'key' informants went from being a single, carefree young man with no major 'adult responsibilities', living in a single room in the company dormitory, to a husband and father of a new-born baby girl, with all the cares and responsibilities that the shift in his circumstances had brought. Second, it was not only the transformations in the informants that were at stake; given the emphasis on my research as an interactive process, it also allowed the informants to get a sense of the not insubstantial shifts and changes that had occurred in me over the months since our previous meeting. Finally, conducting the interviews in two instalments also allowed both sides to return to themes and issues raised the first time

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41 See Glenda Roberts' observations on the advantages of using taped interviews and notes in combination (Roberts 2003: 302, 303). Like Roberts, my notes were taken down in a mixture of English and Japanese. Japanese was particularly useful "to remember the flavor of a particular expression" (302), or when the English equivalent was too imprecise or cumbersome.
that may have required further reflection or clarification.\textsuperscript{42} While most individuals were interviewed twice, in a few instances this was not possible. A small number of informants were either unavailable for the first or second round of interviews, or had been transferred by the time of the second round of interviews, or, in one case, had resigned and left the organization. Furthermore, in a very few instances, technical problems prevented successful interviewing or transcription.\textsuperscript{43}

In addition to the interviews with the informants from the two organizations, I also conducted interviews or discussions with selected individuals and groups. Among such ‘one-off’ interviews was one with a young salaryman working in a public-sector organization, who identified himself to me as ‘gay’. I was able to explore issues related to sexuality and workplace hegemonic masculinity with him in ways I was not able to with the other informants. I discuss this interview at some length in Chapter Eight. ‘One-off’ interviews were also conducted with the founder and coordinator of a men’s group which provided support and counselling to men confronting problems coping with the expectations accompanying masculinity, and with a human resources management consultant, who provides training for new corporate recruits. I also conducted an interview and discussion session with human resources managers and supervisors of one of the organizations (Northern Energy). However, although I was able to take notes openly, my request for the interview was granted on the condition it not be recorded on tape. Consequently, while I do discuss the issues raised in these interviews in a later chapter, I do so in general terms, without quoting any individual directly.

\textsuperscript{42} The advantages of interviewing informants more than once have been noted by other researchers too. For instance, Linda McDowell, in a fascinating paper discussing methodological issues of her research with young men, notes that returning to the informants a second (and in her case, third) time down the track definitely helped strengthen the rapport between the researcher and informants. As she comments, informants who were initially reticent and appeared uncomfortable opening up and discussing issues with her, were, by the time of the second round of interviews, far more open and forthcoming, and seemed to “enjoy the interaction and to welcome the chance to reflect upon their own futures as well as what they had said...on the previous visit” (McDowell 2001: 94). Similarly, Ann Oakley in her discussion of her research project focusing on women making the transition to motherhood, observes that it was only after she had moved onto interviewing the women a second and third time, that the interaction between herself and her respondents took on special significance and richness, for both sides (Oakley 1981: 44-46; see also Newton 1993).

\textsuperscript{43} These technical problems – probably far more common than researchers are willing to admit in writing – included batteries running out, mistaken erasure of the tape, or excessive background noise (a pertinent issue when interviewing in busy public spaces) preventing successful transcription. Although I did have notes from all of these interviews, I did not use them when writing up the fieldwork material unless as was the case with interviews in the first round where this may have occurred, I was able to discuss the same points in a later interview.
The ‘Shades-of-grey’ of the Research Process

As hinted at in the preceding discussion, in addition to the ‘nuts-and-bolts’ issues (such as technical or logistical problems), the research dynamics and methodology were also shaped by more subtle, nuanced considerations which were sometimes difficult to clearly define. As Linda McDowell, reflecting on her own research with young men, observes, while practice manuals and codes of conduct for social researchers may offer sensible, ‘black-and-white’ advice about the ‘do’s-and-don’ts’ of research the reality on the ground may be different. It is, as McDowell points out, “often more difficult in practice to ‘strike the right note’ and establish a successful rapport” (McDowell 2001a: 93, 94). Conducting interviews, she reminds us, “is a chancy business – sometimes it works and sometimes it does not – and the outcome may not always be controllable by the interviewer” (94). Any kind of social (or for that matter, scientific) research with humans involves at least some degree of interaction between the researcher and the ‘subject’. In the case of qualitative research, the interactive element of the research process is especially significant. The researcher is just as important to the process as the informant/respondent/subject. Rather than being a ‘neutral’ detached interviewing/note-taking machine along the lines presented in the more positivist research manuals, the researcher comes into the situation as a fellow social individual with her/his own complex personal baggage. In the relationship with individuals in the research setting, the researcher has to constantly negotiate how to work these strands of her/his own self into the context of relations in the ‘field’. In this sense, field research, to quote William Shaffir, reflecting on his own experiences of field research among Jewish communities, “requires some measure of role-playing and acting ...[where] the researcher learns to present a particular image of himself or herself”. Moreover, as Shaffir stresses, this presentation of self “cannot be determined in advance but instead reflects the contingencies encountered in the field” (Shaffir 1991: 77). In other words, the “presentation of self as well as the research are not organized in a vacuum but are shaped by the people in the setting with whom the researcher interacts” (78; see also Warren and Hackney 2000: 13–21). This reflects the points raised earlier when discussing the influence of aspects of the symbolic interactionist tradition on my approach, that notions of the self – for both the researcher and those she/he is interacting with – are constantly ‘crafted’ through these interactions (Plummer 1996: 224). It is through these intersections and interactions that the research takes shape.

In my case, I was not coming into the research setting as a newcomer, who could start with a ‘blank slate’ (to the extent that this can ever be possible) as far as establishing relationships and rapport was concerned. Rather, as signalled earlier, I
was returning in my new ‘incarnation’ as researcher, to a location I had lived in before and where I had extensive academic, social, and personal networks. The implication of this was a situation where I – not unlike Dorinne Kondo and Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney in Japan, or Kirin Narayan and Suruchi Thapar-Björkert in India, or Lila Abu-Lughod in Egypt – found myself playing the role, to borrow a term from Abu-Lughod and Narayan, of a ‘halfie’ researcher, straddling and traversing the insider/outsider borderzones far more than I had anticipated (see Ohnuki-Tierney 1984; Kondo 1986, 1990; Abu-Lughod 1991; Narayan 1993; Thapar- Björkert 1999; Roth 2003; Yano 2003). In other words, the distinction between a seamless, bounded ‘self’ as outside researcher ‘looking in’ to the informant ‘other’ was more often than not, murky, ambiguous and slippery. The ramifications of this, both in terms of the actual research and in a more general sense, sometimes worked to my advantage but often also confused and complicated things, sometimes forcing me to modify the nature of my interactions with individuals in ways I probably would not have needed to if the distinction between researcher/self and researched/other had been clear-cut and water-tight (see also, Chalmers 2002: 15, 16).

Having pre-existing networks was immensely beneficial – as I noted earlier – in opening doors and allowing me access in ways that would have been far more difficult otherwise. Arguably, had it not been for my ability to fall back on relationships from my earlier ‘incarnations’ in that place, both Northern Energy and Northern Print may well have refused to cooperate in my research. Familiarity with the specific local situation and conditions, rather than just familiarity with the Japan of the metropolitan heartland of Tokyo or the Kansai region (as is the case with many non-Japanese researchers), also worked to my advantage. The fact that I was just as

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44 Abu-Lughod defines ‘halfies’ as “people whose national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education or parentage” (Abu-Lughod 1991: 137). Significant, Abu-Lughod includes feminist researchers within the rubric of ‘halfie’ – as she notes, both (feminists and ‘halfies’) “unsettle the boundary between self and the other” (137). Some of the other writers mentioned, even when not explicitly deploying this term, engage with the implications of having to constantly negotiate the shifting sands of the insider/outsider border zones. Suruchi Thapar-Björkert, for instance, discussing her work in India, as an Indian-born, Western-educated researcher, with older women who had been active in the nationalist movement earlier in the twentieth century, does not explicitly use the term ‘halfie’ to talk about herself in relation to her informants, and her own position of traversing insider/outsider lines. However, the following reflection on her position vis-à-vis her informants, seems to capture the essential elements of Abu-Lughod’s term: “I … came to understand that the category ‘Other’ is not a fixed category but its meaning shifts according to context …. As a non-western researcher, I could identify ‘halfness’ at different levels …. I could accept that in the process of conducting my interviews I would be subjected to the same social constraints as any other Indian woman. However, there were times when I was faced with the problem of being positioned as ‘other’ by my respondents because I was a researcher based in Britain and had what was perceived as the advantage to being able to return (to Britain) …. My nationality was subordinate to my social position” (Thapar-Björkert 1999: 65; see also Ohnuki-Tierney 1984: 584, 585).

45 The editors of the collection on fieldwork experience in Japan mentioned above, acknowledge this importance of third-party introductions to the success of the research endeavours of many of the contributors to their volume (Bestro, Steinhoff, and Bestor 2003b: 14). For instance, Roberts, one of the contributors to the collection, mentions particular individuals who were instrumental in terms of access to sites for research, introductions, and access to information (Roberts 2003: 296, 297).
(indeed, sometimes more) familiar as my informants with local idioms and cultural idiosyncrasies, as well as landmarks and places around the region (including those not normally known to outsiders), could myself relate personally to their experiences of local student life or work culture, and sometimes even had friends or acquaintances in common, went a long way in 'breaking the ice' and establishing rapport with interview informants.

At the same time, being located within webs of relationships, and being connected to familiar (indeed, familial) points and networks of association, also exerted a constraining influence on my ability to explore aspects of the research. First, there was the reality that having pre-existing personal networks worked against the ability to play the type of 'twenty-four-hour-a-day' researcher along the lines typified by the anthropologist in the field. There was too much of the 'self' in the 'other' to make this possible. I really did not want to tap into or 'exploit' these networks of friends and turn them into ethnographic research fodder. Aside from the ethical considerations at stake, having to constantly negotiate between friend and researcher would have been too exhausting. One particular incident where I was faced with the need to balance the two roles will help illustrate the point. On one occasion I happened to be out for drinks with a group of friends from the past, one of whom had helped introduce me to one of the organizations I was working with. In the course of the conversation, talk turned to issues about the way company induction and training had been changing to accommodate the way young male recruits had changed. Although this person, as well as the others, knew in a general way of my interest in the area, the conversation was not specifically directed at me. To the extent it was possible, I tried to maintain the topic of the conversation by asking questions, and raising points. However, given that it was a social setting where no one really wanted to talk about work-related issues, the conversation moved on to other topics. The dilemma I faced in this situation reflected the overall insider/outsider conundrum. Should I, at the moment the conversation spontaneously took a turn toward a topic of research interest, have whipped out a tape-recorder and consent-forms and switched into interviewing mode? However, would that not have destroyed the dynamics of what was essentially a private conversation among a group of friends? Alternatively, should I have committed the conversation to memory and jotted it down in my notebook later? But what about the ethical considerations of essentially

46 Bestor, Steinhoff, and Bestor stress the need for sensitivity required in negotiating relationships, when access to informants/research site has been through introductions by third parties: “The researcher must understand that his or her behavior in the research situation not only affects the relationship between researcher and research subjects, but also reflects directly on the person who made the introduction.... [S]ocial networks ... cannot be changed or disregarded at the researcher’s whim; they are very real, constraining social facts that bind the researcher to his or her introducer and
appropriating' or even 'plundering' a private conversation, without having obtained prior written consent (as I was required to do by my university's research ethics guidelines). Or perhaps I should have arranged for the group to 'stage' a conversation for me on the same topic, on another occasion, which I could tape. However, it was the spontaneity of the discussion that had initially grabbed my attention, and it was doubtful whether that spontaneity could be reproduced. Moreover, if I was to draw upon this conversation with friends, should I not interact with everyone in every situation as a potential 'informant'? Although these other scenarios may have been tempting, I opted for the ethical practice of confining my direct research observations in this thesis to the formal interviews and discussions.

Another, somewhat related issue, was the fact that whereas friends and associates were interested in helping me in any way possible, many were not sure what exactly this new researcher incarnation of me was studying. Explaining the project in terms of doing research about young male employees' perceptions and values (kachi-kan) in relation to organizational culture did make sense to most people. However, this often led to me being regaled with comments along the lines of Japanese youth becoming lazy and losing their moral fibre, and then being praised for seeking to draw attention to this 'problem'. The assumption was that I subscribed to the same views, and that like any good social scientist I was going to 'study' this 'social malady' and make appropriate recommendations. Where possible, I tried to rectify this misunderstanding and counter what I regarded as a problematic view of contemporary youth, but sometimes it was not possible to do so without risking getting embroiled in pointless arguments.\footnote{Even with this, I found myself muddling with the insider/outside dilemma. On the one hand, I asked myself whether as an 'outsider' who would go back to his own country in a few months, I had the right to come in and tell people (many of whom had shown me great kindness) how to think 'correctly'? On the other hand, would I not have challenged friends and associates back in Australia who might have expressed similar views? By keeping quiet in Japan, in order not to impose my 'Western' worldview, was I not, ironically, playing into and reinforcing essentialist notions of 'self' and the exotic, different 'other'? This was a dilemma I was never able to come to terms with successfully. Keeping quiet led to the assumption that I subscribed to essentially the same worldview, I recall an academic at the university I was attached to who held that I (and indeed many of his colleagues) considered to be distasteful rightwing views, proudly boasting that I was able to appreciate the 'true' essence of Japanese culture, in a way that most younger Japanese were not able to (cf. Kondo 1990b: 12, 13). On the other hand, trying to argue with such biases would lead to comments along the lines of 'your thinking's different, you don't really understand the situation here' or, the (universal) claim of academics and researchers being 'bleeding-heart' liberals who lack an understanding of the 'real world'? With my informants during the interviews, it was somewhat easier to deal with this dilemma since the roles were more clear-cut and defined. This issue of how to deal with views (such as racism, sexism, or homophobia) that under normal circumstances are anathema, is one that has plagued many researchers. Depending on the researcher the setting, and the views being expressed, individuals have either chosen to counter such views, ignore them (often as a gesture of respect to the informant for putting her/his trust in, and opening up to the researcher), or try and indirectly engage with them (see for example, Gallmeier 1991: 227; Griffin 1991: 116, 117; Allison 1994: 177; Narayan 1996: 201–204; Thapar-Björkert 1999: 65–67; McDowell 2001a: 96, 97). In}
research with reference to masculinity left many people puzzled and unsure about whether there was anything for me to research.48

The other fallout from the insider/outsider role, and from being enmeshed in webs of relationships, was that the very same familiarity which allowed me to develop a rapport with the informants also prevented me from exploring certain issues connected to the underpinnings of hegemonic masculinity in more detail. In particular, despite the intertwinings between sexuality and hegemonic masculinity, and despite my original desire to explore the issue, I was only able to touch upon the issue in interviews in a fairly perfunctory manner. The only exception was the interview with the non-heterosexual informant mentioned above. With the other informants, on both sides, sexuality seemed like a taboo, ‘no-go’ zone. For instance, there seemed to be a mutual assumption of heterosexuality at work, on both sides (cf. Lunsing 2001: 65, 66). As far as the informants were concerned, my very familiarity with their concerns and lives, my embeddedness in local ‘respectable’ networks, my status as a ‘respectable’ researcher seemed to signal that I could not be anything but the same as themselves (or the appearance of themselves they were maintaining).49 This was best evidenced by responses to the questions about marriage which I posed to the informants. In response to my question asking (the single employees) if they planned to get married in the future, and why, the response from many of them was along the lines that given that we were all (with myself implicated) ‘average, normal guys’ it was the natural thing to get married. On my part, this familiarity and common ground with the informants prevented me from breaching this appearance of heteronormativity, even when – as on at least two occasions – possible cracks in this façade presented themselves, and may have provided rich material to explore, had both sides not skirted round the issue. Part of this reticence to explore potentially ‘sensitive’ areas (such as, say, the extension of the homosocial into the homoerotic or homosexual within corporate culture, or issues to do with sexual relations with female colleagues) may have stemmed from what McKeagney and Bloor (1991) have drawn attention to as the researcher’s male gender influencing what can and cannot

48 This led to some rather amusing situations, such as my closest friend (who had started working straight after high-school and regarded the world of academia with a sort of distant awe) introducing me to new people by telling them that I was back in Japan to get a licence to become a Professor (kyōju no menkyo), or a former academic supervisor commenting that in Japan I would never have been able to do doctoral research on such a trivial topic. Of course, such reactions to choice of research topic are far from unusual; Anne Allison, for instance, notes similar comments expressing indigibility at her choice of ‘trivial’ research topic (bar hostesses), and Linda McDowell talks of the baffled responses among her informants to questions posed about masculinity and gender identity (Allison 1994: 11, 12, 145–147; McDowell 2001a: 96).

49 For an example of the opposite situation – the assumption of mutual non-heterosexuality, regardless of what the reality may be – see Attila Bruni’s account of conducting research in the editorial offices of an Italian lesbian and gay periodical (Bruni and Gherardi 2002: 31–35).
be talked about when conducting qualitative fieldwork research with men. Drawing upon their own fieldwork experience, the authors comment that when conducting research in all-male groups, while “some topics are repeatedly covered, others are ... taboo” (200). Moreover, this avoidance of ‘taboo’ areas or distancing them from the everyday lived experience of the researcher and the informant/s, was a result of an almost unspoken, tacit understanding between the two sides. Discussing one of their research projects which involved working with therapeutic groups, they note that despite the fact that “gay relationships, sexual attraction and desire would be fully discussed within the formal therapeutic groups ... on the rare occasions that these topics surfaced in informal settings typical responses would be under-reaction, embarrassment, and humorous distancing” (199). What the researchers had to negotiate were “culturally approved male-to-male role relationships” (McKeganey and Bloor 1991: 199; see also Gough 2001: 184).

In the case of my research, this kind of dynamic would have informed the other considerations, such as age (being older than the informants), perceived ‘status’ (as a ‘respectable’ academic/researcher), as well as my being too familiar, too much of an ‘insider’. Interestingly, over the period of my fieldwork, there was a visiting researcher from the United States at the same university I was associated with who spoke no Japanese whatsoever, but nevertheless managed to conduct a life-history project that delved into some of the very same issues I had to skirt around. Ironically, this researcher’s lack of Japanese and her consequent need to use an interpreter/research assistant as a filter (or conduit) between herself and her informant, actually created enough of a distance and sense of detachment for both sides to explore issues that may otherwise have been embarrassing to tackle.50

However, drawing attention to some of the more sensitive and nuanced aspects of the research process discussed above should not be seen as indicating a shortcoming or lacuna in the research. Indeed, many of these issues I have discussed are possibly common to the experiences of a far greater number of qualitative researchers than would appear to be the case from published accounts of fieldwork. It has only really been in the past two decades that critiques of established understandings of fieldwork and the role of the researcher by post-modern/post-colonial/feminist anthropologists have extended out to include various research practices, across a range of

50 For a reflection on some of the complexities surrounding the use of interpreters in fieldwork, see the discussion by Borchgrevink (2003). There may have been other factors, such as gender, and age, at work. The researcher from the US was considerably older, and this may have helped create a sense of comfort. Suzanne Culter reflects on how her status as a female researcher who was older benefited her research. As she notes: "...as a middle-aged female, I found that people being interviewed ... talked openly with me, even crying through the interview, perhaps because of my matronly appearance and calm acceptance" (Culter 2003: 226).
disciplines. Rather, I believe that the self-reflexivity that informed my interactions with my informants—basically, the need to be aware of the implications of occupying an insider/outsider role—in the end, brought a richness to the research (as evident in the complexity and range of issues I discuss in Chapters Five through Nine), and a personal sense of achievement, arising from the realization that my interactions with at least some of the informants was as much about interviewing them for my thesis, as about ‘crafting’ relationships based on friendship and mutual respect.

Conclusion

As mentioned in the opening paragraphs, the aim of this chapter was twofold—to lay out a ‘map’ of the conceptual contours running through this thesis, and to map out and situate the research process, within the context of the thesis. The first half of the chapter focused on isolating and clarifying some of the key theoretical concepts and terms, before fitting them into the ‘core’ theoretical arguments being advanced in this thesis. Consequently, the first section highlighted concepts such as gender, male, men, masculinity, maleness, power, hegemony, ideology, discourse, patriarchy (among others) which appeared in the previous chapter and which will continue to inform discussion in the chapters that follow. Once these terms had been defined and elaborated upon, the discussion moved into contextualizing and situating these terms within the central theoretical ‘spine’ of the thesis—the notion that hegemonic masculinity is constantly ‘crafted’ and ‘re-crafted’ at both the ‘macro’ societal level, and the ‘micro’ level of the individual. This process of ‘crafting’ occurs with reference to engagements with a variety of social, cultural, political, and economic structures, institutions, and practices. An integral element of these engagements is the intersection between hegemonic masculinity, and other non-hegemonic forms of masculinity. While this chapter focused on these dynamics at an abstract conceptual

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51 As has been quite widely noted, although there had been earlier sporadic voices (e.g. Paul Rabinow’s 1977 *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*), the trigger for many of these critiques was the so-called ‘relativist turn’ (Newton 1993: 3) in anthropology that started gaining visibility in the mid-1980s, in the wake of Clifford and Marcus’ *Writing Culture* (1986). These critiques (often influenced by the work of feminist scholars of the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the growing visibility of postcolonial interrogations of ‘Western’ constructions of ‘The Other’) gained in momentum and visibility with the publication of the voices and views of non-white (including ‘third-world’) and non-heterosexual researchers who challenged the inviolability of many of the accepted givens of ‘respectable’ research. For a (very limited) sample of some of the ‘voices’ questioning conventional fieldwork and methodology wisdom, see Ophüti-Tierney (1984), Clifford and Marcus (1986), Kondo (1986, 1990), Abu-Lughod (1991), Appadurai (1991), Hirschkind (1991), Limón (1991), Narayan (1993), Newton (1993), Blackwood (1995), Kulick and Wilson (1995), Ortner (1995), Lewin and Leap (1996a, b), Gupta and Ferguson (1997b), Markowitz and Ashkenazi (1999), Thapar-Björkert (1999).
level, the discussion in subsequent chapters will allow us to get a sense of these processes both at the ‘macro’ societal level, and at the ‘micro’ individual level.

In the second half of the chapter, the focus shifted to a discussion of the research process. After outlining the various methods used, the discussion reflected upon why the particular approach adopted – a ‘bricolage’, multi-layered, multi-pronged one – was appropriate for the topic. Following this, the discussion covered some of the issues directly related to the research methodology – both the technical, logistics-related issues, as well as some of the finer, more nuanced aspects of research confronting researchers carrying out in-depth qualitative research. In particular the discussion in this section sought to interrogate some of the comfortable, ‘taken-for-granted’ assumptions about research. However, at the same time, what became clear from the discussion was that by being self-reflexive and constantly questioning these assumptions, the research, in the end, benefited greatly.

Having laid out the conceptual and methodological framework for the thesis in this chapter, the discussion can now focus in on the actual details to fill into the framework. The next chapter will situate salaryman masculinity within the trajectory of Japan’s project of modernity and nation-building, and will examine ways in which elements of this ‘crafting’ of hegemonic masculinity were intricately linked to state-sanctioned ideologies of nation, gender, family, work, and citizenship. The following chapter – Chapter Four – will explore the ways in which channels of popular culture were (and continue to be) instrumental in this ‘crafting’ process. Following this ‘macro’ perspective in the next two chapters, the second half of the thesis (Chapters Five through Nine) will then concentrate on the ‘micro’ level – the ways in which individual males negotiate and engage with the ideological expectations of hegemonic salaryman masculinity.
CHAPTER THREE

DELINEATIONS AND HISTORICAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF SALARYMAN MASCULINITY

As indicated in the discussion in the Introduction, the salaryman, and all that he represented came to (and to a considerable degree, continues to) embody and represent all of Japanese masculinity. Indeed, at the level of official and popular discourse this particular way of being a male/‘doing’ masculinity has been projected as what Vera Mackie has referred to as “the archetypal citizen” who is not only “the model worker … [but] also provides the model for Members of Parliament and the bureaucracy” (Mackie 2000a: 247; see also Mackie 2002). Thus this discourse of masculinity – as exemplified by the salaryman – may be regarded as the dominant or hegemonic form of masculinity in Japan, one which is culturally privileged and has power over other less culturally sanctioned masculinities (working-class, rural, non-productive, non-heterosexual, etc.) and femininities (Connell 1995: 77–81; Beynon 2002: 16, 17). Indeed as noted in Chapter One, and as argued by James Roberson, despite an everyday, lived reality that may be quite different, “the majority of Japanese men who are not white-collar employees of large corporations … are assimilated into the totalizing image of the white-collar salaryman” (Roberson 1998: 6).

On one level, it may appear that this hegemonic masculinity is some kind of fixed constant, some kind of inherent characteristic of Japanese ‘national culture’. This view became especially entrenched in literature pertaining to Japan over the decades of high economic growth through the 1960s and 1970s through the publication of works – which at the time received considerable publicity (and whose legacy continues to influence Japanese studies) – by writers including Nakane (1973), Vogel (1971), and Rohlen (1974). Official and semi-official public discourse in Japan also worked to reinforce this notion of the salaryman being the representative prototype for all Japanese men and somehow embedded in the particularities of Japanese culture; the JTB pocket-guide to Japan discussed in the Introduction is one such example. Yet, despite this apparent omnipresence in the social landscape, what has been neglected in most discussions is an analysis of the salaryman (and the discourse surrounding the salaryman) as a gendered construction, a manifestation of a hegemonic masculinity, which despite a perception of rock-solid stability and immutability, has to be constantly created and re-created through various socio-
economic and cultural institutions and practices of state and society. Moreover, as highlighted in the previous chapter, underlying the hegemonic discourse is the continued existence of the 'other' less culturally privileged masculinities referred to earlier, which constantly engage with the hegemonic in varying ways. Through these interweavings of various masculinities, hegemonic masculinity itself is subject to pressures and influences from these other discourses.

This chapter seeks to address this gap, by focusing on salaryman masculinity as a discourse that was a product of state-generated ideologies of gender embedded within the industrial-capitalist project of the Japanese nation-state. The discussion maps the process by which the discourse of masculinity centred on the salaryman became the hegemonic form of masculinity in the context of the state-directed industrialization and nation-building drive embarked upon from the late nineteenth century, and continuing through the decades of the twentieth century. In particular, I seek to draw attention to the element of 'crafting' and the complex interplay of various social, cultural, economic, and other forces that underpinned the emergence of a distinct discourse of masculinity around the salaryman. The first part of the chapter looks at the early shapings of salaryman masculinity – the influence on its shapings of earlier pre-Meiji forms of masculinity, the extent to which the ideology of the modernizing Meiji state was implicated in the process, and the socio-economic shifts that formed the backdrop to its emerging profile. The following section will discuss salaryman masculinity in the period that it reached its 'full strength' – over the 'Economic Miracle' decades of the 1950s, 1960s. and into the 1970s, when arguably salaryman masculinity consolidated itself as the hegemonic ideal. The final section will explore some of the problematics and complexities underlying this hegemonic ideal, both during its 'glory days' in the 1960s and 1970s, and, over the 1980s and 1990s, as the contestations surrounding it became more visible and pronounced.

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1James Roberson, in his ethnographic study of working-class culture, makes a similar observation when he notes that although “there has been a significant amount of scholarship on gender as related to women's experiences and identities in Japan, the gendered nature of men’s experiences has yet to be fully discussed” (Roberson 1998, 17). Even recent works such as Ogasawara (1998) or Sakai (2000) which at first glance appear to include an interrogation of the salaryman as a gendered construct as one of their objects of study, only indirectly skirt around the core problematic. However, while this applies to the English-language scholarship on Japan, the interrogation of the salaryman as an embodiment of hegemonic masculinity has, as noted in Chapter One, been the focus of a growing body of work in Japanese. Most of this work has been by either scholars in academic fields like gender studies, or by activists involved in the various men's groups which have emerged across the country over the past decade. (see, for example, Morinaga 1998; Nakamura 1996; Toyoda 1997). To my knowledge scholars working on the salaryman in the area of management and business studies (for example, Okamoto and Sasano 2001; Tanaka and Nakamura 1997; Umezawa 1997) do not address the gendering process of the salaryman discourse.
Pre-Meiji Masculinities: Tracings and Contours

As signalled above, the emergence of a distinct discourse of masculinity centred around the salaryman occurred within the framework of a state-sanctioned ideology of gender and sexuality. This ideology in turn, was closely linked to the project of modernity and industrial-capitalism initiated by the new Meiji regime which came into power following the ‘Meiji Restoration’ of 1868. The new order was ushered in when a group of young, middle- to lower-ranking *samurai* from outlying western and southern provinces, overthrew the increasingly ineffectual *bakufu* regime headed by the Tokugawa shoguns based in Edo (subsequently renamed Tokyo), which had been the ruling authority in Japan since the early seventeenth century. The Tokugawa family, through a complex system of direct and indirect authority over regional feudal/military leaders (*daimyō*), had effectively ruled most of Japan since the seventeenth century in the name of the Emperor who resided in the imperial capital, Kyoto, and occupied (as had generally been the case for the bulk of recorded history) a role that was largely cultural, religious, and ceremonial. The factors precipitating the overthrow of the old order were complex—“a conjuncture of social disruptions and political reforms spanning four decades” (Roden 1980: 3), as well as a very real threat of military and/or economic domination by one or more of the Western powers, which at the time were collectively expanding their military and economic influence in East and South East Asia. The build-up of these various factors finally culminated in the ‘Meiji Restoration’ (*Meiji ishin*) of 1868, carried out ostensibly to ‘restore’ the Emperor to his ‘rightful’ place (seen by opponents of the Tokugawa rulers as having been usurped by them) as the real, and not just symbolic, focus of the political and social structure.

However, in actual fact, power was consolidated in the hands of the young *samurai* who had led the push for the Restoration, and who over subsequent decades became an entrenched clique of oligarchs dominating and regulating the contours of the body politic, and shaping the contours of state and society. Exerting authority in the name of the newly ‘restored’ Meiji Emperor, these new leaders initiated a far-reaching program of reforms underpinning the modernization and nation-building project, as a consequence of which “a retrogressive network of agrarian-feudal domains … emerged in the early twentieth century as a rapidly industrializing nation-state and world power” (Roden 1980: 3).² It was within this context that new discourses surrounding masculinity (and femininity) began taking shape. At the same time,
however, earlier pre-Meiji discourses of masculinity (and femininity) also informed the shaping of these emergent forms of masculinity in the context of the modernizing nation-state. While a detailed discussion of this earlier pre-Meiji historical context is outside the scope of this chapter, I will briefly outline the main contours of some of these earlier discourses of masculinity, but only insofar as they are relevant to our central discussion of the shaping of salaryman masculinity.3

Discourses of masculinity over the preceding Tokugawa (or Edo) period were linked-in with the ‘official’ ideology – a variant of neo-Confucianism (Ooms 1984)4 – of the regime, and prevailing social, political, and economic conditions over the roughly two-and-a-half centuries that Japan (or rather, the area that would go on to constitute the nation-state of Japan after the transition to the Meiji order) was either directly, or indirectly under the authority of the Tokugawa shogunate. The Tokugawa rulers had come to power in the early seventeenth century, having subjugated or co-opted rival daimyō (military/feudal lords), after more than two centuries of constant conflict and instability among the two hundred or more feudal/military factions (Leupp 1995: 58–61; Pflugfelder 1999:15–17; Tipton 2002: 1-4). Having consolidated power, the regime sought to minimize potential dissent and opposition by implementing a series of political, social, and economic measures, including restricting contact with the outside world, and the imposition of a social order which (roughly) comprised a four-strata hierarchical order of samurai, peasants, artisans, and merchants. The samurai (or the term more common in Japanese, bushi), the foot-soldiers and retainers of the various daimyō, had originated in the turbulent centuries preceding the Tokugawa period. Initially there was considerable overlap between the peasantry and the bushi, but by the sixteenth century the latter had emerged as a distinct warrior caste, governed by an elaborate and rigid code of conduct known as bushidō (literally, ‘way of the bushi’) which governed virtually every aspect of life (see Storry 1982: passim).

2 There is a substantial body of literature revolving around the events leading up to and surrounding the Meiji Restoration; see, for instance, Beasley (1972), Totman (1980), Keene (2002: Chs. 2–15), Tipton (2002: Ch. 2), among others.

3 While there has been considerable work – some of exceptional quality – on male-male sexual and romantic relations in early modern Japan over the past two decades or so (e.g. Childs 1980; Hiratsuka 1983; Leupp 1995; Miller 1996; Pflugfelder 1999; Schalow 1990; see McLelland 2000, 20-24 for a review of the literature), an area that has yet to be addressed (particularly in academic literature) is the study of masculinities as a construct in the early modern (and medieval and pre-modern) period. Although some of the works cited on sexuality (in particular, Pflugfelder), do indirectly address the issue, work focusing on masculinity per se would provide us with valuable insight into indigenous constructions, prior to the introduction of Euro-American discourses on gender and sexuality from the Meiji period on.

4 In actual fact, as Herbert Ooms argues, the relationship between the Tokugawa bakufu (especially over the initial period after consolidating power) and neo-Confucianism as an ideology was far more complex than unquestioning acceptance and deployment, as is often made out to be the case (Ooms 1984: 27, 28). See also Nosco (1984b).
At the core of this code lay a very specific discourse of masculinity centred on concepts of honour, loyalty (to one’s daimyō lord, in particular), duty and obligation (on and giri), and physical, mental and spiritual toughness (Storry 1982). Another aspect of samurai masculinity was the esteem accorded to certain types of age-hierarchy based same-sex love, falling under the rubric of terms such as shudo and nanshouka (usually inaccurately rendered into English with blanket labels like ‘gay’ or ‘homosexual’). Significantly, these relationships, premised on ideological underpinnings of bushidō (such as absolute loyalty based around principles of on/giri [moral obligation/duty]), were not an alternative to the institution of male-female marriage (which was generally obligatory), or discourses of male-female intimacy, but rather, as Leupp (1995: 199) notes, “its corollary” (see Pflugfelder 1999: 23–82; Schalow 1990: 27–34; also Storry 1982: 91–97; Hiratsuka 1983; Ihara (trans. Schalow)1990; Leupp 1995).

With the advent of Tokugawa authority, the separation between peasants and samurai was formally institutionalized within the framework of the four-tier social status model. Most samurai were physically separated from villages and forced to live in and around daimyō castle towns, or large urban centres, transformed into bureaucrats and officials of the new administration (Hall 1968; Ōishi 1990). Regardless of their new role as administrative officials and pen-pushers (or perhaps to compensate for it), the code of bushidō, with all its connotations, continued to be stressed very heavily. Moreover, since they now comprised the ruling administrative elite, the discourse of masculinity associated with the samurai and bushidō came to be the culturally privileged one. However, unlike during the later Meiji period, when culturally privileged discourses would become the official, prescriptive discourse for all of society, the four-tier social stratification during the Edo period worked against this discourse becoming hegemonic across all sections of society. This allowed for other discourses of masculinity to emerge and intersect with samurai notions of masculinity; discourses of masculinity less constrained by the rigidities of bushidō and the austere expectations of ‘official’ ideology.

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5 Significantly, the ideals of a still earlier discourse of masculinity – that of the court nobility during the Heian period (794–1185 A.D.) – were quite different to the attributes valued in later periods. According to Ivan Morris, the physical ideal of male beauty within the aristocracy was not significantly different from (apart from the presence of a tuft of facial hair) the feminine ideal (conversely a hairy, ‘masculine’ looking man was considered unappealing). In terms of behaviour, the ‘ideal’ male was expected to display qualities which would subsequently come to be associated with ‘un-masculine’ characteristics in later periods – the ability to shed tears in public in any kind of deeply moving situation (in the face of sadness, beauty, parting from his lover), for instance (Morris 1978: 144–146).
Ironically, the emergence of these less austere ‘unofficial’ forms of masculinity was a consequence of both the official ideology of the regime, and the social and economic conditions resulting from the consolidation of Tokugawa authority. After centuries of internal strife, the extended period of relative stability allowed for considerable increases in agricultural output, expansion of commercial activity, and the growth of major urban centres and regional castle towns across the country, linked through very effective communications networks which enabled movements of people, information, goods. These factors in turn formed the background to a burgeoning sophisticated urban commercial, intellectual, and artistic culture centred around merchants, artisans, actors, and entertainers, as well as sections of the samurai population of these urban centres. The intersections of these various lifestyles, indeed diverse discourses of masculinity (ranging from the highly formal, decorum-centred masculinity of the bushi, to the more flamboyant, free-spending merchants, through to the transgressive masculinities of actors and male courtesans), occurred in the tea-houses, theatres, brothels, sites of informal prostitution (e.g. temple fairs), and other sites that comprised the ostentatious, commercialized world of pleasure quarters (the ukiyo, ‘floating world’) (see Ihara (trans. Schalow) 1990; Schalow 1990; Leupp 1995).

Thus, it would be valid to claim that at the time of the transition from the feudal Tokugawa order to the new age of ‘civilization and enlightenment’ (bunmei kaika) that the Meiji Restoration of 1868 ushered in, there was really no single representative ‘Japanese’ masculinity. Rather, there were a host of regional, clan, and class-based masculinities, out of which new configurations would be crafted within the nation-building framework. This situation, as we will see in the following section, would alter quite significantly, as a consequence of state-directed efforts to re-mould the social fabric, in the name of nation-building and modernization.

The Modernizing State and ‘Crafting’ Emergent Masculinities

This multi-pronged project of modernization and nation-building was, as mentioned above, undertaken partially in response to the threat of Western colonial power in

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6 For instance, the (at least in theory) clearly demarcated status divisions meant that the rigid moral expectations required of samurai were not necessarily as severe for commoners; the authorities were more concerned with maintaining the status quo and public order, than with trying to inculcate the moral ideology of the power elites. Hence, for example, the tolerance (apart from sporadic morals campaigns) towards licensed and unlicensed prostitution (including male prostitution) and the theatre world for non-samurai status groups. Moreover, although in terms of the rhetoric of official discourse, samurai were strongly discouraged from patronising these pleasure quarters, the reality was that samurai were also among the patrons of the tea-houses, theatres, and brothels of Tokugawa cities and castle-towns. (See, for instance, Leupp 1995, 156–170; Pflugfelder, 1999: 142–145).
East Asia. The various innovations and changes implemented included the creation of a modern conscript-based military (which would spearhead Japan's own colonial experience in Asia) using the latest in Western military technology, and the establishment of modern socio-economic and political institutions. Also integral to the creation of the strong, new nation\(^7\) was the sanctioning and dissemination through instruments of state and society of a discourse of "civilised morality" (Pflugfelder 2000: 149), designed to create the new, enlightened Japanese man and woman. As implied by the slogan ‘waikon yôsai’ ('Japanese Spirit, Western Learning') this synthesized selective neo-Confucian values from the preceding Tokugawa regime, which had provided the prescriptive discourse for the samurai and socio-political elites, with newly imported medical, legal and, social discourses from the West. The selective nature of this borrowing – both from the West and from Japan's own past – cannot be overlooked. Those values and behaviour patterns deemed to be desirable (the samurai values of loyalty, for instance\(^8\)) were incorporated, whereas others (the relatively open and unproblematic acceptance of male same sex desire within various sections of society, including the samurai, or the prevalence of mixed bathing and public nudity) were seen as vestiges of a feudal, backward past which had no place in the new, 'civilized' social order (Pflugfelder 1999: 146–153, 193–206; see also Garon 1994: 350–355; Hirot a 1999).\(^9\) Moreover, the 'official' ideology that was shaped out of these selective borrowings from the past was a national ideology that in principle applied to all Japanese, not just specific groups or classes (Hirot a 1999: 199).

These prescriptions even extended into specific body reflexive practices in relation to the appropriate presentation and performance of gender roles. Jennifer Robertson observes that in contrast to the relatively relaxed attitude of authorities during the Tokugawa period towards cross-dressing and public gender non-conformity:

\(^{7}\) This was exemplified in slogans such as ‘fukoku kyôhei’ ('Rich Nation, Strong Military'), ‘bunmei kaika’ ('Civilization and Enlightenment'), and ‘waikon yôsai’ (Japanese Spirit, Western Learning).

\(^{8}\) Another good example of this is the way the institution of heterosexual marriage was codified within the new context. As Pflugfelder observes, although “Meiji officials had to choose among laws and customs that varied widely with class and locality ... it was the samurai-based model of strong patriarchal authority over household (ie) members and succession by a single heir, usually the first-born male, that prevailed over nonelite patterns to form the cornerstone of the 1898 Civil Code” (Pflugfelder 1999: 148, 149). See also, Ueno (1996), Hirot a (1999).

\(^{9}\) See Pflugfelder (1999), Chs. 3–5, for a discussion of shifts in legal, medical, and popular culture discourses on male-male sexuality during these years. Pflugfelder stresses the importance of recognizing “that ‘civilized’ discourse had both Western and indigenous roots, and ... that Meiji ‘civilization’, while combining the two, remained a distinctly Japanese phenomenon” (147). An indication of the selective nature of the borrowing from the West is the relatively weak influence of Christian discourses of gender and sexuality compared with legal and medical ones, despite knowledge of these on the part of the producers of the new discourse of civilization. For instance, Pflugfelder points out that whereas “biological notions regarding the workings of ‘creation’ ... permeated deeply into Japanese discourse ... the Judeo-Christian image of an all-powerful Creator made a far less lasting impression” (Pflugfelder 1999: 246; see also Friebstuck 2000, 2003 for a
the modernising state discouraged gender ambivalence and sexual confusion, which were associated with social disorder .... Sex and gender were to be strictly delineated: males were to keep their hair short and dress in Western-style clothing; females were to wear their long hair swept up in a traditional chignon and clothe themselves in kimonos.


This emerging discourse of gender and sexuality from the Meiji era was inextricably linked to the industrial-capitalist and military-nationalist enterprise – the Empire needed pliant, productive workers and soldiers of its male citizens and ‘Good Wives, Wise Mothers’ (ryōsaik enbo) of its female citizens (Sievers 1983: 110, 111), the two sides of the binary linked together through monogamous, heterosexual marriage and the notion of family centred around the husband-wife domestic pairing. Thus, official and popular discourse, working through institutions like the military, the legal system, the education system, and official and semi-official popular culture media worked to inculcate and reinforce these hegemonic ideals of masculinity and femininity (see Kimmonth 1981; Sievers 1983; Nolte and Hastings, 1991; Roden 1980; Sand 1998; Hirot a 1999; Yamasaki 2001; Ishii and Jarkey 2002; Mackie 2003b: 21–29).

The origins of the discourse of salaryman masculinity may be traced back to these initial decades of Japan’s industrialization enterprise. It was over these years that the rudiments of an urban, white-collar, middle-class masculinity began to emerge.

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10 Hair seems to take on special symbolic significance. Sharon Sievers, in her study of the early feminists in Japan, mentions that in response to a fad among young women for short hair (emulating men who were encouraged to replace ‘old-fashioned’ Japanese-style hairdos in favour of short, ‘Western’-style haircuts) the authorities banned short hair for women in 1871 (Sievers 1983: 14). Elsewhere, Sievers mentions the case of Iyama Kajiko, an early activist for women’s rights, whose first symbolic gesture of defiance was to cut off her long hair and send it back to her abusive husband (whom she had just left) on a tray (91).

See also Kondo (1997: Ch.5, 158–174) for a fascinating discussion of the Western-style suit, as a site of contestation and interaction between various discursive strands of masculinity, race, nationalism, and modernity. There is a rich body of literature that draws attention to the ideological binary embodied in many nationalist discourses which equates femininity with the traditional, native or indigenous and masculinity with ‘Western-style’ progress/modernity. This binary gets embodied in a host of regulatory practices, including body reflexive practices like dress and deportment. See, for instance, Chatterjee (1989) and Chakrabarty (1994) for a discussion of the binary, and the associated regulatory practices in the context of South Asia; Finnane (1999) and Zamperini (2003) for discussion in the context of discourses of modernity in China.

11 See Karlin (2002) for a discussion of the growing visibility of various (often competing) discourses of masculinity growing out of this rudimentary middle-class in Meiji Japan., and Ambaras (1998), for a discussion of the emergence of this middle-class culture over the later Meiji years (following Japan’s victory in the 1894–95 Sino-Japanese War). As Ambaras points out, members of this emerging new middle class were not merely passive instruments of the ruling class. Indeed as the professionals (civil servants, doctors, educators, office workers, journalists, etc.) they were instrumental in the creation and construction of ‘social knowledge’, and significantly “were in fact responsible for developing many of the techniques for the policing of society and of families that supported the social structure of the Japanese nation-state” (2). See also, Sievers (1983) for a discussion of some of the early women reformers and activists who came from within the ranks of this emerging middle-class.
alongside the more common contemporary forms such as discourses of masculinity centring around Japan's new conscript-based military, rural masculinities, and forms of 'elite' masculinity, such as the male student cultures discussed by Donald Roden (1980) in his study of elite higher schools (which were essentially training grounds for future positions of leadership). Although the term 'salaryman' (saratiman) itself appears to have been coined and popularized in the years following World War One (Umezawa 1997: 4), its antecedents can be traced back to the gekkyū-tori (monthly salary recipient) of the early Meiji decades, and even the koshi-ben (a somewhat demeaning term for low-ranking samurai bureaucrats who had been reduced to dangling a lunch-box – bentō – instead of a sword from their waists – koshi – of the late Tokugawa years (Kimmonth 1981: 277-280; Suyama 1965: 135; Umezawa 1997: 4-6).  

By the Taishō and early-Shōwa periods (roughly corresponding to the inter-war decades), social and economic conditions allowed for the visible emergence of a distinct category of white-collar salaried worker (classified, increasingly under the term 'salaryman', rather than the earlier gekkyū-tori). Vogel, for instance, gives a figure of almost 1.5 million white-collar workers in 1920, out of a total non-agricultural labour force of roughly 12.5 million (Vogel 1971: 6, n.3). Underlying the growing visibility of this sector of the workforce was the intensification of processes put into motion during the Meiji decades, such as urbanization and the emergence of a 'new' bourgeois middle-class of professionals, small businessman, white-collar public and private sector salaried workers, and service sector employees.

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12 Roden, too highlights the selective borrowing from the past which went into constructing the ideological framework for the "new Japan". With reference to the establishment of the highly elite government higher schools, entry into which almost certainly led to entry into university, and elite career paths, he notes that these "schools eased the transition from government by hereditary feudal social class to government by a new middle-class status group of academic achievers." However, despite this shift, as a consequence of which "commoners slowly replaced the progeny of the samurai class in the university, the new educated elite of the early twentieth century retained many of the attitudes of their Tokugawa predecessors toward manliness, honor, and public service." The higher school played a crucial part in preserving the "samurai spirit" as Japan entered the industrial age (Roden 1980: 6).

13 According to Umezawa, the first writer to mention 'salaryman' was Yoshida Tatsukki with the publication in 1925 of his Saratiman-ron (Theory of the Salaryman).

14 There is a substantial body of both academic and non-academic literature – primarily in Japanese – dealing with the history of the salaryman; for instance, Suyama's discussion of the history of manga representations of the salaryman (Suyama 1965), Takeuchi's analysis of the history of the salaryman (Takeuchi 1997), Tanaka and Nakamura's discussion of the 1920s/1930s periodical Saratiman (Tanaka and Nakamura 1999), and Chapter One of Umezawa's detailed study of the salaryman (Umezawa 1997). For an excellent discussion of the history of the salaryman in English, see Kimmonth (1981).

15 Beck and Beck (1994: 53) provide the example of Tokyo Maritime Insurance, which between 1923 and 1941 increased its white-collar work-force from 100 to 1000. Another large-scale elite employer, Shibaura (the pre-war precursor of Toshiba) increased its management numbers from 2000 to 20,000, over the years 1939 to 1944.
Furthermore, it was over these years that specific features of the employment system which would come to be associated with salaryman masculinity, such as seniority based promotions, implicit guarantees of lifetime employment for permanent employees, and corporate paternalism, gradually started to become entrenched, at least in large-scale and public sector organizations (Dore 1973: 396–403; Beck and Beck 1994: 45–50; Cheng and Kallenberg 1997: 16, 17; Hazama 1997: 26–29, 76–96).

It was during these years that the salaryman really started taking shape as a distinct form of masculinity that was linked with the conditions of urban, capitalist modernity. In this respect, the discourse of masculinity surrounding the salaryman was different to the koshi-ben or gekkyû-tori, in that the latter were not seen as arising out of modernity. If anything, as Kinmonth’s discussion of some of the contemporary derogatory accounts of the koshi-ben would indicate, there was a sense of continuity with habits and practices pre-dating the advent of modernity (Kinmonth 1981: 278, 279). The salaryman, on the other hand had associations of the ‘New Japanese Male’ – to his supporters the embodiment of a new, modern, industrialized, urban Japan, and to his detractors all that was wrong with this new urban middle-class, modern culture. This period of Japanese history witnessed the surfacing of the varied tensions and contradictions of modernity, as divergent discourses of ‘Japanese-ness’ competed in a socio-economic climate characterized by growing inequality, tension, and flux. For many of these circulating discourses – both celebratory and anxious – the reference point was modernity, and the implications

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16 Oshima, in discussing the distribution of the labour force by occupational category, gives a percentage of 5.4 percent falling into the category of “Professional, technical, managerial” in 1920. Ten years later, in 1930, the equivalent share had increased to 6.1 percent (Oshima 1982: 34).

17 Nevertheless, as various writers have pointed out, the actual reality of practices such as lifetime employment were even more limited in range and scope in the pre-war decades than was the case in the postwar high economic growth decades (see, Frin 1978; Kinmonth 1981: 319 n.119; Gordon 1985: 125–155; Beck and Beck 1994: 46–52). This applied not just to blue-collar employees, but also to white-collar employees, who were sometimes just as vulnerable to the possibility of sudden layoffs, particularly in times of economic slowdown. As brought out in Kinmonth’s detailed discussion of these years, salaried workers (including public sector employees) were just as vulnerable as other categories of workers to fluctuations in the economy. Thus, for instance, over the period 1923–24, over 22,000 government workers were retrenched or moved to less attractive positions. Moreover, among the ranks of the dismissed government workers turning up at employment exchanges, were graduates of the elite imperial universities and higher-ranked civil servants (Kinmonth 1981: 285, 286). Roughly a decade later, in the wake of the 1929 Wall Street Crash and ensuing global depression, one in five (or one in three if day labourers were not included) persons in a survey of unemployment was a salaried employee (287).

18 For instance, Kinmonth mentions a novel from the Meiji era which provides descriptions of koshi-ben civil servants. Unlike their higher-ranked, better-educated colleagues dressed in Western style suits, the koshi-ben were depicted as sad, decrepit figures, dangling their lunch-boxes from their waists, and still wearing Japanese dress. A ‘ditty’ from 1909 had the koshi-ben dressed in Western fashions now, but still sadly trundling along with their lunch-boxes dangling from their waists. As Kinmonth points out, with reference to the former account: “As the references to age and traditional dress indicate, the koshiben were a carry-over from the ancien régime … when lower samurai who were engaged in clerical tasks were more likely to have a lunch box than a sword dangling from their waists” (Kinmonth 1981: 278).
were for Japan’s future (Silverberg 1992; Minichello 1998; Yano 1998; Tipton and Clark 2000b). Possibly more so than in previous (and subsequent) periods, concern about these ‘new’ articulations of gender and sexuality were a noticeable feature of these discourses. Furthermore, the earlier Meiji ideological crafting towards standardized gender and (hetero)sexual conformity was now starting to be reworked and couched within the framework of emergent, ‘modern’ scientific (and consequently ‘unchallengeable’) disciplines like sexology, psychiatry, and criminology (see Pflugfelder 1999: 311–326; Narita 1999; Frihstück 2003). As the works of various scholars reveal, much of this anxiety revolved around the policing of women and female sexuality.19 This sense of ‘moral panic’ was particularly pronounced in discourses around the so-called ‘New Woman’ and/or her sometimes conflated successor the westernized ‘Modern Girl’ (moga), in her various manifestations – café waitress, actor in the all-female Takarazuka theatre revue, or simply the ‘pampered’ middle-class daughter (see for instance, Rodd 1991; Silverberg 1991; Robertson 1998).20

While not as pronounced as the ongoing debates on the New Woman/moga (and on femininity, in general), there was a not unrelated sense of anxiety and ‘moral panic’ in discourses surrounding masculinity, too. In particular, the male equivalent of the moga, the foppish, dandy figure of the ‘Modern Boy’ (mobo) was the site for articulating many of these concerns about the corrosive effects of modernity on notions of ‘proper’ masculinity. For instance, Roden mentions the “barrage of criticism” targeting the young men of the late-Meiji and Taishō years by the likes of editor Tokutomi Sohō, who accused young men of not possessing any “unifying sense of character, settling instead for divergent shades of materialism, anguish, debauchery, and colorless nonchalance” (1990: 45; see also Sato 2003: 64, 65). However, co-existing and intersecting with these discourses of concern and moral


20 As Silverberg notes, a contemporary example of the threat to ‘order’ represented by the figure of the ‘Modern Girl’ was the character of the ‘modern’ housewife, Naomi, in Tanizaki Jun’ichirō’s 1920s novel, Chījin no ai (A Fool’s Love), translated into English under the title Naomi. Naomi is an immature café hostess who is ‘discovered’ by the narrator (who decides to marry her). “As Naomi’s body and desires mature”, Silverberg tells us, the husband is “overwhelmed by her sexuality, and both confused and eniced by her constantly shifting persona, which challenges fixed notions of gender and culture.” These transgressions – including the gender transgressions – mark Naomi out as a ‘Modern Girl’; by the end of the novel, she “has taken on male language to challenge the authority of her former mentor … [but] her husband’s speech does not become feminized in a role reversal, but rather infantilized: he responds to her demands … with the acquisitive monosyllable grunt of a domesticated male child” (Silverberg 1991: 245; see also Tanizaki 1987; Chaplin 2001: 61, 62). Jennifer Robertson, in discussing the ‘moral panic’ surrounding the highly sensationalized media reporting of instances of female couples – including celebrities associated with the Takarazuka – attempting to commit shinjū (‘double suicide’ or ‘love suicide’) points out that while the ‘good wife, wise mother’ was regarded, within the context of dominant public discourse, as embodying “social stability and cultural integrity, her alter ego, the ‘Western’ masculinized female – and New Woman in general – was perceived as the embodiment of social instability” (Robertson 2000: 45).
outrage at the perceived ‘feminization’ of masculinity (and the ‘masculinization’ of femininity) was a simultaneous societal fascination with androgyny and gender ambivalence as embodied in figures like the female actors who played the part of the *dan'yaku lotokoyaku* (male role) in the all-female Takarazuka troupe, or the *nimaime* male movie actors who specialized in playing the role of the weak, indecisive, even effeminate male opposite a strong, domineering female character (Roden 1990: 47–49; also Robertson 1998). Furthermore, these representations were not just limited to the theatre or movies; the urban culture associated with modernity allowed ‘modern boys’ with rouge-caked cheeks (and ‘modern girls’ in oversized business suits!) to “promenade down the Ginza” in addition to being depicted in popular culture media (Roden 1990: 47). Yet, the very same spaces of popular culture also allowed expression of some of the anxieties *mobo* masculinity generated. For instance, Christine Yano in her discussion of constructions of modernity and nation through popular songs of this era, mentions songs which ridicule and satirize the *mobo*, mocking his pretensions, and his fake urbanity and questionable masculinity (Yano 1998: 255–257).21

On the surface, there may appear to be little in common between the emerging discourse of salaryman masculinity (which appeared to *conform* to the requirements of the ideology modernizing nation-state) and the ostensibly non-conformist *mobo* masculinity. Yet I would argue that in many respects, these two forms of masculinity intersected and overlapped with each other far more than they did with other contemporary dominant/visible discourses of masculinity such as the aggressively masculine discourses of military masculinity or rural masculinity, or even the more militant working class masculinity of labour activists (see Mackie 2000b:187–189). Both the salaryman and the modern boy were quite clearly products of urban modernity – specifically the urban new middle class (although in reality, as the lyrics of the songs satirising the *mobo* that Yano discusses point to, they may have been migrants from the countryside, eager to ‘pass’). No doubt, many amongst the ranks of the *mobo* went on to become salarymen, just as many *moga* would have taken up the dutiful wife/mother role upon marriage.

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21 As noted above, this anxiety was increasingly framed in terms of concerns about sexual deviance and behavioural abnormality, resulting in a spate of books and other writings by ‘experts’, as well as works which purported to be guides or journals concerned with discussing issues of deviance and criminal behaviour (like *Hanzaigaku* [Criminology] and *Henai shinri* [Deviant Psychology]) but which opened up possibilities for other readings too (by the ‘deviants’ themselves, for instance, thus allowing a sense of *identity* around sexual preferences to start taking shape) (see Frühstück 2000; Pfugfelder 1999; Roden 1990). See also William Sibley’s translation of selected correspondence between the naturalist/scholar Minakata Kumagusu and writer Iwata Jun’ichi in the early 1930s, for an appreciation of the ways in which earlier (Meiji and pre-Meiji) forms of non-heterosexual masculinity were being articulated within the context of (and reconciled with) ‘modern’ discourses of gender and sexuality (Minakata and Iwata 1996).
As was the case with the New Woman/moga and the mobo, these years saw the emergence and circulation, both in the scholarly and popular-press, of various discourses related to the figure of the salaryman, albeit couched more in terms of social class or lifestyle, rather than with reference to the salaryman's masculinity. The academic literature – reflecting the growing influence of Marxist theory – often tried to fit the salaryman within the framework of social class or in terms of lifestyle analysis (for instance social commentator Ōya Sōichi’s analysis of the salaryman and his lifestyle [Ōya 1981: 90–101]). Popular culture treatment of the salaryman, such as Maeda Hajime’s popular 1928 novel (and subsequent sequel) Sarariiman Monogatari (‘Story of the Salaryman’), cartoonist Kitazawa Rakuten’s popular manga depicting “sarariiman no tengoku” (‘salaryman’s heaven’) and “sarariiman no jigoku” (‘salaryman’s hell’) (Maeda 1928; Kitazawa Rakuten Kenshō Kai 1973, 124–125; see also Kinmonth 1981: 289, 290). ‘Salaryman’s hell’ consisted of such things as commuting on ‘jam-packed’ trams at peak hour, being gossiped about by colleagues, and having to work late at the end of the financial month; ‘Salaryman’s heaven’ included business trips, a walk with the typist, and long weekends.22 Similarly, magazines targeting an urban, white-collar readership like Kingu (King) or the monthly Sarariiman revolved around the daily concerns of a salaryman’s life. Sarariiman, for instance contained features on a range of concerns from the economy and issues to do with the workplace, right through to pieces on aspects of ‘modern’ life (everything from cafés through tips about fashion to advice about relationships). 23 Similarly, Kingu, in Kinmonth’s words, was “a monument to mediocrity and middlebrow taste” (Kinmonth 1981: 321). These magazines (and other popular culture media) also served an important prescriptive and reinforcing function – how to ‘correctly’ perform salaryman masculinity, in terms of work, consumer habits, deportment, and lifestyle patterns, as we shall see in the following chapter.

The Emergence of the Salaryman as Hegemonic Ideal

Despite the growing visibility of the salaryman as representative of urban, middle-class masculinity in these years, it was only over the decades following the war that the salaryman became the overarching embodiment of hegemonic masculinity, as alternative/competing masculinities such as the soldier and farmer became neutralized as a consequence of Japan’s defeat and subsequent social and economic

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22 For a fascinating discussion of the cartoon and manga depictions of the salaryman (and his antecedents) from the Meiji period right up to the mid-twentieth century see Suyama (1965).
23 Tanaka and Nakamura (1999) discuss Sarariiman at some length in their study of this periodical, which had until their ‘re-discovery’ of it largely been forgotten.
transformations. These socio-economic changes were pivoted around the remarkable growth and transformation of the economy from the mid-1950s until the early 1970s (and to an extent right through until the bursting of the ‘bubble’ economy boom in the early 1990s). The sheer scale of the transformation is reflected in the various socio-economic indices for the period. For instance, from 1954 to 1958, Gross National Product (GNP) grew at an average of 7 percent per annum, 10.8 percent over the period 1959 to 1963, and 10.9 percent from 1964 to 1968. This was at a time when global GDP as a whole was growing at 5 percent per annum (McCreery 2000: 17). In particular, the implementation of the ‘Income Doubling Plan’ under the Ikeda administration in the 1960s had significant repercussions on both society and the economy. Within that decade, Japan had quite definitely made the transition from a developing economy still mapping out its road to affluence, to an advanced industrialized nation, confirmation of this status being its admittance into the ranks of the OECD in 1964.24

At the ground level, this translated into very real improvements in the standards of living of large sections of the population – as an example, the average monthly income of workers in firms with more than thirty employees tripled between 1960 and 1970 (Duus 1998: 300). In terms of people’s everyday material quality of life, there was no denying that there had been some very significant improvements. For instance, per capita personal consumption expenditure, which within the objectives of the Income Doubling Plan had been targeted to be increased by 6.7 percent within the ten year time-frame, actually increased by 9.4 percent by 1970 (Uchino 1983: 112). Moreover, the nature of this household consumption shifted, as the share of household income spent on essentials – the Engels coefficient – decreased from 44.5 percent in 1955 to 32.8 percent in 1969 (Yano 1970: 67), allowing families to devote greater shares of their resources on non-essential and quality-of-life related consumption. Indeed, it was over these years that the diffusion rates for many of the consumer durables that Japanese industry was churning out (and that came to be associated with Japanese industry), really started to accelerate. As an example, the diffusion rates for black and white television sets rose from 7.8 percent in 1957 to 44.7 percent in 1960 to 90.3 percent by 1965 (Uchino 1983: 122). By the end of the decade, in 1969, 88.9 percent of urban households owned washing machines, 88.2 percent possessed their own refrigerators, 18.1 percent owned a private family car,

24 The Income Doubling Plan was initiated by the administration of Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato in 1960. Through a combination of a variety of macroeconomic policies (in particular, boosting domestic consumption) designed to further stimulate economic growth, the Plan aimed to double National Income (measured by real GNP) within a period of ten years. In reality, this target was reached within seven years. This accelerated high-growth essentially continued until the Oil Shock of 1973 (for further discussion of the Income Doubling Plan and aspects of economic growth in the 1960s, see Nakamura 1981: 80–91; Uchino 1983: Chs 4, 5; Itô 1992: 61–69; Hein 1993: 112–115).
and the diffusion rate of colour televisions jumped over one year from 6.3 percent in 1968 to 16 percent in 1969 (Yano 1970: 75). Numerous works discussing the changes over these years have drawn attention to the sense of material prosperity which started to seep into the collective consciousness of the nation in the 1960s (see, Plath 1964; Vogel 1971; Kelly 1993). For instance, Ezra Vogel’s study of urban middle-class salaryman life in ‘Mamachi’, a fictitious Tokyo suburb, at the start of that decade, conveys a sense of the tangible excitement and realization of these changes that were just beginning to have an impact on people’s lives:

In the immediate postwar period, Mamachi residents, like other Japanese, were concerned with getting the barest necessities of food and shelter... In the last decade, this picture has changed drastically. Large numbers of machines which formerly they had only seen in foreign films were imported, and later, as Japanese business began to recognize the importance of the consumer market, they were produced at home. The excitement of the consumer has been enormous. These new goods were at first available only to the wealthy, but now they are within the reach of the average salary man. Mamachi residents relate with pleasure how they first saw the machines and how they heard about them. They still tell funny stories about the mistakes and misunderstandings in their first attempts to use them, and they talk with great delight of their most recent purchases.

(Vogel 1971: 71, 72)25

In many respects, it was the salaryman who came to personify the rapid transformations Japan was undergoing over these years. Indeed, as reflected in the term kigyou senshi ('corporate warrior') that came into circulation over these years, it would appear that the salaryman had now replaced the soldier as the new masculine ideal, while ironically, the representative of military masculinity in the postwar period, the Self Defence Force, did not really figure in imaginings of idealised masculinity.26

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25 Ivey, Morris-Suzuki's very engaging oral history account of three individuals who were born in the 1920s and lived through the Showa era, also conveys a very real sense of the suddenness of these transformations in people's lives. Her informants seemed almost surprised to discover, almost unwittingly, that somewhere along the track in the 1960s, their lives had become comfortable and reasonably prosperous. As one of her informants, a woman who had been caught up with trying to run a small business from her home (painting faces onto dolls for export) amidst the difficult postwar years, reflecting on the shift in her fortunes in the mid-1960s observed: "After a while the doll-painting business grew too large for the house where we lived... By this time we were sometimes employing as many as forty workers... suddenly it seemed, I had a fair amount of money saved up. I had been putting a bit by every now and then, and with all the hard work of the past few years, I'd never had time to spend any." This woman's experience, Morris-Suzuki's comments, was not atypical. As she points out: "By the mid-1960s many people in Japan were discovering, with the same sense of wonderment, that they had attained a previously unimagined level of affluence" (Morris-Suzuki 1984: 294).

26 The noted feminist scholar Ueno Chizuko points that much of the terminology associated with the 'corporate warrior' and his activities (particularly over the crucial decades of the 1960s, '70s, and '80s) has strong militaristic connotations — for example, messhi hōkō (selfless advance), senpei (advance guard) and shūjo senryaku (market strategy) all conjure up images of military masculinity (Ueno 1995: 215–216).
Foregrounding this increasing presence of the salaryman on the social and economic landscape were the shifts in the composition of the labour force from the 1950s. One consequence of the rapid industrialization from the 1950s was an expansion of white-collar labour. Vogel, for instance, gives a figure of 7.3 million for the number of white-collar workers in 1959, an increase from 6.1 million in 1955, and 3.5 million in 1940 (before military conscription began to have a significant negative impact on the male workforce) (Vogel 1971: 6, n. 3). At the same time, changes in the countryside such as land-reform programs carried out in the late 1940s which had led to improvements in technology and reduction in the labour required for farming, meant that agriculture no longer needed to occupy as large a share of the labour force as even a decade or so earlier. In 1949, for instance, it had still accounted for nearly half of all employment (Kelly 1993: 203). By 1959 the primary sector’s share of employment was down below forty percent, and by 1968, it hovered just above twenty percent of the workforce (Cole and Tominaga 1976: 68). In particular the second and third sons of farm owning families were now freed up to seek employment in the rapidly expanding factories and offices of an urban Japan undergoing, first, postwar reconstruction, and subsequently the start of what would be labelled the ‘economic miracle’ of the late 1950s and the 1960s. Thus, whereas in 1950 total employment in the primary sector stood at 17.5 million, over the next two and a half decades an average annual decrease of 400,000 individuals meant that the total number had been reduced by almost two-thirds by 1975 (Levine 1983: 21; see also Oshima 1982: 10–15, for discussion of some of the changes in the countryside over the 1950s). From the 1950s through to the 1970s, Japan quite definitely became a nation of wage and salary earners, numbers increasing roughly threefold between 1950 and 1975, as the proportion of total employment increased from 35.4 percent to 69.8 percent (Levine 1983: 23). Correspondingly, proportions of various occupational categories within the employment sector reflected these increases. Professionals, managers, administrative and technical personnel, clerks, and service workers doubled in numbers over the period 1955 to 1975, and transport and communications workers increased over three times during the same period (Levine 1983: 23). Cole and Tominaga, in their discussion of the shifts in occupational structure also draw attention to these transformations. They point out that whereas in 1960, 26.8 percent of new school graduates went into white-collar jobs and 41.2 percent into blue-collar work, by 1970 the percentages were 38.9 percent white-collar and 35.9 percent into blue-collar jobs (Cole and Tominaga 1976: 74). This is reflected in the changes in the shares occupied by the various occupational categories – in 1950, the categories of professional, managerial, clerical, and sales constituted 4.4, 1.8, 8.4, and 8.4 percent respectively. In 1970, the corresponding percentage shares were 6.7 for professional, 3.9 managerial, 14 for clerical, and 12 percent for
sales (73). By 1970, Japan ranked seventh in a cross-national comparison of white-collar workers as a proportion of the total economically active workforce (74, 75). Moreover, it was over these years that attributes associated with Japanese corporate culture such as lifetime employment, seniority-based wages and promotions, and the ideology of corporate paternalism, started extending out beyond just elite, large-scale organizations, as had largely been the case in the pre-war years (see, for instance, Ballon 1969; Beck and Beck 1994).  

Linked in with these changes was the rapid urbanization that occurred over these decades. Between 1955 and 1970, fuelled by the influx of migrants from regional Japan, the population of the six major urban centres increased at an average rate of one million per year. Thus, in 1964 Tokyo became the first city in the world to reach a population of 10 million (Duus 1998: 303). By 1970, 72 percent of the population was concentrated in urban areas, bringing Japanese urbanization rates up to the same level as the United States of America (McCreery 2000: 21). One immediate consequence of this rapid industrialization and urbanization was the impact on rising urban land prices (see Hein 1993: 101, 102, n.7; McCreery 2000: 22). This, in turn, led to the distancing of homes from workplaces, further accentuating the public/private dichotomy (McCreery 2000: 21–23). The public/work domain became increasingly associated with masculinity, and the private/home sphere with femininity, motherhood, and nurturing. Indeed, the trend towards smaller, nuclear families in the postwar years, coupled with the rapid diffusion of household durables like vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, and washing machines, resulted, ironically, in focusing women’s roles on motherhood and child-rearing (hence the female counterpart of the salaryman - the senyō shujō, or full-time housewife). This led to a sharpening of the distinction between private/female and public/male. As Kathleen Uno (1993) points out, it was motherhood that replaced being a wife as dominant image of the Japanese woman over the postwar era. Moreover, this image of woman as mother “also contrasted sharply with the high and late postwar image of the Japanese male -- a man in a dark blue suit commuting by train to a company, an actor in the public world, rather than a father or husband in the private world of the home” (Uno 1993: 304). The hegemonic ideal of the family as a nuclear unit of a

27 However, as stressed in the Introduction, what needs to be borne in mind is the fact that even at its zenith (during the 1960s and 1970s) this model of management was never really as pervasive as was often made out to be the case in much of the literature about Japanese management, particularly in the West (see, for example Levine 1989: 297, 298).

28 Hein, for instance, points out that whereas incomes of urban worker households rose from an index of 11.7 in 1960 to 100 in 1980 (and thereafter to 127.2 in 1985 and 149.2 in 1990), the change in the urban residential land price index pegged at 1950 as 100, was from 6.8 in 1960, up to 189.5 in 1990 (Hein 1993: 101, 102 n.7).

29 As Brinton in her study of the gender dynamics of the ‘economic miracle’ points out, the structure of the taxation regime also detracted from married women working full-time. If a spouse earned
husband/wife with two children, which in the pre-war period had been an ideal only for limited sections of the urban middle-class, now became increasingly widespread and accessible to growing numbers of young couples and families. By 1970, 64 percent of households in Japan were in nuclear-family situations (Fujii 1995: 129). As Anne Imamura observes:

In the late 1950s and early sixties, increased industrial production brought with it the ‘salaryman family’. This archetypical nuclear family, headed by a salaried male breadwinner, included two children and lived in relatively small quarters requiring little maintenance. In contrast to women who married into farm or shopkeeping families, where they helped in the family business and were under the supervision of their mothers-in-law, the wife managed her own household and was considered a full-time housewife (sengyō shufu). Although numerically in the minority, the salaryman became the ideal: boys strove to become and girls to marry salarymen and attain economic security.

(Imamura 1996b: 2)

The crucial element in access to this ideal, Imamura stresses, was considered to be education. Moreover, while the responsibility of the father was seen as being that of bringing in the income to support this education, the actual day-to-day management of the children’s education – both in the narrower sense of passing examinations in order to gain access to ‘good’ schools and universities, and in the wider sense of inculcating hegemonic expectations of ‘good’ citizenship – was firmly located within the realm of motherhood. In this sense, the salaryman and his wife were equally instrumental in producing, reproducing and indeed, embodying, the ‘economic miracle’ (and the ideologies and discourses accompanying it). As Imamura argues: “The image of success became the nuclear family living in a modern dwelling with a full-time mother focused on her children’s education” (Imamura 1996b: 3; see also Vogel 1978; Atsumi 1988; Ueno 1988; Allison 1991, 1996; Fujii 1996: 128–139; Okamoto and Sasano 2001: 18, 19).

above a set ceiling amount, the husband (as primary income earner) would lose the tax-exemption that applied to any spousal income earned below that ceiling (Brinton 1993: 89 n 10).

30 Imamura’s observations draw attention to the fact that we are talking about culturally privileged ideals here. The reality, even at the high-point of this salaryman/sengyō shufu hegemony’s pervasiveness in the 1960s, was that the sengyō shufu was actually more than likely to be a kengyō shufu, a ‘part time housewife’, i.e. a housewife with a part-time job (Ueno 1988: 173–174; Uno 1993: 304). And as studies like Roberts’ study of blue-collar women seems to indicate, despite what society (or in the case of Roberts’ study, the conservative president of the company who saw a woman’s place as in the home) may have preferred, these women saw work as an essential part of their identities (Roberts 1994: 19–32; also Kondo 1990).

31 In many respects, although not exactly fitting into this parents-and-children nuclear family set-up (but instead in a more traditional three-generation household), the very popular comic strip Sazae-san, which was serialized in the major daily newspaper, the Asahi Shinbun, from 1949 to 1974 (and subsequently serialized on television) captured the essence of the typical ‘Mr and Mrs Salaryman’ and family, over this period (Shūkan Daiyamondo 1995: 52, 53; for further discussion of Sazae-san, see Nakano 1998: 107–117, Lee 2000).
Moreover, as had been the case with modernity in the 1920s, these social and economic shifts underpinning the strengthening of the salaryman discourse found expression through being embodied in, and performed through, the everyday practices of work, leisure, home-life, and public-life of citizens (see Mackie 2000b: 189–192). In other words, as I explore in more detail in the next chapter, the emergence of the discourse of salaryman masculinity as the culturally privileged/pervasive hegemony was inextricably linked to the production and dissemination of the products – in particular consumer products – the production of which underpinned the postwar ‘economic miracle’. Marilyn Ivy makes a similar point when she notes that not only did electrical appliances fuel the Income Doubling Plan generated consumer boom of the 1960s, and become the sign of middle-class inclusion, but they also “standardized the image of the average household ... their presence and placement within Japanese dwellings ... also homogenized Japanese domestic space, which became a ‘concretized metaphorical scene’ of social equality” (Ivy 1993: 249). Thus, in many senses, over these decades the salaryman/senryō shufu-centred nuclear unit came to be both the target for, and to represent, all the catch-phrases coined to capture the various fads and trends that were the driving force behind the akarui seikatsu (‘Bright New Life’) of the 1960s and 1970s – the 3 Treasures (washing machine, vacuum cleaner, black and white television); 3 C’s (car, colour television, cooler [i.e. air conditioner]); 3 J’s (jet [i.e. holiday overseas], jewels, jūtaku [own house]); mai-kōmu (own home, with the implication of privatized lifestyles), and mai-kaa (own car, implying mobility, consumption of leisure), just to name a few (see Vogel 1971; Tobin 1992b; Ivy 1993; Kelly 1993; Hazama 1996; Shūkan Daiyamando 1995).

Compounding these social and economic shifts that formed the backdrop to the standardization of the salaryman/senryō shufu pairing in the national psyche, were demographic forces coalescing around the postwar ‘Baby Boom’ generation (see Kelly 1993: 197, 198; McCreery 2000: 51–53; Matsuno 2001: 263–265). This was a generation whose trajectory into adulthood was closely intertwined with the pronounced material and social changes of the 1950s and the 1960s. Moreover, as we will see further on in this chapter, this generation continued to be closely associated with the fortunes of the Japanese economy over subsequent decades. Many of the present (and anticipated) socio-economic problems and faultlines (including the unravelling of the salaryman ideal) are inextricably entwined with this generational cohort (McCreery 2000: 51). At the time this generation was coming into adulthood, though – in the late-1960s/early-1970s – Japan was at the high-point of the ‘economic miracle’ years. The ‘miracle’ itself was, at that time, strongly associated with the efforts of the kigyō senshi (corporate warriors) and mōretsu shain
(intense/passionate company employees) salarymen of the preceding Shōwa hitoketa (Shōwa single-digit) and Shōwa futaketa (double-digit) generations. The former, those born in the first decade of the Shōwa era (i.e. 1926–1934), had come of age either during the war, or during the chaotic, hardship-filled immediate postwar years. As Kelly outlines, this was a generation that had

... become the bedrock of postwar recovery and boom. They became, in the popular imagination, the workaholic company-men (mōretsu shain) and the education mamas (kyōiku-mama), whose selfless efforts on behalf of company and children insured present and future prosperity.

(Kelly 1993: 197)

The futaketa generation, those born between the mid-1930s and the mid-1940s, were, as Kelly continues, “to many commentators the mai hōmu-gata, home-oriented types, who nonetheless retain a commitment to the workplace, if only to secure the status and resources to enable a prosperous home” (198). The Baby-Boomer generation of salarymen came into the workforce at this juncture. As McCreery points out:

[rapid economic growth created jobs, making space for them at the bottom of growing organizations. Their fate would be to provide the army of subordinates that growing companies needed for the older generations whose members were starting to move up the corporate ladder.

(McCreery 2000: 53)32

The men of this generation went on to become

... what both foreign observers and the Japanese man in the street would consider the ‘typical Japanese’. In this familiar stereotype, we are talking about men who achieve the Boomer dream. They become successful, but not too successful, middle-class, white-collar workers. They are married, have one or two children. Their homes are in the suburbs. They commute long distances to offices where, after working long hours, they go out drinking with their fellow workers. These are the men, it is said, who work so well in groups. They know the wisdom of the oft-cited maxim, ‘The nail that sticks out gets hammered down’.

(McCreery 2000: 52)

Thus, it was against a backdrop of the various social, economic, and demographic shifts and forces outlined above, that the salaryman became the embodiment of Japanese masculinity and the middle-class lifestyle that postwar economic growth had brought within the reach of increasing numbers.33 On the one hand, in many

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32 For a comprehensive discussion of the ideological forces and ethos underlying the generation of men credited with shaping the ‘economic miracle’ see Hazama (1996: Chs 8, 9).
33 See Okamoto and Sasano’s discussion of representations of the salaryman over the postwar era in the Asahi Shinbun to get a sense of the construction of the salaryman in the collective national imagination (Okamoto and Sasano 2001: especially 24, 25).
respects, it was the legions of salarymen and their wives desiring access to the products and cultural symbols associated with a middle-class lifestyle who became the metaphorical ‘foot-soldiers’ of the various economic White Papers and plans devised by economic planners and bureaucrats to chart the recovery and subsequent ‘take-off’ of the economy. This is brought out quite clearly in the desires and aspirations of individuals in many of the ethnographic studies of urban life carried out during these decades, such as Dore’s detailed study of the residents of a Tokyo ward in the early 1950s (Dore 1973b), or Plath’s (1964) and Vogel’s (1971) works conducted in the late 1950s, or even Rohlen’s study of white-collar bank employees in the early 1970s (Rohlen 1974). Consequently, the long hours of overtime put in by corporate workers, or the bonus payments channelled into household savings in order to purchase a house or consumer durables or to put aside for children’s education,34 or the pressure on children (particularly boys) to study hard, translated, directly or indirectly, into the success of the economy on a macro level. At the same time, this economic growth and expansion also allowed for increasing numbers to enter into the lifestyles associated with this standardized middle-class salaryman discourse. Thus, in contrast to previous generations when only a small proportion of students finishing compulsory education would have continued on to secondary and tertiary education (and hence have had greater access to white-collar occupations), the increasing ability (and desire) of parents to send children on to post-compulsory education meant that by 1965 about 70 percent of children went on to some form of secondary education, and 17 percent went on to tertiary education at either two-year junior colleges or four-year universities (McCreery 2000: 157).35 One consequence of this was the entrenchment of the belief that Japan had become a classless society, with the overwhelming majority of the population belonging to the middle class – according to surveys conducted by the Prime Minister’s Office, 90 per cent of Japanese citizens saw themselves as belonging to the middle class (Kelly 1993: 195).

This claim, as Kelly (195–197) cautions, needs to be treated with some reservation, and over the years, has been the subject of considerable debate and criticism (for some of the voices and debates surrounding the topic, see, for instance, Murakami 1978; De Roy 1979; Steven 1983; Ishida 1989, etc.).36 However, regardless of the

34 Personal household savings, which became an important pool to tap into for financing investment without the need for overseas borrowing, was an important component of economic growth over these decades. Over these decades, the household savings rate increased from 12.2 percent in 1955 to 20.5 percent in 1973 (Tipton 2002: 183; see also Horioka 1993: 280–289).

35 Vogel’s ethnographic study of residents of a Tokyo suburb in the late-1950s captures this sense of importance placed on education as a key to social and economic status (Vogel 1971: Ch. 3). By 1995, the equivalent percentages for these education progression rates had risen to 96.7 percent for students going on after the end of junior high school (and hence onto post-compulsory schooling) and 45.2 percent going onto to the tertiary level (McCreery 2000: 157).

36 According to Rob Steven, for instance, in his comprehensive (albeit strongly Marxian) analysis of class in Japan, the share of the total economically active population occupied by the middle class in 1979 was a mere 6.9 percent, lower even than the peasantry (at 9.5 percent). This was in contrast to
reality that the actual proportion of the population falling within the category of the ‘middle-class’ (in itself, open to contestation), was far less than popular perception suggested, it was the discourse (and indeed, the ideology it was based upon) associated with a middle-class lifestyle that was far more extensive in reach. As Kelly points out: “it is the wide appeal, not universal attainment, of this ideal life trajectory that lies behind the poll-readings of ‘90 percent middle class’” (1986: 605).

Problematicizing Hegemonic Salaryman Masculinity

It was within the context of the social, economic, and historical framework outlined in the previous sections, that the salaryman emerged as the ‘ideal citizen’ in the first two decades of the postwar period (i.e. over the 1950s and 1960s). He emerged as both the corporate ‘ideal’ and the masculine ‘ideal’, shaped by, and embodying the hegemonic discourse of masculinity. Typically, he would be middle-class and often university-educated, entering the organization upon graduation from university in his early twenties. Once within the organization, he would be expected to display qualities of loyalty, diligence, dedication, and self-sacrifice. Everything about the salaryman embodied (and indeed, to a large degree, continues to embody) these values: his behaviour, deportment (white shirt, dark business suit, lack of ‘flashy’ clothing and accessories, neat hair-style), consumer habits (for example, reading certain types of magazines), even his verbal and bodily language. Moreover, his success (or lack of it) would be premised not only on workplace conduct, but also on his ability to conform to the requirements of the hegemonic discourse – to marry at an age deemed suitable, and once married to perform the appropriate gender role befitting the role of husband/provider/father.

the working class, which in Steven’s analysis occupied a share of 51.2 percent of the economically active population, the petty bourgeoisie at 17.3 percent, and the bourgeoisie at 14.3 percent (Steven 1983: 319, table 8.1). Steven’s categorization of the middle class comprises the occupational categories of university lecturers and teachers, medical and health services employees, technocrats and supervisors (shunin), and military and police personnel (127–141). However, if we consider that individuals Steven lumps within the bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie, could arguably – at least in terms of lifestyle and self-identification – be included within the rubric of the middle class (as would sections of the categories of the working class and what he terms the ‘peasantry’), the proportion categorized as the middle-class would be far greater than Steven’s 6.9 percent. For critiques of Steven’s analysis of the class structure in Japan, see reviews of his work by Imanura (1984), Lincoln (1984), and Plath (1986).

37 Evidence for this appeal of the middle-class ideal is perhaps provided by the progressive standardization and convergence of lifestyle patterns (including leisure activities and consumption) of both white-collar and blue-collar workers, over these years; as Tipton points out: “A 1970 NHK survey of blue-collar and white-collar workers revealed almost identical uses of time in a ‘typical’ day for sleeping, meals and personal hygiene” (Tipton 2002: 182; see Hazama 1976: 45, table 14 for breakdown of the survey).
However, in many ways, the above description represented the ‘ideal’, albeit a hegemonic one. The reality, even during the ‘glory days’ of the ‘economic miracle’ was far more nuanced and complex. It is true, as argued through this chapter (and indeed, through the entire thesis) that the discourse built around salaryman masculinity emerged as the hegemonic form of masculinity at a specific juncture in Japan’s trajectory of modernity and industrialization. Yet, as signalled in the Introduction to this thesis and in the previous chapter, hegemonic masculinity is far more tenuous and open to questioning and contestation than might initially appear to be the case. As stressed earlier, while the discourse built around the ‘ideals’ of hegemonic masculinity (for example the ‘ideal’ of the selfless móretsu shain) may exert a powerful influence on the lives of most males (adult men and boys), virtually no one will be able to match it one hundred percent – to borrow Connell’s words: “The hegemonic form need not be the most common form of masculinity, let alone the most comfortable” (Connell 2000: 11; see also Kaufman 1994: 144, 145). Thus, in terms of the discourse of salaryman masculinity, even in its heyday, there were alternate, subordinated masculinities that continued to engage and interact with the discourse of salaryman masculinity in varying ways, ranging from outright hostility and opposition, to varying degrees of co-option, complicity, or subordination. Moreover, as also flagged in the earlier chapters, different discourses of masculinity often co-existed and interacted within the same individual, either at different stages of his life-path, or at the same point in time. An example from the period under discussion would perhaps be a student activist involved in the anti-establishment protests which punctuated the social landscape through the 1960s, who subsequently went on to enter the ranks of the ‘corporate warriors’ and rise up the organizational hierarchy, a not uncommon occurrence (see for instance, Morris-Suzuki 1984: 312).

While the discourse of masculinity embodied in the student activists of the 1960s may have been visibly the most oppositional and antithetical to what salaryman masculinity represented, there were also other less visibly flamboyant masculinities that continued to maintain a presence on the social tapestry. These included discourses surrounding working-class and rural masculinities, as well as non-heterosexual masculinities. If the figure of the kigyô senshi – as depicted in innumerable business novels (kigyô shôsetsu) or salaryman manga – embodied and

38 The second and third parts of Tessa Morris-Suzuki’s oral history account of the Shôwa era convey a keen sense of the upheavals and excitement surrounding the student protests in the 1960s, as seen through the eyes of her informants who lived through the events (Morris-Suzuki 1984: Parts 3 and 4; also McCormack 1971; Krauss 1974).

39 This was – and continues to be – a huge genre within popular literature – manga – as well as film and television, which, as noted earlier in the chapter, dates back at least as far back as the 1920s with the publication of Maeda Hajime’s Sarariinan Monogatari (Tales of the Salaryman) and its sequel. 

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represented one face of the high-speed economic growth years, another face was presented by figures such as the ‘anti-hero’ cinema figures played by actors such as Takakura Ken and Ishihara Yūjiro, or the bumbling, ineffectual but endearing character of Tora-san (played by the actor Atsumi Kiyoshi), the protagonist of the enormously popular *Otokotaro Tsurai Yo* (It’s Tough Being a Man) series of over forty films, the first of which was made in 1969, at the zenith of the ‘economic miracle’ (see Buruma 1984: Chs 10, 12; Standish 2000; Schilling 2000). Similarly, accounts such as Kamata Satoshi’s story of back-breaking, demeaning labour as an ‘under-cover’ production-line worker in a Toyota plant, or Robert Cole’s ethnography of blue-collar workers, provide another (particularly in the case of Kamata’s account) decidedly less upbeat side of the ‘Economic Miracle’ and the machinery of Japan Inc. (Cole 1971a; Kamata 1982; see also Mutô 1986; de Bary 1997).

Salaryman masculinity itself was not free from contestation and interrogation, both over the High-Growth decades, and in the decades following the maturation of economy after the Oil Crisis of 1973. Indeed, the very dynamics responsible for strengthening and expanding salaryman masculinity (both in terms of the discourse built around it, and in terms of actual numbers) – the expansion of the white-collar sector, the large numbers of the Baby Boom generation entering the ranks of the

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Only a very limited selection has been translated into English – see, for instance, Genji Keita’s *The Ogre and Other Stories of the Japanese Salaryman* (1972), Arai Shinya’s *Shoshukan: A Tale of Corporate Japan* (1991), and Tamae Prindle’s translated anthology, *Kemono. The Corporate Bouncer and Other Stories from Japanese Business* (1992). For a discussion of this genre see the introductions to the translated works cited; also Schot (1986: 111–114); Kissell (2000: 79–84); Saitô (2002). For discussion in Japanese, see Sataka (1991); Tao (1996); also Umezawa (1997: 45–47). I go into some discussion of the more contemporary manga representations of the ‘Corporate Warrior’ (such as *Kachô Shima Kōsaku* and *Sarariman Kintarô*) in the next chapter.

40 Indeed, the appeal of these characters lay precisely in the fact that they represented an alternative (or perhaps, a vision of nostalgia and loss) to the increasingly bureaucratized, regulated reality of lives of the expanding numbers of salarymen and their families. The success of Tora-san, in particular, according to Buruma was because he reinforced “how lucky we all are to lead such restricted, respectable and in most cases, perfectly harmless lives” (Buruma 1984: 218).

41 The Oil Crisis of 1973 when OPEC quadrupled the price of oil, thus having serious economic repercussions on an energy dependent nation like Japan, is generally regarded as the watershed between the end of the High-Growth era, and the subsequent years of slower economic growth (Tipton 2002: 190, 191). However, as both Tipton (190) and McCrery (2000: 18) point out, the precursor of the Oil Shock of 1973, in terms of negative impact on the economy, was the so-called ‘Nixon Shock’ of 1972, when among other measures (such as the USA’s recognition of the People’s Republic of China without prior consultation with Japan), the Nixon administration ended the fixed exchanged rate against the yen, thereby devaluing the dollar by 17 percent (negatively impacting Japanese exports to the US), and imposed a 10 percent surcharge on Japanese imports. The repercussions of these two successive ‘shocks’ had the immediate effect of putting the brakes on economic growth – whereas GNP growth in 1972 had been 8.5 percent, and 7.9 percent in 1973, in 1974 it went down to minus 1.4 percent, and the inflation rate for 1974 reached a peak of over 30 percent (Ito 1992: 70, 71). Consumer spending dropped by 8.5 percent, and private investment in plant and equipment fell by 19.8 percent (McCreery 2000: 18). Despite the short-term negative fallout, in the long-term the economy was able to recover within a couple of years (by 1976 GNP growth rate was back up to 4.8 percent). Moreover, the Oil Crisis prompted a shift away from energy intensive manufacturing industries to an emphasis on more value-added, information and technology-intensive sectors like electronics and information technology (Tipton 2002: 194, 195). In this respect, the post-Oil Crisis years, signified the transition to a post-industrial, mature economy.
salaryman in the late 1960s and early 1970s – also contained counter forces within themselves. The Baby Boomer salarymen had entered the organizations at a time when rapidly growing companies needed growing numbers of white-collar salarymen at the lower end of the corporate hierarchy:

Their fate would be to provide the army of subordinates that growing companies needed for the older generations whose members were starting to move up the corporate ladder. For themselves, however, lifetime employment would turn out, at the end of their careers, to be literally, a pyramid scheme. The end of high growth and a shrinking number of younger men would make it impossible to continue the seniority-based promotions that made a salaryman’s life seem so attractively secure.

(McCreery 2000: 53)

From the above, it would appear that the seeds of the unravelling of the features of corporate culture salaryman masculinity was situated within, which would become visible in the 1990s, were already in the making. At the same time, other challenges to aspects of the salaryman and his lifestyle which would also become more pronounced a decade or so down the track – issues such as the personal cost and burden on the family, for instance – started to surface in these years (see for instance, Shukan Daiyamondo 1995: 56, 57). This is vividly brought out in contemporary representations of the salaryman, such as in the 1970s manga, Dame Oyaji (Stupid Dad), revolving around the tribulations of a ‘typical’ salaryman, “a sad little man with glasses and buck teeth” who, “after spending his days bowing at a nightmarish office, … is tormented by his wife, a vicious, screaming harridan, nicknamed ‘the devil woman’” and his two children, “his son, a bald little horror and his daughter, a whining sadist, [who] both happily assist their mother …”(Buruma 1984: 196). In a less ‘tongue-in-cheek’ sense, Kumazawa Makoto’s sensitive and incisive account, ‘Twenty Years of a Bank Worker’s Life’, based on the personal diaries of a Fuji Bank employee over the 1960s and 1970s, conveys a real sense of one man’s frustrations and struggles, as he tried to contend with the demands of the corporate ideology, union bureaucracy, work responsibilities, and responsibility to his family. His attempts to balance these with his deep personal sense of commitment to justice for workers, and defence of strongly held principles, end up taking a toll on himself, both in terms of his career, and his own well-being (Kumazawa 1996: 205–247). The following excerpt brings out the burdens imposed by hegemonic masculinity on someone who, in many respects, started his career as an exemplar of the salaryman ideal (a graduate of an elite university, working for one of the top banks in Japan):

... the time he could spend with his family or reading was extremely limited. Every morning he left his house at 6:45 and did not usually return home until 11:00 P.M. In this one year (1976), the entries in his diary in which he mentions
being busy because of work and being exhausted increased greatly. There are over fifteen periods during which the only notations for five or six days in a row are ‘busy’ or ‘tired.’ On the job, an additional assignment called ‘investigative duty’ was introduced, and in September, five new client companies were added to his workload.

(Kumazawa 1996: 236)

Inevitably, this man’s health broke down, and he spent the remaining two years of his life alternating between spells in hospital, and returning to a gruelling work regime at the bank. In the end, he was knocked down and killed by a truck on his way to work in January 1978. Although not explicitly spelled out, the implication seems to be that his death was somehow linked to the psychological and physical toll of trying to be a diligent ‘corporate soldier’ and at the same time, trying to maintain his sense of personal integrity.\(^{42}\)

This interrogation and problematization started to intensify and become increasingly visible over the 1980s. The social and economic conditions during the ‘bubble economy’ years shaped the attitudes and values of a new generation of salarymen (dubbed, the shinjinrui, literally ‘New Humankind’, generation). These conditions included a speculation-driven economic boom where even relatively small-scale companies embarked on ambitious expansion programmes, a labour shortage allowing university graduates to be discerning about employment conditions, and a culture of almost hedonistic conspicuous consumption. This was also a period when the costs of buying into salaryman masculinity started to enter into public discourse in a far more visible fashion. Issues such as karōshi (literally, ‘death from overwork’), kitaku-kyohi (inability or reluctance to go home, partly due to a lack of communication between the salaryman and his family),\(^{43}\) tanshin funin (workers forced to live away from their families, sometimes for years, due to job transfers),\(^{44}\)

\(^{42}\) As Kumazawa observes: ‘... Kawabe Tomomi [the employee in question] was a loving husband and father at home and a conscientious employee at work. Additionally, he was both a determined workplace activist who opposed the mainstream union leadership and a diligent student who pursued an anti-establishment logic ... Although his emphasis varied over time, Kawabe never neglected any of these multiple aspects of his persona. One imagines he derived pride and delight from keeping this balance, but this endeavor also clearly produced contradictions and grave psychological strain’ (Kumazawa 1996: 214).

\(^{43}\) See, for instance, Okifugi (1990), Itō (1996: 51–54) for a discussion of this phenomenon, as represented in the popular press. Around this time expressions such as nure ochiba (literally, wet fallen leaves that cannot be swept away) and sodai gomi (large bulky rubbish) entered into popular parlance. These pejorative labels were applied by wives to their salarymen husbands, who having retired after a lifetime of knowing nothing but the company, had no interests and hobbies to occupy themselves, and consequently spent their days at home doing nothing and being a burden on their wives (see Itō 1996: 65–70).

\(^{44}\) By 1992 the estimated number of tanshin funin men had exceeded 250,000 (Gill 2003: 158, n. 3). Of the various factors causing salarymen to lead a tanshin funin life, not wanting to interrupt children’s schooling seems to be the motivating factor for an overwhelming number — 85.1 percent in one survey (Fūramu Josei no Seikatsu to Tenbō 1994: 21). See Wiltshire (1995) for a detailed discussion of some of the structural and other factors underlying the high rates of in-company transfers among male workers in Japan.
mado-giwa-zoku (literally, ‘window-sill tribe’ – middle-aged salaried men automatically promoted up the corporate escalator to junior management posts, but due to either personal inefficacy or a lack of available jobs commensurate with their status, being sidelined and relegated to the desks by the window, so they could pass their time staring at the scenery outside) entered the lexicon of everyday discourse, as a result of wide coverage in the media. Karôshi, in particular, received considerable attention, due to a spate of widely publicized incidents, where corporate employees (generally males in their forties or fifties, but occasionally female staff, and male staff in younger age brackets too) collapsed and died as a consequence of work-related physical and mental stress, including having to cope with excessively long periods of non-stop work without rest, long overtime hours (often not ‘officially’ recorded) as well as having to meet unrealistic work targets or sales figures. This questioning and criticism seemed to coalesce around the key tenet of salaryman masculinity – that it was through work that a man’s sense of self-worth and societal esteem was determined.

Accompanying this growing criticism of salaryman masculinity (or at least of some of its negative fall-outs), were wider socio-economic, cultural, and demographic shifts which started to become visible in the 1980s, and further intensified over the 1990s. These had considerable bearing on the discourse of salaryman masculinity. Firstly, the shift to a mature, late-industrial society which had been triggered by the 1973 Oil Shock became more pronounced through the 1980s and the 1990s. With the growing transition to an economy centred on the tertiary services sector, industries which had previously been less important started to occupy an increasingly influential role within the economy. These included areas such as fashion, tourism, media and communications, information technology, and education services. These areas of employment tended to de-emphasize attributes traditionally associated with the solid, respectable, corporate masculinity model of the salaryman, tending instead to value traits like youth, creativity, flair, sensitivity. Thus, for significant numbers of younger Japanese – male and female – there was now a greater range of lifestyle options than had been available to their parents’ generation, when the choices had

45 Karôshi, despite the widespread publicity it received in the late 1980s and over the 1990s, remained a fairly elusive term to pin down, as far as exact numbers were concerned. This was largely a result of the reluctance of the government authorities and the corporations to recognize karôshi in itself as a recognizable category leading to death (due, no doubt, to the implications for compensation claims). The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare subsequently recognized the condition as death from ‘cerebro-vascular’ or ‘cardio-vascular’ disease due to overwork, and in recent years there have been some cases of suicides being recognized as karôshi. However, the actual number recognized (and hence eligible for compensation) over the years has been a very small proportion of the total number of cases reported to the Ministry. For further discussion of karôshi, see, Nikkan Gendai Hembû-bu (1991), Zenkoku Karôshi o Kangaeru Kai (1997), Matsuno (2001: 41–44), Dasgupta (2002: 247, 248), JOSHRC Online Newsletter No. 15, May 1998 (http://www.jca-apc.org/joshre), for
been more clearly defined. For males in the past, it had generally been a choice between either accessing the cultural ideal of hegemonic salaryman masculinity with all its associated dividends (lifetime employment security, middle-class respectability) or settling for other less economically and socially rewarding alternatives. Now, particularly during the heady years of the ‘bubble economy’ boom, the choices were less clear-cut, in that there was a far greater range of options available to choose from which offered the possibility of gaining social and economic dividends on par with salaryman masculinity.46

Intertwining with these shifts was the impact of the bursting of the ‘Bubble’ economy in the early 1990s, and the subsequent economic slowdown and corporate downsizing, which continued through the 1990s and into the new millennium, and which came to be dubbed the ‘Heisei Recession’.47 One of the fallouts from this has been the dismantling of some of the mainstays of the organizational culture associated with the salaryman, in particular the implicit guarantee of permanent lifetime employment. This had a particularly acute impact on that generation of men who had come to be most closely associated with salaryman masculinity, the Baby Boomer generation. This cohort had entered the workforce during the peak years of economic growth in the late 1960s to early 1970s. This was, as noted above, a time when rapidly expanding organizations needed a large pool of young white-collar (or for that matter, blue-collar) workers, to provide the backup support to middle and upper management. The implicit assumption was that the economy would keep growing and corporations would continue expanding. Hence, the expectation, within the framework of the lifetime employment/seniority promotions system, was that as this cohort moved up the organizational hierarchy, organizations would keep expanding, and by the time they reached the age when they would move into middle

46 One survey of young full-time workers, for instance, found that only 27.5 percent of respondents expressed a desire to continue working with the same employer; this put Japan at the bottom of a ranking of eight nations, in the area of company loyalty (Japan Pictorial 1994: 33). For some of the contemporary media discussion of work attitudes of younger employees during the ‘bubble’ years, see Esaka and Kusaka (1990), Yamane (1990); for more general discussion of values and behaviour patterns of youth during these years, see Tobin (1992b: 23, 24), White (1993), Greenfield (1994).

47 So dubbed because the recession had started within a few years of the dawning of the Heisei era. In addition to following the Western system of counting, calendar years are also dated according to the year the reigning emperor comes to the throne. The Heisei era had begun in 1989, with the ascension to the throne of Crown Prince Akihito, as the new Heisei Emperor, upon the death of the previous Shōwa Emperor (Hirohito). The immediate trigger for the recession was the ‘bursting’ of the artificially inflated land and stock ‘bubble’ boom that had built up over the late 1980s, in January 1991. As Tipton notes, stock and land prices continued to drop dramatically over the next thirty months. By 1995 the total value of stock and land prices had declined by roughly the same amount as Japan’s GNP over one year. The real economic growth rate fell from 3.1 percent in 1991 to 0.4 percent in 1992, and by 1994 unemployment had climbed to 3 percent, and continued to edge upwards through the rest of the decade (Tipton 2002: 214). For discussion of the background factors and economic climate during the 1980s leading up to the bursting of the ‘bubble’, see Noguchi (1994);
management (roughly around the early-to-mid forties), sufficient managerial posts would have been created to absorb them. However, in the wake of the unanticipated economic slowdown following the bursting of the ‘bubble’, corporations found themselves with excess capacity, particularly in terms of human resources, and it was this cohort of salarymen who were particularly troublesome for corporations. In the context of a seniority-based organizational structure that had tied promotions and pay scales to length of service, they were now turning out to be a costly layer of ‘excess fat round the middle’ within the organizational hierarchy. At the same time (partly due to the cost burden on organizations to continue maintaining permanent staff at, or approaching middle management), organizations were increasingly forced to cut back on their new staff intake, particularly the intake of young female graduates into the workforce.\(^{48}\) One of the consequences of these cutbacks was that the burden of work and the pressure on middle management to ‘come up with the figures’ became even more intense, further exacerbating those negative aspects associated with salaryman masculinity, such as karōshi and the tanshin funin phenomenon, which had come under social and media scrutiny in the 1980s. Furthermore, as part of the ‘restructuring’ (abbreviated into risutora in Japanese) of organization and hierarchy that many corporations — including large elite organizations like some of the major automobile manufacturers — embarked upon, large numbers of middle-management staff found their very jobs under threat. As organizations sought to cut costs — even by shuffling round numbers, so that on paper there would at least be an appearance of reduction in staff numbers at the parent organization — growing numbers of lower- and middle-management staff found themselves being shunted off to branch offices and subsidiaries or even being ‘out-sourced’ to other firms.\(^{49}\) Others were asked to take extended leave, or only come in to work a few days a week, or, contravening everything lifetime employment supposedly stood for, were laid-off (see for instance, Frank and Murakami 1995; Shūkan Daiyamondo 1995: 62–65; Roberson and Suzuki 2003b: 9, 10).

\(^{48}\) While the economic slowdown and recession may have whittled away some of the power of hegemonic salaryman masculinity, this did not necessarily translate to a strengthening in the position of women in the workforce. As Tipton points out, the enactment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOL) in the mid-1980s notwithstanding, the percentage of regular female employees actually decreased from 67 percent to 58 percent in the ten years from 1986 to 1996 (Tipton 2002: 215). Moreover, many of the inequalities, which in the 1980s appeared to be moving towards being rectified, actually worsened over the 1990s. The wage gap between men and women, which narrowed in other industrial economies, actually widened over the 1990s, and in 1996, ten years after the passage of the EEOL, in private industry only 1.2 percent of women workers were in departmental head positions, the majority of these in the small-business sector. Even in the public sector, in 1998 only 1 percent of section chiefs and assistant section chiefs in government ministries and departments were women (216).

\(^{49}\) The total number of “dispatched workers” for instance increased from just over 500,000 in 1992 to close to 1.5 million by 2001 (Japan Institute of Labour 2003: 40).
The implications of these shifts in corporate ideology, in the discourse surrounding the salaryman and what he stood for, as well as in terms of the changed day-to-day reality for large sections of the population, were manifold. First, the unemployment rate continued to climb through the 1990s as a consequence of companies driven into bankruptcy due to the recession, or as a result of corporate re-structuring – in 1992 the official unemployment rate had been 2.1 percent; even in 1995 it was still at a relatively low 3.2 percent, but by 1999 it had climbed to 4.7, reaching 5 percent in 2001 (Japan Institute of Labour 2003: 22). The group impacted the most by the adverse employment conditions was males in the 15–24 age bracket (with an unemployment rate of 11.1 percent in 2002, compared with 4.5 in 1990). However, these unemployment figures also reflected a rise in jobless rates among middle-aged men, many of whom were the victims of corporate restructuring and lay-offs. The unemployment rate for men the in 45–54 age group had been a mere 1.1 percent in 1990; by 2002 it had climbed to 4.3 percent, and for those in the next age category – 55–64, the rate was 7.1 percent, up from 3.4 percent in 1990 (Japan Institute of Labour 2003: 44).\(^50\) For men in these age groups, the implications of being retrenched were particularly hard-hitting. Not only did they have to contend with the financial and economic strain posed on themselves and their families, but given the centrality of work in defining their identity up until that point, their very masculinity was seen as being compromised. One fallout from this was a marked increase in the male suicide rate, particularly among middle-aged men (Itô 1996: 48–51; Tipton 2002: 217; Roberson and Suzuki 2003b: 14, n.7).\(^51\) Generally speaking, for a significant proportion of salarymen in this age group, even among those who had not been laid off, there was a heightened sense of anxiety, stress, and a feeling of having been betrayed by the corporate ideology and system into which they had invested so much (see for instance, Frank and Murakami 1995; Nakamura 1996).\(^52\)

\(^{50}\) Among unemployed persons looking for work in 2002, 42.1 percent were seeking a new job as a result of losing their previous employment due to "involuntary reason" (Japan Institute of Labour 2003: 44). In terms of the trend by age group, whereas for those between 15 and 34, in a 1999 government survey, the most common reason for quitting a previous job was "another job or something else", for those between 35 and 54 it was due to "dismissal or personal adjustment" (Japan Labour Force Bulletin 2000: http://www.jil.go.jp/bulletin/year/2000/vol39-02/02.htm). Moreover, the recession and male unemployment has also been a contributing factor in the large increase in the number of homeless men (Kennett and Iwata 2003; also Gill 2001).

\(^{51}\) As Roberson and Suzuki, drawing upon Ministry of Health and Welfare statistics, point out, the number of men killing themselves in 2000 was over 2.5 times the number in 1970. Moreover, the sex-ratio over the same period has altered quite significantly – whereas in 1970 it had been 53.6 percent male and 44.3 percent female, in 2000 this was 71.6 percent male and 28.4 percent female. Among men in the 25–39 age bracket, suicide was the leading cause of death in 2000, and second for men in the 40–49 category (Roberson and Suzuki 2003b: 14, n.7; see also Nakamura 2003: 165, 166).

\(^{52}\) One indication of this shift in perceptions about the old 'givens' of corporate culture is the change in attitudes to lifetime employment. According to the 1999 White Paper on National Lifestyle, whereas in 1990 27.1 percent of companies definitely intended to maintain a policy of lifetime employment, by 1999 this share had dropped to just 9.5 percent (although it should be noted that the commitment was greater in large firms – 22.2 percent with more than 5000 employees intended to continue with lifetime employment) (White Paper on National Lifestyle 1999 [http://www5.cao.go.jp/99/c/19991210wp-seikatsu/figure1-1-4-e.gif])
For younger men, those becoming *shakaijin* over the 1990s, while there was not the same sense of betrayal, there was a definite shift in the way the discourse of salaryman masculinity was being constructed. Firstly, many younger men had firsthand experience of the toll salaryman masculinity had taken on their fathers’ generation. Thus, many of the old ‘givens’ of salaryman masculinity – stable lifelong employment with the same firm, or corporate paternalism, for instance – were far less appealing and far less of an expectation. This was even the case for those who seemed destined for ‘elite’ employment tracks. One survey conducted among job entrants from a range of elite universities in 1999, for instance, found that 60 percent held no negative image about changing jobs. In fact, 30 percent intended to change careers down the track themselves. Moreover, over 70 percent of the respondents in the same survey favoured a salary and promotion system based on performance rather than seniority (Matsubara 2000:19). Indeed, the new corporate hero seemed to no longer be the *kigyo senshi* type figure of earlier decades, but rather, drawing upon the new global realities of a world dominated by trans-national capitalism, a more entrepreneurial, ‘no-nonsense’ economic rationalist type figure. An exemplifier of this seductive new globalized corporate masculinity is someone like Carlos Ghosn, the Brazilian-born CEO of Nissan Motors. Ghosn had taken over the mantle of CEO of the then financially troubled organization in 1999, following Nissan’s merger with French automobile manufacturer Renault. He had implemented an aggressive “take-no-prisoners corporate restructuring” (Dawson 2002: 27), which was seen as being the key to turning around the fortunes of Nissan. Consequently, Ghosn became a hero in corporate boardrooms and business management schools, and also something of a popular culture icon. Not only did his autobiography become a bestseller, but it also generated a *manga* based on his career and exploits (Dawson 2002; Roberson and Suzuki 2003b: 9).

The other issue at stake was the reality that for large numbers of young men, the life of a salaryman was of little relevance, not only due to the apparent decline in the appeal of that discourse of masculinity, but for the simple reason that compared with their fathers’ generation, the likelihood of finding employment in ‘traditional’ lines of white-collar employment was far more limited. As pointed out earlier, in 2002 the male unemployment rate in the 15–24 age cohort stood at 11.1 percent (Japan Institute of Labour 2003: 45). Conversely, the trend that first started becoming visible in the 1980s of an expansion of temporary and casual work (*arubaito*) among young people, particularly in employment areas like information technology, leisure, hospitality, and the services sector, became firmly entrenched in the 1990s, becoming a sustained source of income and employment for many. Thus, for a growing number
of younger Japanese, the narrowing of opportunities in traditional employment areas, dovetailing with their own desires for more flexibility and personal choice in lifestyle, resulted in a sharp increase in the number of ‘freeters’ (or, in Japanese, *furiitā*). The number of male ‘freeters’ in the 20–24 age group increased from less than 200,000 in 1987 to close to 400,000 in 1997 (Odani 2001: 24; Murakami 2000; *Far Eastern Economic Review* 8 February 2001: 66).

It was the coming together of these various forces outlined above, that brought the interrogation of salaryman masculinity and all that it stood for to the surface, in the years since the collapse of the ‘bubble’ economy. This interrogation has operated on two intersecting levels. One, the more widespread and visible, has been the interrogation and problematization of the salaryman’s lifestyle and work habits, without specific reference to his masculinity (although masculinity often ended up being implicated through discussion of such issues as the lack of communication with his family). Much of the popular media coverage of the hardships faced by salarymen falls into this category, as does much of the academic literature pertaining to the salaryman (see for instance, Ujigawa 1981, *Gekkan Rōdō Kumiai* 1990; Ōtani 1993; Uchihashi, Okumura and Satake 1994, *Shūkan Daiyamondo* 1995; Shimada et al. 1996; Ōta 1997; Umezawa 1997; Asahi Shinbun Shakai-bu 1998; Dame-Ren 1999: 19–82; Okamoto and Sasano 2001). This wider media and academic treatment of the salaryman linked with critiques and interrogations of masculinity as a construct. While there had been some earlier antecedents where masculinity in itself was held up for scrutiny, it was largely from the 1990s that the voices seeking to tease out and unpack the term became pronounced and visible. These critiques of masculinity ranged from discussion about masculinity in some mainstream popular media outlets, through personal accounts and reflective essays, to academic and/or activist literature seeking to ‘deconstruct’ Japanese masculinities. Of particular

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54 See for instance Tanaka (1974). In fact there had been the odd piece in a magazine or newspaper that actually focused discussion specifically around masculinity, even in the pre-war decades. See for instance, Ōta Yōko’s reflection on maleness (*Otoko to in mono*) in the November 1935 issue of the journal *Nihon Hyōron*, and the panel discussion between three contemporary (and well known) female literary figures, Uno Chiyoko, Enchi Fumiko, and Hirabayashi Taiko, which appeared in a March 1959 issue of *Fujin Kōron*. See Taka (2003a) for examples of some of the early academic works focusing on masculinity.

significance were the critiques of patriarchal institutions and ideological practices, from feminist scholars and grass-roots activists. While the history of such activism dates back to the pre-war decades, the visibility and profile of campaigns for gender equality became especially pronounced from the 1970s (see Mackie 2003b: 144–168). Indeed, the efforts of such activists and scholars contributed in a significant way to the promulgation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act (Danjo Koyō Kikai Kintō Hō) in 1985, and the subsequent gender-related legislation enacted through the 1990s (Mackie 2003b: 179–193; see also Roberts 2002: 61–87, for a discussion of some of the more recent initiatives). Moreover, some of the serious academic critiques of masculinity as a construct have come out the writings of feminist academics (see Inoue, Ueno, and Ehara 1995; Shibuya 2001).

Through the 1990s, these various voices and strands seeking to interrogate masculinity and ‘maleness’ coalesced into a loose (yet distinct) social movement centred around men’s studies/men’s issues. The first ‘men’s group’, Menzu Ribu Kenkyū Kai (Men’s Liberation Research Association) was set up in Osaka in 1991, and similar groups were set up in other cities over the next few years (see Dasgupta 2003a: 112, 113; Roberson and Suzuki 2003b: 11). 56 While the issues and concerns of the groups sometimes varied according to specific local conditions, certain issues did cut across all the groups – the provision of a forum where men could talk about issues pertinent to their lives, such as relationships, work, and sexuality, and the raising of community awareness about masculinity. 57 Underlying the thinking of most of these groups was the recognition that while men did benefit as a group from the patriarchal dividends of hegemonic masculinity, individual males could also be ‘victims’ of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity. The fallout from this ‘burden of

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56 Despite the use of a name (Men’s Liberation) suggestive of a more conservative, anti-feminist agenda along the lines of some of the men’s groups in countries like the United States (such as the Mytho-Poetics or the Promise Keepers), right from the outset, these groups have had considerable intersections – both at an intellectual and a personal level – with various academic and community-based women’s groups and feminist organizations. Indeed some of the key individuals (such as Itō Kimio) had links with the 1960s’ student movement and Women’s Liberation activists from the 1970s. There were also intersections with other social activist and interest groups gaining in prominence and visibility through the 1990s. These included advocacy and support groups for sexual minorities (such as OCCUR or the Bukoten Project), as well as other specific interest and citizens’ groups, such as fatherhood and childcare groups like Ikigiren (see Roberson and Suzuki 2003b: 11).

57 In order to provide this kind of support and raise community awareness, several of these groups (often in conjunction with local government bodies and Women’s Centres) organize seminars and workshops (and annual or semi-annual national conferences), and put out publications such as newsletters, pamphlet style minikomi (newsletter-style publications put out and circulated through informal and semi-formal networks such as citizen’s groups and activist collectives), and collections of essays. The Men’s Center Japan, for instance, has put out a number of quick, easy to read booklets such as ‘Otokorashita’ kara ‘Jibunrashita’ e (‘From ‘Macho-ness’ to ‘Being Yourself’”) in 1996, and Otokotachi no Watashi Sagashi (Men’s Search for ‘Self’) the following year. Many of these groups also provide information through the Internet; the Tokyo-based group, Men’s Lib Tokyo, in particular, has a very comprehensive and frequently updated website. For detailed discussion of the
masculinity' manifested itself in the types of 'social problems' being publicized in the media – issues such as karōshi, suicide, domestic violence, dysfunctional family relationships, bullying at schools and in the workplace. Many of these issues relating to the 'burden of masculinity' were also inextricably tied in with the underpinnings and features of hegemonic salaryman masculinity. It was in this sense that the 'deconstruction' and teasing out of masculinity – whether by the men's groups, or more generally in writings about masculinity – also invariably linked in with critiques of the discourse of salaryman masculinity. As brought out in the previous sections of this chapter, while critiques of the salaryman extend back to the early twentieth century, what was significant was the fact that the salaryman was now being critiqued as a gendered construct. It was the man aspect of salaryman that was now starting to be addressed and questioned directly (Inoue, Ueno and Ehara 1995: 215–233; Nakamura 1996; Toyoda 1997: Ch. 3).

Conclusion

From the discussion in the preceding section, it may be tempting to conclude that the salaryman and all that he stood for is no longer of relevance in the Japan of today, that while the discourse of salaryman masculinity (and its links with gender ideology) may have been an integral part of Japan's project of modernity over much of the twentieth century, this is no longer the case. The socio-economic and cultural conditions of the past decades (in particular, since the 1990s) – the dismantling of pillars of the employment system the salaryman was situated within, the growth in the 'freeter' sector, the incremental, but nevertheless significant increase in the number of women continuing to work full-time after marriage – may, at one level be taken as evidence for such an assertion.

However, the situation is much more complex than these points may suggest. As my discussion of the genealogy and the historical trajectory of the salaryman has demonstrated, the discourse of salaryman masculinity – as with discourses built around any form of masculinity – was always in a process of being shaped and re-shaped, crafted and re-crafted. At any one point in time, its shape and form was a product of engagements with the prevailing social, cultural, economic, and political conditions. This was the case whether we are talking about the emergent white-collar salaryman masculinity in 1920s urban Japan, or the kigyō senshi of the 1960s, or the

internet to raise awareness about issues relating to masculinity, see my chapter (Dasgupta 2003a:
seemingly crisis-besieged salaryman masculinity of the 1990s. Moreover, as pointed out earlier, the relationship between the hegemonic masculinity and other masculinities is a dynamic, constantly shifting one. These other non-hegemonic masculinities (or aspects of them) may be appropriated into the dominant, hegemonic one, or may subvert or challenge it (with even a possibility of superseding it as a new hegemonic masculinity). As this chapter has shown, this has been the case with salaryman masculinity. It emerged out of earlier pre-existing discourses of masculinity, and continued to engage in a variety of ways with a host of different masculinities. Over the span of its historical trajectory, for instance, these various engagements have encompassed absorbing and adapting aspects of the codes of bushidō from the pre-Meiji era, coexisting and intersecting with a variety of different masculinities (such as those revolving around the soldier or the farmer) in the decades leading up to the war, effectively becoming the hegemonic cultural ideal in the decades following the end of the war, being challenged by new globalized discourses of corporate masculinity (as embodied in figures such as Carlos Ghosn), and (as I discuss in the next chapter) being reinvigorated by incorporating elements from blue-collar, working-class masculinities, as seen in such popular culture icons as ‘Salaryman Kintarō’, the protagonist of the popular salaryman manga series of the same name.

Thus, considered in this light, we would need to be cautious about making overly confident assertions about the ‘demise’ of the salaryman, and the discourse of masculinity built around it. The contours and shapings of salaryman masculinity may be shifting and transforming in response to the conditions of a complex, mature, late-capitalist, ‘global’ society, but the question remains as to what extent the core assumptions that made this the cultural ideal, have shifted – in particular, the belief that a man needs to work and support his family, in other words, to be the datokubashira, the mainstay of the family.58 To get a sense of this, the following chapters of this thesis will explore the dynamics through which these core underpinnings of salaryman masculinity are crafted and re-crafted, on a day-to-day basis. The next chapter looks at one important conduit through which these core assumptions at the heart of hegemonic masculinity get disseminated and reinforced and engaged with and re-negotiated – spaces of everyday popular culture. The

58 Datokubashira literally refers to the main support pillar within a dwelling. Perhaps the best evidence to support this continued stress on work on a fulltime, regular basis, playing a pivotal role in a man’s life is to take another look at the ‘freeter’ statistics mentioned earlier on in the chapter. While it might appear that a male ‘freeter’ population of 400,000 in the 20-24 age bracket represents a protest against conventional expectations of masculinity, the fact that the numbers drop sharply in the age groups after that (as the man gets more ‘tied down’ with conventional responsibilities) is a sobering reminder of the continuing hold of hegemonic expectations about masculinity (see Odani 2001: 24).
subsequent chapters will then shift the focus down to the 'micro' level, to explore, through the voices of my informants, these negotiations and engagements with the expectations of the hegemonic ideal, on a day-to-day basis.
CHAPTER FOUR
CRAFTING SALARYMAM MASCULINITY THROUGH POPULAR CULTURE

The previous chapter explored the historical trajectory of salaryman masculinity emerging as the hegemonic discourse of masculinity. As indicated through the discussion in that chapter, the emergence of the salaryman as the embodiment of hegemonic masculinity was a multi-faceted process, with a variety of socio-cultural, economic, and political forces at work. Included among these would be the influence popular culture in its varied manifestations has had (and continues to have) on this 'crafting' process. This influence of popular culture is often ambiguous and contradictory, on the one hand reinforcing and disseminating the dominant discourses (not necessarily just in the context of hegemonic masculinity), yet, at the same time, also allowing for resistance to, and sometimes subversion of, the very same discourses. Moreover, popular culture in its varied aspects circulates through all levels of society, with differing degrees of intensity. First, it operates at a more diffuse societal level through such media as magazines, television, film, advertising, manga, and popular literature, and (more recently) the Internet. Popular culture's influence is also at work at a more specific micro level. For instance, in the context

1 A precise (and generally agreed upon) definition of the term 'popular culture' is far more difficult to pin down than might initially be expected from such a 'common sense' expression. As Craig Lockard, in his study of popular music observes, despite the fact that 'the artifacts of popular culture and mass media have become a part of everyday life for billions of people ... popular culture remains a nebulous concept with contested definitions' (Lockard 1998: 2; see also Sriniati 1995: Ch. 1). Does the term, as Lockard reflects 'mean simply the products designed for mass consumption, or something more than that? Does the term 'popular' pertain to a mode of production and consumption, a style, a method of distribution, a form, a strategy? Could it be that popular culture functions in some respects as a form of folk culture for urban industrial societies? But popular culture is not restricted to industrialized nations, given the transformation or displacement of folk cultures in recent decades even in mostly agrarian societies" (3). For Lockard, it is the 'popularity' of popular culture which acts as the key determinant. As he states, popular culture "is a 'majority' culture involving aspects of culture (ideological, material, social) that are widely spread, believed in, or consumed by large numbers of people (generally on a leisure basis)" (3). While, at one level, Lockard's definition does capture a sense of the term, it still leaves us with a number of unresolved questions, mostly pertaining to the interfaces and disjunctions between the categories of 'popular culture', 'mass culture', 'folk culture', 'sub-culture' (or 'alternative', 'underground' culture) and 'consumption'. Moreover, the term 'popular culture' (or for that matter 'mass culture', 'folk culture', 'sub-culture', etc.) and all the associated baggage that goes with it, is, at the end of the day, an English-language term that was shaped by particular socio-cultural, political, and economic conditions of Euro-American modernity. As John Whittier Treat in his introduction to a collection of popular culture in Japan points out, there are problems associated with simply transplanting the English term 'popular culture' into the Japanese context. Firstly, despite drawing upon and being influenced (as we have seen in the previous chapter) by discourses emerging out of Western modernity, Japan had its own trajectory of modernity, including a rich 'popular culture' heritage pre-dating its 'opening' to the outside world in the mid-nineteenth century. Additionally, terms that have been used to talk about notions of 'popular culture' or 'mass culture', such as isyō, minzoku, massu, and poppyū, all have political and academic assumptions and agendas embedded in them, which may be quite different to the debates and agendas associated with the terms in English (Ivy 1993: 239–242; Clammer 1995b: 31–45; Treat 1996b; Martinez 1996b: 4–6; also Kogawa 1988: 54, 55). Despite these problematics, my deployment of the term 'popular culture' in this chapter largely follows Lockard's and John Clammer's use of the term.
of salaryman masculinity, popular culture media such as ‘pop-management’-style books, employment training manuals, and self-improvement guides play an important role in ‘crafting’ the salaryman towards the hegemonic ‘ideal’. This chapter explores these intersections between popular culture and the discourse of salaryman masculinity. Specifically, through a discussion of media such as magazines and *manga* targeting a salaryman readership, employment training manuals and self-improvement style guides, I analyse the ways in which the hegemonic discourse is inscribed onto the bodies of men, as they are instructed about the correct *performance* (repetitive enactments) of salaryman masculinity. This notion of performance points to Connell’s observation that “gender is something actually *done* and done in social life, not something that exists prior to social life” (Connell 2002: 55; *emphasis added*). However, as the chapter also brings out, many of these same media also open up spaces for interrogation of these very same hegemonic ‘ideals’. The first part of the chapter sets out the theoretical framework for the discussion, specifically the varied and often contradictory relationship between popular culture and hegemonic discourses and ideologies in society. The second half of the chapter will then go on to discuss in some detail how, in relation to salaryman masculinity, these dynamics are played out in a selection of specific media targeting the salaryman.

**Popular Culture, Cultures of Consumption and ‘Crafting’ Masculinities**

The role of popular culture – particularly under conditions of late modernity – as a space where the tensions and intersections between dominant and alternative/subordinated discourses are played out, has been the focus of discussion in an extensive body of work across a range of disciplines (cultural studies, anthropology, sociology, cultural geography, to single out four of the areas) (see for instance, Strinati 1995, G Turner 1996, Skelton and Valentine 1998; Storey 2001). Drawing attention to the various forms popular culture may take, Craig Lockard, in a discussion of the intersections between popular music and politics in South East Asia, observes that “popular culture can … be viewed as both a mirror and a lamp: a mirror that reflects society and a lamp that illuminates the picture (and hence facilitates the changing) of political reality” (Lockard 1998: 8). Thus, on the one hand popular culture acts as a powerful transmitter and reflector for the dominant ideologies and discourses, but on the other, may also work towards challenging and de-stabilizing the very same discourses and ideologies. Within the context of the

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Clammer stresses the importance of the "everyday" and "consumption" as being integral to popular or mass culture, terms which he deploys interchangeably (Clammer 1995b: 32).
former reading of popular culture are views along the lines of the works of Theodor Adorno and the Frankfurt School which saw popular culture as little more than outright manipulation and control (see, for example, Strinati 1995: 53–85 for a detailed discussion of Adorno and other writers associated with the Frankfurt School).

An example of such a view of popular culture in the context of masculinity, would be the popular appeal of what came to be termed ‘New Laddism’ in the United Kingdom from the mid-1990s. Through the appropriation, re-packaging, and re-invigoration of conservative, thinly disguised patriarchal (and often homophobic) values associated with subordinated working-class masculinities into a slicker 1990s culture-industry-created ‘designer’ version through men’s magazines such as Loaded and FMH, television serials such as Men Behaving Badly, and industry-created media personalities such as celebrity chef Jamie Oliver, hegemonic ideals of gender and sexuality were (and continue to be) reinforced in seemingly innocuous and entertaining ways (see, for instance, Whelehan 2000; Jackson, Stevenson and Brooks 2001; Beynon 2002: 98–119; chapters by Benwell, Gill, Crewe, Edwards, Wheaton in Benwell 2003a; Hollows 2003). Moreover, these dominant discourses surrounding particular masculinities, disseminated through popular culture channels – and even through particular individual icons (David Beckham, Jamie Oliver) – such as advertising, popular music, movies, and television, are not just internalized in terms of values and attitudes (for example, attitudes towards feminists or gay men). Rather, as will be expanded upon further on in this chapter, these discourses are inscribed onto male bodies, and through repetitive performances become integral to the body reflexive practices that constitute individual males’ engagements with hegemonic ideals of masculinity. Thus, popular culture becomes one avenue contributing to the social embodiment (Connell 2002: 47–52) of hegemonic discourses and ideologies (including those pertaining to gender).

However, the very same popular culture manifestations may be (and have been) open to quite different readings, which see spaces of popular culture as sites and avenues of potential resistance to and/or subversion of dominant discourses and ideologies.

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2 See also Robert Hanke’s analysis of the portrayal of ‘softer’, sensitive male characters in television dramas of the late 1980s to early 1990s such as thirtysomething (Hanke 1992). Hanke argues that through strategies of appropriating aspects of subordinated/alternative masculinities and depicting male characters who (on one level) appear quite different from hypermasculine ideals of toughness and aggression, such programmes in actual fact work towards bolstering rather than dismantling hegemonic masculinity. As he notes: “The key question is not whether such a [‘softer’, less overtly patriarchal] version of masculinity is more modern or less (hetero)sexist than traditional, hegemonic conceptions of the male role ... but how masculinity is defined and re-defined in order to remain hegemonic” (Hanke 1992: 196). Thus, in order to do so, “hegemonic masculinity must continually be reconstituted through specific representations of masculinity” (196), representations which may on the surface appear to be incongruous with the attributes of hegemonic masculinity.
This was brought out, for instance, in many of the early works of scholars associated with the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) (Hall and Jefferson 1976; McRobbie and Garber 1976; Hebdige 1979). The argument of many of these writers was the very 'everyday', mundane, indeed superficial nature of resistance often through the appropriation and re-appropriation of symbols and artefacts associated with the dominant culture (see, for instance, Fiske 1991: 241; Lockard 1998: 16).

Such views, which essentially see popular culture as the ground where hegemonic discourses and ideologies are constantly being appropriated and resisted need – as various writers have pointed out – to be treated with some circumspection. For instance, Craig Lockard makes the following observation in relation to the either/or binary approach to reading popular culture:

If the seminal Frankfurt theorists were too far removed from mass culture to understand it, some of their opponents are too enmeshed in it to maintain critical distance, hence exaggerating the freedom of the consumer to create their own meaning.


Rather, the reality, as far as popular culture is concerned, is more likely to be the coexistence and intermeshing of both readings. As Lockard, citing Stuart Hall, points out: "popular culture should be perceived neither as popular traditions of resistance nor as forms superimposed from above, but rather as 'the ground on which the transformations are worked'" (13). This, essentially, resonates with the reading taken in this chapter. The theoretical assumption underpinning this chapter (and indeed many of the other chapters) is that popular culture is one of the various 'spaces' and 'channels' where, and through which, the hegemonic discourse of masculinity circulates and interacts with the lived, day-to-day experiences of individuals (male and female, although we are specifically concerned with men in the present discussion, rather than boys, girls, or women). It is through these intermeshings in popular cultural spaces that the hegemonic masculinity is inscribed and embodied, and is resisted, modified, played around with, and even (in some cases) subverted.

An additional element which has a bearing on our discussion, is the centrality of the consumption of popular culture, particularly in late-industrial societies (see, for instance, Featherstone 1991; Lury 1996; Clammer 1997). As John Clammer points

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4 Celia Lury outlines sixteen characteristics of modern consumption in her study of the various theories and discourses surrounding the concept of consumer culture. These include: availability of
out with reference to contemporary Japan, “this [mass/popular] culture is consumed in every sense of the word: not only is it constantly ingested through just about all of the sense organs, but it is bought not self-produced” (Clammer 1995b: 32, italics in original). Thus, it is through, and in, spaces of popular culture (movies, shopping, television, magazines, the Internet, etc.) hegemonic ideologies and the discourses surrounding these ideologies, are consumed. It is through consumption that the varied strategies of engagement mentioned above — compliance, active or passive resistance, subversion, playful engagement, or combinations of all of these — take place. Moreover, as signalled earlier, the site on, and through, which many of these engagements are carried out is the body of the consumer. The following section will expand on this theme of bodily engagements with dominant socio-cultural discourses in circulation.

Embodying Salaryman Masculinity through Consumption of Popular Culture

As Vera Mackie has shown, the history of the project of Japanese modernity (which I outlined in the previous chapter) can, at one level, be read through the embodied everyday practices of work, leisure and home life (Mackie 2000b: 189). In other words, as Connell reminds us, “bodies are in history, not outside” (Connell 2000: 59). Moreover, as Connell also stresses, embodiment is from start to finish, a social process. Rather than being a blank slate onto which “meanings and stories are inscribed” (Connell 2000: 58), the body of the consuming citizen can also be the site where the engagement between the hegemonic and other discourses takes place, the “ground on which transformations are worked” (Lockard 1998: 13). Thus, on the

large numbers of goods across a wide range: increasing commodification of human interaction; the emergence of shopping as a leisure pursuit in its own right; the diversification of methods and sites for shopping; the importance and visibility of the consumption of leisure and sport; growing importance of packaging, style, appearance of goods; pervasiveness of advertising; and expansion of consumer credit, among others (Lury 1996: 29–36).

5 Discussion of the interplay between consumption, popular culture and the matrix of discourses within which they are embedded has been the focus of a growing body of work, particularly since the ‘hedonistic’ conspicuous consumption associated ‘bubble’ economy boom years of the mid-1980s to early 1990s, and the subsequent ‘bursting’ of the ‘bubble’ (see for example, Tobin 1992a; White 1993; Skov and Moeran 1995a; Treat 1996a; Muramatsu and Gossmann 1998; Craig 2000; Martinez 1998a; McCreery 2000; Seo 2001, etc.). Some of these works draw attention to the historical context foregrounding the emergence of a late-capitalist culture of consumption in Japan (Tobin 1992b; Ivy 1993; Skov and Moeran 1995b; Clammer 1997). Others examine the consumption of specific popular culture media and sites through which the engagements with the dominant societal ideologies and discourses occur. A sample would encompass works looking at magazines (Moeran 1995; Nagamine 1997; Clammer 1995a; Rosenberger 1995; White 1995; Morohashi 1998; Tanaka 1998, 2003; Seo 2001), manga and anime (Allison 1996a; Schodt 1996; Nakano 1998; Napier 1998; Standish 1998; KinSELLA 2000; Lee 2000; TsuRUMI 2000; OgI 2001), film (Hall 2000; Standish 2000), music (Ching 1995; Currid 1996; Yano 1998; StanLaw 2000; Roberson 2001; Stevens 2002), television (Harvey 1995; Painter 1996; Shioya 1998; Miller 2000), advertising (Moeran 1996a, 1996b; Yoshida 1998; McCreery 2000), department stores (Creighton 1992), theme parks (Brannen 1992, Hamilton-Dehl 1998; Raz 2002) fashion (Skov 1996; Kondo 1997; Cameron 2000; Miller 2003) popular literature (Aoki 1996; Treat 1995, 1996c; Yonaha 1998), sport (Watts 1998; Light 2000, 2003), and the Internet (Gottlieb and McLelland 2003), to name just a few.
one hand the hegemonic discourses are inscribed onto, performed by, and represented through bodies. Bodies are accordingly disciplined and regulated to conform to the expectations of the hegemonic ideals. However, at the same time, bodies can also be sites for contestation or, at least, playful modification of these hegemonic ideals – examples would be the ways sub-cultures such as the punks, mods, skinheads, and other groups discussed by Hebdige (1979), or the bōsōzoku biker sub-cultures described by Sato (1991) appropriate and re-deploy artifacts and cultural symbols associated with the dominant, mainstream culture. Similarly, even within contexts where initial impressions may indicate bodies being disciplined and conforming to the hegemonic expectations, there may be areas open to contestation and negotiation. For instance, Linda McDowell in her discussion of gendered embodiment through deportment and dress among executives in the financial sector in London, notes some of her (male) informants talking about the minor modifications, such as tartan socks or bright coloured braces or ties, made to alleviate the monotony of a hegemonic dress code revolving around dark, sober suits (McDowell 1995: 88). These executives interviewed by McDowell were men who otherwise in most respects embodied the hegemonic ideal of “the sober, besuited … heterosexual family man” (88). However, although perhaps quite trivial in significance, these modifications do point to aspects of engagement between individuals’ practices of embodiment and the hegemonic ideal. In a similar vein, Brian McVeigh’s study of uniforms among Japanese students draws attention to the ways in which a powerful instrument of discipline and control (the school uniform) can also become a site for engagement and subversion (McVeigh 2000). Laura Spielvogel, in a recent discussion of women’s fitness clubs in Japan, makes the point that the leotards worn by the female instructors and patrons can be viewed either as controlling or liberating. She argues that “with an emphasis on beauty, body, and aesthetics, aerobics and the leotard … conform to traditional notions of sexualized femininity. But … [they] also provide women with an opportunity to resist the prevalent feminine stereotype of the demure, passive, and sexually inexperienced ideal” (Spielvogel 2003: 101, 102).

These above observations need to be stressed, since, as Connell points out, the tendency (particularly in many of the Foucauldian influenced writings) often is to view bodies as merely “passive bearers of cultural imprints” (Connell 2000: 58), which are disciplined and regulated. In other words, the body becomes like a canvas. Rather, bodies can also have the agency to engage with and modify those disciplining discourses. In other words, bodies are “both agents and objects of practice” (2000: 26). Moreover, it follows that through such “body-reflexive practices, bodies are
addressed by social process and drawn into history … [and] do not turn into [merely] symbols, signs, or positions in discourse” (27).6

To get a sense of this in the context of salaryman masculinity, the rest of the chapter will focus on a selection of popular culture media. I will discuss the ways in which popular culture instruments inscribe and reinforce the ideals of salaryman masculinity onto the bodies of men, particularly those who are making the transition from pre-shakaijin non-productive masculinity to adult, salaryman masculinity (and hence need to be instructed in the correct performance of salaryman masculinity). However, popular culture channels and spaces can also act as sites of contestation and negotiation through which the hegemonic discourse itself gets subjected to pressures. I will first look at a variety of publications which are specifically devoted to the instruction of salaryman masculinity. These include ‘pop-management’-style self-improvement guides targeting young salarymen, as well as employee training manuals for managers responsible for training new employees. Following discussion of these specific instruments, I will shift the focus to media which are more diffuse, but arguably more influential, such as popular magazines aimed at men (particularly salarymen) in their twenties and early thirties. The final part of the discussion will then look at the ways in which popular culture can also act as a site for resistance and negotiations with the hegemonic discourse.

Self-Improvement Texts and ‘Pop-Management’ Training Manuals

Publications that fall into this genre are arguably the most specifically instructional and prescriptive in terms of acting as instruments for inscribing and inculcating salaryman masculinity. This is a genre that — as is the case in many other countries — occupies entire sections of major book-stores. Publications within the genre encompass a range of topics, ranging from advice about specific skills related to the work-place (for instance book-keeping skills, or updating computer literacy) through

6 While Connell acknowledges the enormous contribution made by Foucault-inspired analyses of the body, his major criticism revolves around the fact that the “body-canvas … approach emphasizes the ‘signifier’ to the point where the ‘signified’ practically vanishes” (Connell 2002: 38). These approaches erase the reality of bodies. Bodies can be “recalcitrant and difficult… [they] grow, age, become sick, desire, learn and forget skills, engender and give birth” (39). See also Dellinger and Williams’ (1997) discussion of women’s use of make-up at work, for a critique of approaches which rely too heavily upon the “docile body thesis” (152), or alternatively over-emphasize “freewheeling agency” (153). There is a considerable body of literature dealing with socio-cultural constructions of the body and embodied practices. Detailed discussion of the literature and the myriad of views and debates is outside the scope of the present discussion. However, for a good discussion of the range and scope of the area see Featherstone, Hepworth, and Turner (1991), Cranny-Francis (1995), B. Turner (1996b), Hancock et al (2000) ; also for discussion specific to the Japanese context Clammer (1997:122–133).
to more general advice about being successful and/or fulfilled in life.\textsuperscript{7} For the purposes of the present discussion, I will focus on a selection of publications that are concerned with the instruction of the ideals of salaryman masculinity to new employees. Such publications complement the company-specific manuals and guides put out by employers, such as those I discuss in Chapter Six. Moreover, although many of the messages imparted in these manuals and guides apply equally to male and female new recruits, there is a subset of publications within this genre that focuses specifically on the ‘Office Lady’ (OL). OLs are the female clerical/secretarial employees who, as explained in an earlier chapter, are in many respects considered the female counterpart of the male salaryman, both in the workplace, and as future marriage partner. This chapter will not specifically address the ‘crafting’ of OL femininity; however, this is an area that has been addressed in the works of a number of authors, including Lo (1990), McVeigh (1997), Ogasawara (1998), and Kawashima (1999).

Many of these publications are quite explicit about their agenda – the prescription and inculcation of expectations of the hegemonic ideal. This is apparent even from the titles of many of these publications, which make no attempt to conceal the ideological agenda. Thus, we have titles such as:

- \textit{Otokō wa ni-jū dai ni nani o subeki ka} (What a Man Should Do in His Twenties), with an accompanying subtitle of ‘Ningen no kihon’ o mi ni tsukeru tame ni (For the Purposes of Acquiring the ‘Basics of [Being] Human’) (Suzuki 1997);
- \textit{Otona no ‘otoko’ ni naru 85 ka jō: Kachō Shima Kōsaku kara kimi e} (85 Items Needed to Become an Adult ‘Male’: From Section-chief Shima Kōsaku to You) (Hirokane 1996);\textsuperscript{8}
- \textit{Shakaijin toshite no kokoro} (Rules/Instructions for Shakaijin) (Keici Shoin 2000);

\textsuperscript{7} As Earl Kinmonth’s study reveals, such ‘guides’ for aspiring and new salarymen are not a recent phenomenon. Kinmonth discusses a range of guides – with names such as ‘Placement Tactics’ and ‘Placement Secrets’ – from the 1920s and 1930s which aimed at providing tips to new graduates to help secure employment, and once employed to get ahead in the company (Kinmonth 1981: 303–314, 317–323).

\textsuperscript{8} Significantly the word o\textit{tokō} (male/man) is marked out in the title, drawing attention to the masculinity component of being an adult male. The \textit{Kachō Shima Kōsaku} (Section Chief Shima Kōsaku) in the title refers to the salaryman ‘hero’ – a middle-management sales manager at an electronics firm – of an extremely popular salaryman \textit{manga} and television series of the same name (and also by the same author) of the 1990s (see Kinsella 2000: 82, 83). The hero of this \textit{manga}, which subsequently became \textit{Buchō} (Departmental Manager) \textit{Shima Kōsaku}, embodied all the ‘ideal’ qualities of hegemonic salaryman masculinity, and – although there were some significant differences in the representation of the masculinity of the protagonists – was not dissimilar to another popular salaryman \textit{manga} (discussed below), \textit{Sararimannin Kintařō}.
• *Shakaijin no tessoku 2001* (Ironclad Rules for *Shakaijin*, 2001) (Inoue et al. 2001);

• *Tadashii shanai no arukikata* (The Correct Way of Walking [i.e. negotiating your way through] the Company) (Matsui 1998);

• and for the boss or supervisor of the new *shakaijin*, *Shinnyû shain kyôiku manyuaru* (Manual for Training New Staff) (Mizui 1991).

The themes addressed by these (and other) instructional guides show a predictable commonality. All revolve around the themes of needing to learn how to *perform* the hegemonic ‘ideal’ through the appropriate work- and body-reflexive practices.

The information/instruction/guidance in these manuals covers both the individual’s work life-course (i.e. from the point he enters the company as a *shinnyû shain*), and his workday (i.e. from the time he arrives at work each day). For instance, Suzuki Ken’ichi’s ‘What a Man Should Do in His Twenties’ gives the reader a variety of lifestyle and work-related advice. The former ranges from tips such as ensuring that you choose your friends carefully as friendships made in your twenties will stay with you for life (“*mi-jû dai no tomo wa isshô no tomo da*”) (Suzuki 1997: 94), to making sure that your table etiquette is correct (“*shokubi wa reigi tadashiku tore*”) (90). He also gives his young male reader a host of tips related to the ‘ideal’ kind of marriage; the two essential duties of a man in his twenties, according to the author, are finding employment and getting married (“*otoko ni totte 20-dai ni shinakereba naranai daijigyô wa, shûshoku to kekkon de aru*”) (128). Thus, given its importance in a man’s life, the reader is warned against getting married out of mere attraction (“*suki dake de kekkon suru na*”) (128). and told that once married, he should not treat marriage as an extension of his single life (“*dokushin jidai no enchô dewa nai*”) (149). Playing around as if unattached may lead to the wife being neglected, hence causing her pain (“*tsuma o sabishigaraseru na*”) (149). Moreover, the author suggests that sex should only be for creating a family and recommends finding a partner who thinks likewise (“*sekkusu ... wa yoi kazoku o tsukuru tame ni dake aru ... onaji kangae no josei o ren’ai no taishô toshite erabu koto o susumetai*”) (145). Apart from these more personal bits of advice, he also gives more work-specific tips such as making sure you arrive at work at least fifteen minutes early (“*15-fun mae shussha o okotaru na*”), and making sure you do more work than your work-place peers, as the most shameful thing for a *man* is to be branded as a stupid/useless individual (“*... hito yori takusan shigoto o suru. Otoko ni totte motto mo haji na no wa, gudon na ningen*”)

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9 As is the case with this particular guide, many of the texts in this genre use the imperative form of the language usually adopted when giving instructions or orders to juniors and subordinates.
da to iu rakuin o osarete shimau koto de aru”) (119). He also stresses that as a new employee starting at the very bottom of the corporate ladder, the word “no” should not exist in the new entrant’s vocabulary, and that he should happily take whatever work comes his way (“shinjin no jisho ni wa ‘nô’ wa nai. Shigoto o iitsukeraretara kiki toshite yaru no da.”) (115).

Apart from the work-specific and lifestyle-related guidance offered, these manuals also place great emphasis on projecting the appropriate image through clothing, deportment, verbal language, and body language – quite literally how to perform salaryman masculinity through the body. The ‘Ironclad Rules for Adults, 2001’ referred to earlier is a good example, covering most of these embodying practices through the use of attractive colour and black-and-white illustrations, eye-catching captions, and easy-to-read text. Thus, the reader is instructed, with the aid of visuals, about the appropriate protocol and body language for different situations: suddenly realizing that a senior executive is standing next to you while waiting for the elevator; greeting same-age colleagues; welcoming a client and showing him (and I use him deliberately) into the waiting reception area; or the correct way to exchange business cards (Inoue et al. 2001: 22, 23, 46). The use of correct verbal language is similarly emphasized – for instance, the importance of the correct greeting/expression for each situation (for instance what they refer to as the five basic “golden greetings” of the workplace [21]10; the correct telephone language (including proper body language: correct posture, not smoking while talking, making sure your necktie is not slack) (37–39); and the distinctions between honorific language (keigo) and everyday speech (25–27) (see Figures 1, 2, 3 at the end of this chapter).

As mentioned, deportment and grooming is also integral to this inscription. In fact, the importance placed on proper appearance is indicated by the fact that this is the very first topic covered (the reader is told in no uncertain terms that the correct style is the key to creating a favourable impression with bosses and clients [Inoue et al. 2001: 6]), and the use of colour photographs and visual images (in contrast to the other sections which only use monochrome images) (Figure 4). Virtually every aspect of dress and appearance is considered. The appropriate styles for different situations (work, formal occasions, weekends) with matching accessories and budget checklist is presented – the “off-style course” for weekend wear, for instance, warns

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10 They are 1) ohayô gozaimasu (“good morning”); 2) itte irasshai (expression used when someone else is leaving, but with the knowledge that the person will be returning); and okaeri nasai (when they return to the office); 3) otsukaresama deshita (at the end of the workday or after someone has finished a particular task), osaki ni shitsureishimasu (apology when leaving before the other person(s); 4)
you not to dress-down in case you bump into your boss downtown (Figure 5). Readers are instructed about the proper way of tying a necktie, told about cosmetic products they should or should not use, warned against dying their hair brown, and entreated to keep certain indispensable items handy (nail clippers, breath freshener, hair comb, pocket tissues). Just to be certain, a visual check-list is provided (Figure 6). This check-list goes through points such as checking your hairstyle (short and neat, and no dandruff), making sure your shoes are polished (because both clients and bar hostesses begin with the shoes when judging a person’s worth), your trousers pressed, and that you are wearing a white dress-shirt (of which you should possess at least six; striped or coloured shirts are only appropriate if you have been working for a number of years and have confidence in your ability!) (Inoue et al. 2001, 18, 19). The importance of correct appearance and deportment as a determinant of success (or lack of) in attaining the hegemonic ideal can be gauged by works focusing exclusively on clothing with titles like Dekiru otoko no fukusō-jutsu (The Successful Male’s Art of Dressing) (Kawaki 1998) and Otoko no fukusō-jutsu (The Art of Dressing for Men) (Ochiai 2000).

The above points to the fact that merely entering the workforce as a salaryman does not make a new recruit into a ‘successful’ salaryman. Rather, what is crucial is the ability to ‘memorize through the body’ the expectations that accompany being a salaryman.

Magazines and Salaryman Masculinity

Despite the very visible presence of this genre of ‘how-to’ manuals, probably more pervasive in terms of influence are magazines and manga (comics) targeting the salaryman. Of the various popular culture media, these two, taken together, arguably exert greater influence in terms of dissemination and representing dominant (and, to a lesser extent, alternative) societal discourses and ideologies,11 than most other

yoroshiku onegaishimasu (a stock expression when meeting people, asking favours, etc.); and 5) arigatō gozaimasu (“thank you”) (Inoue et al. 2001: 21).

11 John Clammer points out that the simultaneous enmeshment of a myriad of often contradictory discourses (and hence the difficulty inherent in attempting to make clear-cut differentiations) in popular culture spaces such as magazines and manga “makes it difficult to make sweeping generalizations” (Clammer 1995b: 36). For instance, as he points out, “nationalist themes and the making fun of the common shibboleths of Japanese culture exist side by side ... in the same publication. In many popular magazines news, current events, political comment, scandals, gossip, consumer information, articles on ecology, health and diet, foreign and domestic travel information, general advertisements, guides to ‘adult videos’ ... articles on the lives and loves of media people ... and folios of female nudes all exist together ” (36). Thus, it becomes difficult to argue that “Japanese popular culture is inherently anti-authoritarian, anti-hierarchical and anti-corporatist” (37), or for that matter, completely the opposite either.
channels. As Merry White (1993: 114–123) notes in her study of youth culture, magazines in a sophisticated, information-permeated society such as Japan play a vital role in disseminating information (including the transmission of hegemonic ideals and expectations) and as a conduit of communication. Tanaka (1998) gives an indication of the significance of the place of magazines within popular culture as a whole. She notes, citing the Shuppan Nenkan 1992 ("Publishing Yearbook 1992") that "in 1991 more than 4.6 billion magazines were published, compared to ... 1.4 billion books" (128, n.2). This reflected an overall postwar trend of a decline in sales of books in contrast with a continuous increase in magazine sales. Between 1980 and 1985, according to Tanaka, "as many as 1300 new magazines were launched or relaunched" (113). Similarly, manga occupies just as significant a place within popular culture spaces and media. Schodt for instance, notes that in 1995, manga constituted nearly 40 percent of all books and magazines sold in Japan; nearly 2.3 billion manga books and magazines were produced that year (Schodt 1996: 19).

Moreover, as signalled in Chapter Three, magazines (along with other channels of mass/popular culture such as the radio) played a not insignificant role in the shaping of discourses related to modernity in the prewar decades (see Tipton and Clark 2000b: 8).12 Popular magazines in the 1920s and 1930s such as Kingu, Sarariiman, and Shufu no Tomo (The Housewife’s Companion) played a crucial role in instructing readers about what constituted the desired attributes of modernity, in terms of behaviour, values, comportment, and lifestyle (Tanaka and Nakamura 1999; Sato, 2000). Sato in her discussion of mass-circulation women’s magazines, draws attention to the ways in which articles in magazines like Shufu no Tomo disseminated discourses of the housewife needing to be a ‘modern’, ‘practical’, and ‘rational’ household manager. Similarly women’s magazines were a channel for the dissemination of government initiated campaigns such as the ‘Daily Life Reform Movement’ (Seikatsu kaizen undō) which was “one of the first organized attempts to assure efficiency by eliminating wasteful spending and simplifying everyday living” which it did through such things as urging “people to safeguard their time, refrain from irrational customs like exchanging costly year-end gifts, and pay heed to health dangers presented by a predominantly white rice diet” (Sato 2000: 146; see also, Garon 1998, for detailed discussion of government campaigns to encourage thrift and efficiency). Even features on fashion promoted this notion that through efficiency and frugality the housewife could be just as ‘modern’ and attractive:

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12 See Nagamine (1997) for a good discussion of the emergence of a mass readership and mass circulation magazines in these years.
Detailed, step-by-step diagrams instructing women that they, too, could reproduce fashionable clothing for the entire family, create alluring hair-dos like the stars, or dance the tango and foxtrot, were featured in most mass women's magazines.

(Sato 2000: 147)

Male equivalents of publications like *Shufu no Tomo* also gave similarly explicit advice on how to perform 'modern' masculinity. Thus, the publication *Sarariiman* often ran features giving tips on lifestyle and consumption-related behaviour, alongside 'serious' articles on work and the economy. These included such matters as the correct way of wearing 'western clothes' (*yōfuku*) (*Sarariiman* 6(12): 86, 87), advice on male cosmetics (3(10): 94–96), features on enjoying 'modern' forms of leisure like going to cafés, beer-halls, and sport (3(10): contents page), and even advice on the proper way of 'modern' dating, entitled "An Introduction to the Art of Kissing" (*Seppungaku nyūmon*) (3(7): 28, 29) (Figures 7, 8).

At the same time, as Sato points out, such magazines also opened up spaces to negotiate with, and sometimes even question, dominant discourses and ideologies in circulation. Thus, the very same women's magazines that promoted thrift and efficient housekeeping also provided a public space for the emergence of a sense of shared community among readers to emerge (Sato 2000: 149). A similar point could be made about the male magazine *Sarariiman*. As Tanaka and Nakamura (1996: 6) point out, *Sarariiman* offered members of the new middle class (such as salarymen and university students) an alternative to the standard *keizai-shi* (business periodicals) such as *Daiyamondo* (Diamond), *Jitsugyō no Nihon* (Business Japan), *Jitsugyō no Sekai* (Business World), and *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō* (Oriental Economist) or popular mass-circulation magazines like *Kingu* (King). As with mass-circulation women's magazines, *Sarariiman* may not have challenged dominant discourses (of class, nation, and gender) in ways that left-wing or elite, 'intellectual' journals such as *Chūō Kōron* (Central Review), *Kaižō* (Reform), or *Kaihō* (Liberation) may have. Nevertheless, it did open up spaces for alternative ways of articulating men's practices, as the articles on male cosmetics or instructions about the proper ways of dating women mentioned above, would indicate.

In the context of contemporary Japan, despite a degree of cross-over between ages, interests, and genders,¹ the media (like popular culture as a whole) are generally finely tuned to their target readerships (White 1993: 114–116; Clammer 1995b: 38). There are numerous magazines of varying quality targeting a salaryman readership.

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¹ Clammer, for instance, notes that many magazines such as *Friday, Focus*, and *Flash*, ostensibly targeting "youngish to middle-aged salarymen, are also bought and read widely by women" (Clammer 1995b: 36).
In this chapter, I will discuss publications such as *Popeye*, Bart, Gainer, and Big Tomorrow which are geared towards a younger twenty/thirty-something readership, and which tend to be glossier than publications such as *Friday* or *Focus* which target an older readership.

‘Cool’ and ‘Un-cool’ Salaryman Masculinity

All four publications have different styles of approach and presentation, but there are certain common themes that cut across the publications. One common aspect of the four magazines has to do with the representation of particular styles of masculinity associated with the hegemonic ‘ideals’ of salaryman masculinity at that particular point in time. This may be (and often, is) different to the representations associated with an older discourse of salaryman masculinity. This older discourse revolves around men who are now middle-aged and older (the ones who typically would read *Friday*, *Focus*, or the tabloid-like *Supōtsu Shinbun* ['Sports Newspaper']), and who, despite having a greater stake in real terms in the dividends of hegemonic masculinity, are often associated in these magazines, in terms of representation, with negative, ‘un-cool’ characteristics, at least as far as contemporary heterosexual appeal is concerned. Thus, in terms of representation, the ‘ideal’ in contemporary hegemonic salaryman masculinity is depicted in terms of such attributes as exercising regularly, being well-groomed, having hobbies outside of work, self-motivation, even the possession of skills traditionally associated with ‘femininity’, such as the ability to cook.

This ideal is contrasted with the more ‘traditional’ image of salaryman masculinity—the dowdy, cigarette-smoking, alcohol-loving middle-aged salaryman with a bad haircut, who does not exercise, does not have interests outside of work, and does not know how to treat women in the workplace with respect. A perfect example of the juxtaposition of these two faces of what is essentially the same discourse of masculinity is a feature in a recent (February 2003) issue of *Big Tomorrow*, based on a survey of “seventy-six female beauties (bijo)”, comparing a “desirable man (iketeru

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14 *Popeye*, along with *Hot Dog Press* (similar in terms of style and layout) may be included both within salaryman magazines and youth/fashion magazines (such as *Bidan* or *Men’s Non-no*) targeting males in their teens and twenties.
15 However, it should be noted that there also has been a trend towards ‘lifestyle’ magazines like *Serai* and *Obra* for an older (50s-plus) male readership too (Sakai 2002). For further discussion of Japanese men’s magazines see Seo (2001: 158–165), Sakai (2002), Tanaka (2003); also Clammer (1997: 115–122).
16 See Miller (2003) for a discussion of the shift in notions surrounding male beauty and (hetero)sexual appeal, as represented in popular culture spaces.
otoko)" with an unappealing “old codger (oyajikusai otoko)"\(^{17}\) (Big Tomorrow February 2003: 144, 145; see Figure 9). As can be seen in Figure 9, the “attractive male” is characterized by such attributes as being fit and healthy as a result of attending the gym regularly, paying attention to his personal grooming (including such things as polished shoes, and attention to belts, socks, and other finer details), the ability to visually show different sides of his ‘at-work’ and ‘after-work’ personality (for instance, by switching from glasses to contact lenses after work), and wearing just enough of a light, fresh (sawayaka) fragrance to “tickles a female heart (onnagokoro o kusuguru)”. Conversely, the unattractive, old man (oyaji) is characterized by “an old man smell that wafts into the nose (oyaji-nioi ga hana ni tsuku)”. This includes the smell of hair-oil, breath smelling of jinton (a type of mint drop dating back to the prewar period), and cigarette-odour-permeated suit. Apart from his “smell”, the oyajikusai salaryman is also characterized by a bad dress-sense (worn-out, crumpled suits, still carries a hand-pouch, long out of fashion), poor personal grooming (dirty fingernails, discoloured teeth, ‘five-o’-clock shadow’ from not shaving properly), and is fond of drinking alcohol (‘cup-sake’ rather than a can of beer) in the train home after work, with no concern for what others might think (Big Tomorrow February 2003: 145).

Such representations demonstrate my assertion that spaces of popular culture can be both reinforcing agents for dominant ideologies and discourses and sites of contention and change in these. Thus, the shift in the representation of the hegemonic ideal from the earlier version of salaryman masculinity to the more contemporary, ‘sexier’ version is, to stress once again one of the core theoretical propositions of this thesis, indicative of the tensions constantly underlying hegemonic masculinity, and the need for hegemonic masculinity to incorporate some of the pressures on it, as it constantly re-shapes itself (see Hanke 1992: 195–197). Specifically, the shift in the representations of what is ‘ideal’ in these magazines is indicative of the growing hegemonic power of an emergent global hegemonic masculinity. This is a form of masculinity that is associated with (strongly Euro-American influenced and dominated) transnational capitalism and neo-liberalism. Significantly, it is increasingly overshadowing older, local forms of masculinity (such as the older version of salaryman masculinity) across the globe. This new masculinity, which Connell dubs “transnational business masculinity” (Connell 2000: 52) hinges on an ideology of ‘leaner, meaner’, economic rationalism, something that gets embodied

\(^{17}\) Oyajikusai, would quite literally translate as ‘with an old man’s stench’. Oyaji is a colloquial slang term that can either be used to refer to (usually one’s own) father, or a man in his late middle age or older (usually with slightly negative, derogatory connotations). Kusai, the adjective that translates as ‘smelly’ or ‘stinking’, can also be attached to certain nouns and adjectives such as inaka (countryside, rural) or binbō (poor) to convey a sense of negativity.
into work-practices (an attitude of ruthless rationality and egocentrism, emotional separation of the realm of work from the private), lifestyle (for instance, going to the gym to stay fit, eating healthily, not smoking), and body image (lean, fit, well-groomed) (Figure 10). Thus, in the context of salaryman masculinity there appears to be this tension – made particularly acute in the context of the structural problems of many Japanese corporations – between older expectations (such as loyalty to the organization, deference to seniority) and these newer ‘global’ ideals. This is a tension, as can be seen from the present discussion, that gets played out in these spaces of popular culture. This shift from the older, local form of salaryman masculinity to the newer transnationally global one is best exemplified by Carlos Ghosn, the non-Japanese CEO of Nissan Motors whose ‘new’ efficient approaches to management were credited with turning around that organization’s losses. As noted in the previous chapter, Ghosn became something of a popular culture celebrity figure, generating both an autobiography and a manga based around his exploits. In the process he became, in Roberson and Suzuki’s words, “a new symbol of masculine success” (2003b: 9; see also Dawson 2002).

Salaryman Inscriptions

These shifts and contentions, as well as expectations of the salaryman that have remained relatively unchanged, are not just restricted to representation. There is also a very noticeable element of inscription and inculcation through visual and printed instruction and guidance, which extends across all the magazines. Furthermore, there is a remarkable crossover with the issues addressed in the self-help and employment training manuals discussed above. As with the manuals, the information presented in these magazines also includes such things as hints about personal grooming and appearance (choosing appropriate suits, ties, bags, accessories, and the proper way to ‘dress for business’) and instruction about workplace conduct (the correct way to exchange business cards, the proper way to talk to clients over the telephone, how to be more time-effective at work). Like the manuals, instruction provided is extremely detailed, with copious visual support (see Figure 10). Big Tomorrow, for instance,

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18 See Laura Spielvogel’s discussion of the circulation of this ‘thin, healthy, fit, beautiful’ discourse in the context of fitness clubs in Japan. Spielvogel captures the sense of policing and disciplining involved in these practices (Spielvogel 2003: 85–95, 110–113).

19 Connell also points out that compared with traditional bourgeois masculinity, transnational business masculinity tends to be more open-minded in relation to sexuality (Connell 2000: 52). Sexual relations are increasingly commodified, and less (obviously) tied to married, heterosexual monogamy; as long as the transnational business executive performs efficiently at work and pulls in the figures, his sexual orientation is of little concern to the organization. Perhaps it is significant that it is transnational corporations like IBM which are often the most ‘progressive’ when it comes to providing ‘gay-friendly’ work environments and practices. However, as authors such as Hall (1989), Pringle (1989), and McDowell (1995) point out, heteronormativity is still the overarching assumption in corporate culture.
carries a tear-out supplement on being more efficient at work. The supplement in the May 1998 issue covered a day in the life of a young salaryman, giving hints on everything from massaging your face first thing in the morning (in order to look fresh), to various tips on being more efficient at work, English expressions you need to know in case you take a call from overseas, quick exercises you can do at your desk, and even tips on avoiding a hangover if you go out drinking with colleagues or clients (Big Tomorrow May 1998; Figure 11). The February 2003 issue of the same magazine carried a visual step-by-step guide to various ways of exercising and physical toning while commuting to work, and while at work. This included such tips as bending your knees while brushing your teeth in the morning, using the handrail or pole in the subway train (used in commuting) to do exercises, stretching your neck inside the elevator (if you are alone), through to various exercises that can be performed while seated at the desk (Big Tomorrow February 2003: 146–150). Another issue, January 2001, ran a visually explicit article featuring the contents of the briefcases of salarymen who had a reputation of being efficient and productive, another sign of the growing importance of the sort of economic rationalist, "efficient" global masculinity mentioned above (Big Tomorrow January 2001: 150–155).

This manner of visual instruction is not limited to just Big Tomorrow, but extends to the other magazines too. For instance, the January 2003 issue of Gainer ran a special feature devoted to watches and shoes, that included (among other things) detailed, visual instruction on "shoe-care" (Gainer January 2003: 20–31). In June 1998 the same magazine published a three-page feature on preventing halitosis, which contained every possible piece of advice imaginable, from tongue-scrapers to the best pills and lozenges to counteract bad breath (Gainer June 1998: 100–102).

Another aspect of these magazines is the instruction and advice given about "correctly performing heterosexual masculinity". For instance, in its June 1998 issue, Gainer provides advice on the "do's-and-don'ts" of dating an older woman (95–99), and the June 1998 issue of Big Tomorrow contained a very explicit step-by-step "guide" to successful "car-sex" (the introductory blurb informs the reader that "a car is a 'mobile love hotel'") (191–195). Although most issues of Big Tomorrow (and to

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20 A 'love hotel' is a motel which rents out rooms by the hour for sexual liaisons. While there are similar facilities in many countries, what distinguishes Japanese 'love hotels' (and what has often put them in the international spotlight) is the 'extraordinary architecture and theme-based room designs' (Buckley 2002b: 291) of many of these establishments. These designs, as Buckley comments, may include, "S & M, Versailles, safari, warzone, [space] shuttle, samurai". The exterior design may range from "fantasy castles to spaceships or even a volcano" (291). The prevalence of these facilities is "closely linked to essential elements of Japan's modernisation - urban crowding, commuting and motorisation". Indeed, Buckley tells us, they were originally developed as short-term accommodation for travelling salesmen and truck-drivers (Buckley 2002a: 291; see also Phillips and Alexander 1983: 95, 96; Bornoff (1992: 44–51).
a lesser extent, the other publications) carry similar graphic “guidance”, the magazine is not a “soft-porn” publication; the emphasis is on providing ‘serious’ information to the reader. Interestingly, as discussed above, the 1920s, 1930s monthly publication, Sarariiman, also contained features (with only black-and-white visual supports) instructing readers on similar matters, ranging from correct deportment and workplace conduct to the etiquette involved in ‘modern dating’, such as a guide to the “study of kissing” (seppun-gaku) in the July 1930 issue of the publication, mentioned above (Kurokawa 1930: 28, 29).

It is also worth noting that the magazines representing these discourses of corporate masculinity share some common elements with magazines such as Bidan, Men’s Non-no, Fine Boys, and Hot Dog Press, all of which target younger, pre-shakaijin males, who are yet to enter full-time work (see Cameron 2000; Miller 2003; Tanaka 2003, for discussion of these magazines). Both groups of magazines share the same instructive layout, telling readers what is and is not appropriate behaviour/dress/consumer habits, be it for salarymen or teenagers. However, there is one particularly significant point of difference. Where they differ is in the realm of (readings of) sexuality. Whereas magazines such as Men’s Non-no often allow for ambiguous, non-heterosexual readings in the visual images presented, the salaryman magazines are insistently and aggressively heterosexual, both in terms of images portrayed and information provided (see Figures 12 and 13). Figure 12, for instance, is a male fashion magazine, Men’s Non-no, which targets a teenage/early-twenties pre-shakaijin student readership. The image presented in the figure depicts two casually dressed young men lazily reclining against each other in a style that is suggestive of homosocial/homophysical/homoerotic possibilities (see Edwards 1997: 116, 117). Significantly, there is no mediating female figure in the image. However, the scene depicted in Figure 13 is unambiguously heterosexual. The image is from the magazine Big Tomorrow and provides step-by-step visually illustrated instruction to the young salaryman (appropriately clad in a suit) as to the correct way of ‘picking up’ a girl at a party. The strategies suggested vary according to the ‘type’ of woman (the quiet, shy one versus the confident, outgoing one) the young man is targeting, but the end result is the same – heterosexual consummation. The message being conveyed is quite explicit – to be successful at performing hegemonic masculinity, one needs to successfully perform (or present the outward appearance of performing) successful heterosexuality. What such magazine images seem to signal is that while the appearance of heterosexual sobriety on the part of producers in society is crucial for hegemonic masculinity, for non-producers (such as teenage males), although desirable, it is not as urgent a requirement.
Salaryman Masculinity in Sarariiman Kintarô

What the preceding analysis of the employment manuals and the magazines demonstrates is the importance of the body of the young (or not-so-young) male shōkaijin. The body is important as both a site for the inscription of hegemonic masculinity, and, through repetitive enactments of the bodily-reflexive practices that constitute and represent hegemonic masculinity, an agent for its continued circulation. This is even as hegemonic masculinity itself keeps re-shaping in response to changing socio-cultural and economic considerations. An ideal example of a popular culture manifestation of this hegemonic discourse of masculinity may be seen in the form of Sarariiman Kintarô (Salaryman Kintarô) (Figure 14). Kintarô is the salaryman hero of an immensely popular manga, which originally appeared in serialised version in the manga periodical, Ōguru Jampu (Young Jump), subsequently published in twenty-five volumes (Motomiya 1999/2000). In addition to a CD-ROM version, a computer game, and its own Internet home page, Sarariiman Kintarô was also made into a successful television serial (with several series) and into a feature film.

In many ways Sarariiman Kintarô resembles other salaryman manga and novels, particularly the above-mentioned Kachō Shima Kōsaku, (Section-chief Shima Kōsaku). Behind the popularity of the manga and television versions of both lay the characters of Kintarô and Kōsaku. However, unlike Kōsaku who by-and-large conforms to the expectations of respectable salaryman masculinity, Kintarô is simultaneously the embodiment and the antithesis of all that is connoted by salaryman masculinity. On the one hand, he is a junior-high-school drop-out and a former member of a biker gang (bōsōzoku), who by a quirk ends up working for the head-office of a large corporate organization, and in the process becomes transformed into the ideal of respectable salaryman masculinity, someone who willingly puts the interests of his fellow employees before his own interests. He does not, however, lose his pre-salaryman masculinity, bringing it to the surface at necessary moments. In many senses, the character of Kintarô represents the synthesis of the idealized attributes of several disparate (and often mutually hostile) discourses of masculinity in the body of one individual: rural, working-class, impulsive brute strength (which he does not hesitate to inflict on villains — often members of biker gangs — who keep materializing), raw (hetero-) sexual attraction, coexisting with the diligent, conscientious responsibility generally associated with the middle-class,

21 As noted in Chapter Three, there is an extensive body of fiction and manga that falls within this genre. For further discussion of this genre of fiction and manga revolving around (and targeting) the salaryman, see, for instance, Sataka (1980), Schodt (1986: 106–118), Prindle (1992), Tao (1996), Umezawa (1997), Kinsella 2000 (79–84); Saitō (2002).
urban, salaryman masculinity. In many senses, Salaryman Kintarō would fit in perfectly with Connell’s assertion that, “in order to stabilise the gender order as a whole” hegemonic masculinity needs “exemplars who are celebrated as heroes” (Connell 2000: 84).

Yet ironically, this aggressively idealized figure of Kintarō ends up as little more than an exaggerated caricature, as is appropriate to the cartoon-like, almost parodied presentation of the character. Moreover, the fact that such aggressively idealized popular culture portrayals are necessary, may in fact serve to highlight the instability and ambiguity in the discourse of hegemonic masculinity. In this respect, spaces of popular culture may operate not only as sites for the inscription of the dominant discourses and ideologies (as with the pop-management-type manuals and the magazines discussed, or even the figure of Kintarō), but may also be the site for the challenging of these very discourses and ideologies.

Thus, the flip-side of the ‘ideal citizen’ representation of salaryman masculinity is an alternative reading which depicts the salaryman, not as a figure of awe and respect, but rather as a figure for ridicule. Starting with pre-war portrayals such as Kitazawa Rakuten’s depictions of “salaryman heaven” and “salaryman hell” (Kitazawa Rakuten Kenshō Kai 1973: 124, 125) mentioned in Chapter Three, numerous manga and television comedies have depicted the salaryman as weak and insipid. Frederick Schodt, for instance, describes the typical hero of such manga as “a middle-class everyman known in Japan as the hira-shain, or rank-and-file employee ... [who is] married to an ugly woman, dreads going home, and hangs his head low after being scolded by his boss” (Schodt 1986: 112). On a more serious level, popular culture has always worked simultaneously to consolidate hegemonic discourses and ideologies, and to destabilise them (or at the very least to present alternate readings). An example would be the much-loved hero of the Tora-san series of movies, revolving around the experiences of an ineffectual, unsophisticated, bumbling, warm hearted ‘hero-by-default’ character hailing from the ‘wrong-end-of-town’. If anything, Tora-san embodied the very antithesis of hegemonic masculinity. It is significant that the first movie of the series, entitled Otoko wa tsurai yo (Men Have it Tough), was made in 1969 during the glory days of salaryman masculinity (see Buruma 1984: Ch. 12; Schilling 2000).

What the above suggests is that just as popular culture media such as magazines and manga can reflect and reinforce the ideals of salaryman masculinity, they also have the potential to contest and destabilize them. This is brought out in the discussion in the following section.
The Internet and Contentions of Salaryman Masculinity

A more recent example of the intermeshing and collision of contrary forces and pulls within popular culture is the ways in which Internet sites centred on the salaryman and his concerns have opened up spaces for both reinforcing salaryman masculinity, and questioning and challenging its expectations. Web sites such as *Kaisha seikatsu no tomo* (Company Lifestyle Friend), *Sarariiman to OL no hiroba* (Open Space for Salarymen and Office Ladies) and *Sarariiman kyōwakoku* (Salaryman Republic) provide excellent illustrations of this point. These sites are primarily concerned with issues relating to the workplace and organizational culture – providing both light-hearted anecdotal information and entertainment (such as horoscopes, and amusing work-related incidents), as well as more serious issues, related information and advice, and a space for employees to air grievances and frustrations. In this respect, these sites are not consciously concerned with ‘de-con structs’ masculinity. However, given the centrality of work in constructing masculinity, the issues posted and discussed on, for example the *Kaisha seikatsu no tomo* Web site’s open-access space, under categories such as *Katsute no yume* (Past Dreams), *Yume no tenshoku saki* (My Ideal/Dream Job), *Kike! Sarariiman no okori* (Listen to Salaryman Anger!), and *Onayami nan demo sōdan shitsu* (Advice Room for Any Problems) are often linked to expectations of hegemonic salaryman masculinity. A selection of the archived monthly postings to the ‘Advice Room’ between September 1996 and January 2002 gives us some indication of this underlying disenchantment. The problems posted encompassed a range of topics at the nexus between corporate culture and masculinity, including dissatisfaction with the need to participate in obligatory company trips and the possible ramifications of refusing to go (October 1996: *Shain ryokō o kotowaritai*?); resistance to expectations of promotion from a thirty-seven-year-old employee in an electronics firm, who felt that he was not suited to coping with the added stress and responsibility (January 1997: *Kanrishoku ni naritakunai*); financial and personal problems arising from changing jobs (December 1997: *Tenshoku o kurikaesu jibun*); concern about the negative impact of workaholism on a future marriage partner (April 1998: *Wākahirikku to kekkon*);

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disillusionment with the lack of freedom within Japanese work culture (March 1999: Nihon no kaisha wa fujiyû da); concerns about the financial and personal ramifications of imminent lay-off in middle age (August 2000: Risutora saresô jibun); among a host of similar concerns relating to the workplace.

Significantly, masculinity itself is seldom specified – it gets implicated almost by default. For instance, a posting from a twenty-four-year-old male entrant (shinnyû shain) in the financial sector (Erito ginkōin no nayami) illustrates this quite clearly. The complainant notes that he was attracted to his present job with a bank largely due to the attractive salary and due to the fact that he had nothing else he wanted to do. However, since commencing the job he finds his whole life revolving around work. He is unable to return home until late everyday, has no girlfriend, and has no real hobbies or interests – in short, a life without meaning (“hakkiri ite tsumaranai sekatsu desu”). While he does not actually allude to masculinity, all the expectations and problems surrounding salaryman masculinity are in fact encapsulated in his posting. Another posting, also from a new entrant in the financial sector interrogates a basic premise of hegemonic masculinity – heterosexuality. The twenty-three-year-old writer confesses that he is gay, and wonders how others (whom he presumes to be largely heterosexual) would respond to a co-worker ‘coming out’ to them. Once again, masculinity itself is not called into question, rather the expectations of masculinity and heteronormativity are.

Advice from others (Mina sama no adobaisu) in response to these problems/questions was also posted. These responses encompassed a whole range of opinions. For example, there were 150 responses to the October 1996 posting complaining about the necessity to participate in company trips, mentioned above. Some of these criticized the complainant for being too sensitive about a relatively minor issue (Response No. 133: “Seikaku ga komakakute ki ni shisugi ja nai no”), or advised him to “endure” (gaman) since he is a salaryman, or else quit the company (Response No. 106: “Ichinichi gurai gaman dekinai no? Shosen sarariiman desho. Kaisha yametara.”). However, a significant proportion of the responses were supportive. These included expressions of empathy for the complainant, with statements like: “It’s a total waste of time, and waste of a life” (Response No. 143: “Hontô ni jikan no muda, jinsei no muda”), or “I like travel, but hate company trips” and inviting someone to start a “movement to exterminate company trips” (Response No. 144: “Boku wa, ryokô wa suki da ga, shain ryokô wa dai kirai. Dareka, shain ryokô bokumetsu undo shimasen ka?”). Many respondents also offered blunt advice about dealing with the problem, such as lying and using excuses like sickness (mentioned in a number of responses, such as Nos. 20, 49, and 143), prior
commitments like a wedding or memorial service (hōji) (Response No. 66), or "drinking lots of alcohol, and falling asleep straight away!" (Response No. 86 "Gangan nonde, sassato neru.").

In some respects, these spaces that allow for the airing of gripes and concerns may not be dissimilar to the advice columns of the 'agony aunt' variety in salaryman magazines like Big Tomorrow touched upon earlier. The difference lies in the space allowed for flexibility and dissent. McLelland (2001: 106, 107), citing research done on the responses to problem letters sent in to a leading newspaper, notes that an often stern, didactic, correctional pose is adopted by the advice-giver. The onus seems to be placed on the individual to conform to societal expectations in order to rectify whatever problem she/he faces. A similar point could be made for salaryman magazines like Big Tomorrow. For example, the response, in the January 2001 issue, to a complaint about having to cope with entirely new work demands as a consequence of a sudden transfer, was to lay the blame on the writer for being overly "selfish" (wagamama) and that as long as one put in one's best effort, the experience was bound to be useful someday (Big Tomorrow January 2001: 78).

Conversely, as indicated by the discussion of postings on the Kaisha seikatsu no tomo site (and the responses to these postings), Internet sites allow for the expression of a greater range of dissenting voices.24 For instance, in contrast to the 'preachy' tone adopted in the Big Tomorrow column mentioned above, responses to a not dissimilar concern posted on the Kaisha seikatsu no tomo advice space (December 1997: Tenshoku o kurikaesu jibun) from a thirty-five-year-old male employee who was unable to hold a job for long elicited numerous sympathetic responses, including advice such as encouraging him to keep searching until he finds a suitable job (Response No. 80: "iijan, oishii shigoto ga mitsukaru made, tenshoku shinayo"), or telling him that a salaryman's reality is different to the salaryman heroes portrayed in TV serials ("TV dorama no bari bari sarariiman no you ni wa ikana i ze!").25 Even the responses to the posting from the young salaryman dealing with issues of sexuality, and what ramifications 'coming out' in the work-place might have, cover a range of opinions, some negative, but many supportive and/or neutral.

24 McLelland makes a similar assertion in the work cited above. In contrast to the print advice columns, Internet spaces, such as the Gay Men's Advice Online Page run by gay activists Itō Satoru and Yanase Ryūta, which he discusses, allow for greater freedom in challenging dominant societal discourses. See McLelland (2001: 107-114).
25 A prime example would be the salaryman hero of the popular manga series, Sarariiman Kintaro, discussed above.
Conclusion

The preceding discussion of these diverse spaces and channels of popular culture brings out the core theoretical point of this chapter – that hegemonic masculinity (or for that matter any hegemonic discourse) is crafted out of, circulates through, and shapes, and in turn is shaped, by interweaving structures, institutions, and practices. The focus of this chapter has been one specific ‘space’ through which hegemonic masculinity is mediated – that of popular culture. The discussion over the course of the chapter has covered a wide range of considerations pivoted around popular culture’s role in the ‘crafting’ of salaryman masculinity. I have explored some of the complexities at work in the concept of popular culture itself, before sketching the emergence of a society where consumption and popular culture are closely intertwined. As we have seen, popular culture can be a powerful instrument for the inscription and reinforcement of the ideals and expectations of salaryman masculinity. This was brought out in the discussion of the self-improvement-style management guides that aim to ‘teach’ young salarymen how to properly ‘perform’ salaryman masculinity. Magazines targeting salarymen, such as Big Tomorrow, also perform a similar prescriptive function, but in a less direct manner. However, popular culture can also be a space where the expectations and ideals of salaryman masculinity get contested, either through parody and ridicule, as in the example of the manga discussed, or through direct questioning and challenge, as evidenced in the Internet sites discussed.

These complexities involved in the day-to-day engagements between individual men and the expectations of hegemonic salaryman masculinity will be explored in greater depth over the next five chapters, where the focus of discussion will shift from the ‘macro’ level of society to the ‘micro’ level of the individual.
Figure 1: The rules of proper telephone manner. The tips include a list of appropriate telephone greetings, and visual instruction about appropriate deportment when talking on the telephone. These include such tips as sitting up straight, not smoking, not putting your feet up on the desk, and making sure your tie is done up properly.

Figure 2: Rules to observe when visiting clients. The illustrations provide instruction on the correct etiquette to follow when shown into a reception room when visiting clients or other companies. The tips include standing up as soon as someone enters the room, not drinking the tea provided to visitors (in case it is spilled by accident), not smoking, and not crossing your legs.

Source: Inoue et al. 2001: 42.
Figure 3: The etiquette of giving and receiving *meishi* (business cards). The image on the left gives instructions about the proper way of receiving *meishi*. The rules to be observed include standing up, receiving the card with both hands, and bowing while receiving. The image on the right provides tips about giving *meishi* to others. The instructions include always standing up, making sure the giver’s name and details faces the receiver, making sure that there are no physical obstructions (like a table) between the giver and the receiver, and offering the card while bowing from the level of the (giver’s) chest.

Figure 4: The “Iron-Clad Rules of Style” – This manual opens with a range of business-wear choices (“courses”) for a range of budgets. This one is for 50,000 yen (approximately $700 Australian).

Figure 5: The “Off-Style Course” – This one is for weekend/casual wear. The text accompanying the illustration cautions against dressing “too casually” (らくす), in case you “bump into your boss” on your day-off.

Source: Inoue et al. 2001: 12.
Figure 6: A complete 'head-to-toe' checklist. The tips provided include such things as:

- making sure you have a short, neat hair-cut, checking that you have no dandruff, and that the scent of hair lotion is not too strong;

- making sure you are wearing a white dress-shirt – coloured and striped shirts should not be worn by young men, only by men who have a few years of experience behind them;

- advice about the design and colour of your tie and suit – sober, conservative colours and designs are the safest. Ties with conventional dots or stripes, and dark-coloured suits are recommended; and

- making sure your shoes are coordinated with your suit, and that they are properly polished. Women, whether staff at counterpart organizations or bar hostesses, we are told, start judging the quality of a man from his shoes.

Figure 7: The 1920s/1930s equivalent of tips on ‘proper dress’ for salarymen.  
*Source: Sarariiman, 1933, 6(12): 86.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>洋服の色</th>
<th>茶 な ら ば</th>
<th>茶 な ら ば</th>
<th>茶 な ら ば</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>鼠と緑色を主とした柄、又は白地に鼠緑又は黒の絹のもの</td>
<td>薄茶系統のものが最も無事です。然し淡く淡い緑・茶の如き \ 地色のものも巧く着 \ こなせます。</td>
<td>白地に茶の絹或は紋を \ 織出したもの。其 \ 他自衣地は何もゆる \ 色調の洋服に許され \ ます。</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>茶・薄茶・緑の各色。又赤褐のあるものな \ ど特に結納です。</td>
<td>海老茶系統の無地又は \ 茶と合わせたもの。 \ 鼠地の薄絹の中、目 \ 立つ色調をとった物</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>茶又は鼠の色調のもの</td>
<td>茶又は薄茶のもの。</td>
<td>茶又は薄茶のもの。</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鼠・緑鼠・又は鼠・白 \ 又は鼠・白の緑色の \ となった色調のもの。</td>
<td>茶又は薄茶のもの。</td>
<td>茶又は薄茶のもの。</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鼠の色が薄い鼠で \ と黑がない。然が \ 薄鼠の場合は白と共に \ 茶もよく似じ。フランス \ 茶の場合は \ 茶が最も適します。</td>
<td>茶褐が結納です。</td>
<td>淡鼠又は黒。</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>茶目の緑茶は特によ \ く調和します薄鼠も \ 宜しい。茶は薄かつ \ 赤は避けるべきです。茶や \ 赤は結納です。</td>
<td>鼠・緑・白及びは色 \ 組合せとはどうも調和い \ たしません。</td>
<td>余り黄色 \ 茶褐茶系統がよく合 \ 次が薄茶・茶色系統 \ 是最も避けるべき。 \ 赤は淡心しません。</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

なお、この図は1920年代から1930年代にかけての男性職員向けの着物の着用に関するガイドラインを示しています。
二人はきついつい接吻をかたくした。二人には

【接吻の学説】

接吻の目的は、性の欲求を満たすためにある。しかし、これには、脳の活動が関与していることがわかってきた。

1. 乳頭
2. 状態

【接吻とその影響】

接吻は、精神的な満足をもたらす。それは、身体的な満足を超えて、心の満足をもたらす。
Figure 9: ‘Cool’ versus ‘Un-cool’ Salaryman. The ‘cool’ salaryman in the top illustration looks after his health and fitness, pays attention to personal grooming, wears just enough cologne or after-shave lotion to attract women, and is able to show different sides to his personality by doing such things as switching from wearing glasses at work to contact lenses after work! The ‘un-cool’ salaryman, emits as “old manly odour” (oyaji-kusai nioi) with his hair reeking of hair-oil, suit smelling of cigarette smoke, and his breath smelling of jintan (an old-fashioned breath drop). He also has no sense of style, and is careless about his personal grooming and hygiene (un-cut nails, traces of ‘five-o-clock’ shadow on his face, and is stoop-backed, making him look five years older than his age).

Source: Big Tomorrow, February 2003: 145.
Figure 10: Exercises even a desk-bound salaryman can do to shape up his body. The illustrations suggest various tips for reducing fat that can be followed from the time the reader wakes up right up to when he arrives at work. The exercises suggested include simple stretches while brushing his teeth, exercises that can be performed in the train while commuting to work, and neck stretches when riding the elevator up to the office.

Source: Big Tomorrow, February 2003: 147.
Figure 11: Tips on being more time-efficient. The entire day is broken-up into five-minute blocks, accompanied by various suggestions on using time more effectively. These suggestions include such things as using a portable electric razor to shave on the way to the station in order to save time, tips on reading a newspaper quickly and efficiently, taking down telephone messages on band-aids on the palm of your hand, taking your lunch-break earlier than others before the midday rush, and not drinking tea during meetings.

Source: Big Tomorrow, May 1998: 100.
Figure 12: A fashion feature from the male teen magazine *Men’s Non-no*. The pose adopted by the two models allows for ambiguous, homophysical and/or homoerotic readings. Such ambiguous representations are absent in magazines targeting an older male salaryman readership.

Figure 13: Tips on successful (heterosexual) seduction. The setting is a party, where the male reader may be interested in ‘picking up‘ a female guest present. The woman is depicted as being one of two personality types – a shy, introverted type-A woman, or an outgoing, confident, ‘savvy’ type-B woman. Depending on the ‘type’ the advice on successful seduction differs. For the ‘Type-A’ woman it is necessary to take things slowly, and wait until the next occasion to have sex with her, whereas for the ‘Type-B’ woman a more direct and overtly seductive approach is advised. With the ‘Type-B’ woman, the reader is assured, it will be possible to have sex on that very day.

Figure 14: A sample of the covers of various issues of the manga, *Sarariiman Kintarō*. 

- **Volume 5**: 本宮ひろ志 (Motomiya Hiroshi) 
- **Volume 12**: 本宮ひろ志 (Motomiya Hiroshi) 
- **Volume 4**: 本宮ひろ志 (Motomiya Hiroshi) 
- **Volume 11**: 本宮ひろ志 (Motomiya Hiroshi)
CHAPTER FIVE

MEN’S STORIES OF BECOMING OTOKO

The preceding chapters discussed some of the theoretical and methodological considerations underpinning this thesis, before discussing the emergence of the salaryman model as the hegemonic discourse of masculinity, and exploring the ways in which spaces of popular culture work to simultaneously disseminate and reinforce hegemonic masculinity, as well as undermining it. The discussion over these chapters was largely on a broader, ‘macro’ level, in order to provide a contextual framework for the chapters in this second half of the thesis. Over these next chapters, the focus of discussion will shift to the ‘micro’ level of the individuals who were my informants. Specifically, what these next chapters will attempt to do is to trace the contours of what, following on from Connell (2002: 81), I referred to in Chapter Two as an ongoing gender project at the heart of which lies the individual male’s negotiations with the expectations of hegemonic masculinity. As stressed in Chapter Two, when we talk about these negotiations with hegemonic masculinity, we are not talking about a situation (along the lines argued by sex role theorists), of individuals either conforming to the hegemonic gender order, or conversely being unable to conform to it and thereby being considered ‘deviant’. Rather, as Connell stresses, an “account of how we acquire gender must ... recognize both the contradictions of development, and the fact that learners are active, not passive” (Connell 2002: 79). Accordingly, throughout this thesis – in particular over these next five interview-based chapters – I argue that the ‘path’ taken by the individual male along his life-course (or rather, as Roberson [1998: 16] suggests, “life-path”) is characterized by an ongoing process of engagements and negotiations with the hegemonic discourses and ideologies of gender and sexuality, specifically hegemonic masculinity.

As argued in Chapter Three, over the postwar decades, the discourse of masculinity typified by the salaryman in many respects came to occupy the position of a ‘culturally privileged’ discourse of masculinity – in other words, the hegemonic ‘ideal’. While the requirements of this discourse are especially relevant to those men who as shakaijin become salarymen themselves, it would be wrong to assume that the expectations only apply to these men. The reach of these hegemonic ideals, as I have argued earlier, is far more extensive. Indeed, phrased in a slightly different way, we could say that salaryman masculinity is situated within the wider framework of

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1 As Connell points out, the sex role socialization model ignores these messy complexities – the simultaneous coexistence of conformity, resistance, pleasure, appropriation, and other elements which
the ongoing gender project, referred to above, a gender project within which what is meant by terms like 'man' and 'male' (*otoko/danshii*), 'woman' and 'female' (*onna/josei*), 'masculine' (*otokorashii*), 'feminine' (*onnarashii*) are 'crafted'. In other words, long before an individual male becomes a *shakaijin* and has to contend with the expectations of salaryman masculinity, he has to engage with what constitutes the requirements of the socio-cultural category of *masculinity* itself, and work out what 'being a male' means to him.

Furthermore, this engagement with the socio-culturally 'sanctioned' attributes of masculinity extends through the individual's entire life-path, as he moves through different 'life-stages'. Expressed in another way, these engagements characterize the individual's journey through different *masculinities* – in the playground as a primary-school boy, as a junior-high-school student working out the complexities of 'first love', as a university student relatively free of demands of social responsibility, as a new *shakaijin* negotiating with the requirements of salaryman masculinity, as a married salaryman with responsibilities of being a husband and father (essentially, attainment of the hegemonic ideal), and as a retired 'honorary' *shakaijin*. Even if the 'life-path' taken follows a completely different trajectory – say, if he drops out of school and ends up far from the hegemonic 'ideal' (as a middle-aged unmarried day labourer on a construction site, for instance) – this engagement with what is thought to constitute being *otoko* will be just as relevant. Moreover, as mentioned above, when we talk about this engagement, we are *not* talking about some kind of biologically pre-determined programme that is followed. Rather, both the historical construction of the particular form of masculinity which happens to be hegemonic at that historical moment (e.g. salaryman masculinity in postwar Japan), and the individual responses by men (or for that matter, women) to that hegemonic masculinity are mapped out in the context of wider social, cultural, political, and economic institutions and structures of that society. Indeed as Connell reminds us, *gender* (or more specifically *gender relations* between men and women, as well as different hierarchies between men themselves) itself, constitutes a 'structure' (Connell 2000: 23–29; 2002: 54, 55). Moreover, he reminds us that although

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2 See my discussion in Chapter Two for the complexity surrounding translating these gender concepts and terms across languages. As I explained in that chapter, the term *otoko* can be equally translated as (biological) 'male' or (socio-cultural) 'man' in English. Moreover, while the terms *otoko no ko* (literally 'male child') and *otoko no hito* ('male person') allow for the distinction between non-adult boys and adult men, the *no ko* and *no hito* suffixes are often dropped in conversation. Thus, it is only from the context that we can determine whether the equivalent English term should be 'male', 'man', or 'boy'.
social structure conditions practice . . . [it] does not imply that structures cause, or exist separately from, practices. The structure of gender relations has no existence outside the practices through which people and groups conduct those relations. Structures do not continue, cannot be ‘enduring’, unless they are reconstituted from moment to moment in social action. In this sense gender, even in its most elaborate, abstract or fantastic forms, is always an ‘accomplishment’ . . . Gender is something actually done; and done in social life, not something that exists prior to social life.

(Connell 2002: 55, [emphasis added])

Accordingly, these next five chapters will explore this ‘doing’ of gender, specifically masculinity, at the level of the individual male, through the voices of my informants. As pointed out when discussing my research methodology in Chapter Two, the informants’ voices drawn upon in these next chapters, are based upon taped (and transcribed) individual and group interviews conducted with them over the period of fieldwork in Japan. A list of informants, with relevant personal information (such as age, area of placement, marital status, etc.) and the date/s each informant was interviewed is provided in Appendix 1. In order to preserve confidentiality, all names are pseudonyms. The names of the organizations the informants were drawn from have also been changed. Any references to place names (such as the name of the city and prefecture where the research was carried out) which may lead to individuals being identified have also been omitted or disguised. Finally, in drawing upon the informants’ accounts I have, by-and-large, chosen to quote the informants’ own words directly, in favour of paraphrasing their words. This was a deliberate decision in order to convey a sense of the richness of the individual voices. This has meant that in translating their voices into English, I have tried to stay as close to the original Japanese as possible, and have tried to avoid ‘polishing’ the accounts by deleting grammar and syntax errors, and other inconsistencies. While I realize that this may at times, result in the English renditions of the informants’ words come out sounding disjointed and ungrammatical, I feel it is important that their voices engage with my discussion.

This chapter will begin by exploring what the informants make of masculinity itself, what connotations being male has for them. The next chapter (Chapter Six) will then focus on the crucial transition zone from ‘non-productive’, pre-shakaijin masculinity to ‘productive’ salaryman masculinity in the first weeks and months after my informants entered the workforce, and had to negotiate with the efforts on the part of the organizations to craft them to conform to the expectations of salaryman masculinity. Chapters Seven, Eight, and Nine will then explore the ways individual informants continue to engage with the various expectations of hegemonic salaryman masculinity even after the formal transition to a recognized shakaijin status. Chapter
Seven will focus on the centrality of work in defining salaryman masculinity, and the various ways in which my informants negotiated with this expectation. Chapter Eight looks at the ways in which sexuality intersects with salaryman masculinity – specifically the ways in which my informants engaged with the expectations of needing to publicly conform to a particular discourse of regulated heterosexuality centring on the man as husband and father. Chapter Nine, the final chapter drawing upon the voices of my informants, explores some of the engagements with an aspect of organizational culture which has seldom been explored through the lens of masculinity – the significance of same-sex homosociality in the context of salaryman masculinity.

**Being Otoko**

An appropriate entry point in the informants’ own voices would be to start off with a sample of views as to their conception of masculinity – what it was about themselves that they saw as making them male/a man (otoko). When I posed this question, during the first focus group discussions with the informants from both organizations, the initial response was one of confused hesitation – it struck me that none of the individuals present had really even been asked to consider this before. Some of the initial responses displayed a deliberate glibness that seemed designed to hide feelings of embarrassment. Thus, the first response to this question from Kimura Kenji, a very articulate and self-confident young man who was my liaison contact in Northern Print was a laughing statement that he was conscious of his ‘masculinity’ when he was “having sex”, especially the occasion when his partner became pregnant. Also, the fact that he “did not menstruate” (seiri ga nai) was another reminder of masculinity for him (Northern Print Focus Group [hereafter NPFG] Interview Transcript: 1). Masculinity, for this informant, appeared to be framed primarily in biological terms. For Kajima Daisuke, a twenty-eight-year-old technical manager, who I will return to in more detail in subsequent chapters, the realization of his own masculinity was reinforced when he got married. As he put it: “Thinking back, it was when I got married and obtained a bride (yome-san) that I thought ‘Well, I’m a man’” (NPFG Interview Transcript: 1).

Others defined masculinity by what it was not – attributes associated with femininity. Thus, for Inoue Toshifumi, a twenty-six-year-old technical shop-floor employee at Northern Print, his sense of being male was defined in relation to the (perceived) mental/psychological (seishinteki) differences between males and females – women
(onna no hito), in his view, tend to be more “emotional (kanjōteki)” than men (NPFG Transcript: 2).

The focus-group discussion with informants from the other organization (Northern Energy) elicited a similar mixture of responses. As with the Northern Print group, the initial reaction to my question was one of confused silence. One member of the group mentioned being “stronger than females (Josei)” as being a determinant of defining masculinity (Northern Energy Focus Group [hereafter NEFG] Interview Transcript: 1). Another member, echoing the observation by Kajima-san of Northern Print, drew upon the image of the “daikokubashira [literally, ‘central pillar of the household’] ... working with all his strength to support a family” (NEFG Interview: 1). Another informant, Murai Yukihiro, also saw masculinity defined by the need to be a daikokubashira figure, to “financially and emotionally” support the family (NEFG Interview Transcript: 2).

At one level, this sample of responses to my rather sudden way of opening the discussion during the focus-group meetings seems to indicate the entrenched hold of hegemonic ideals surrounding masculinity (masculinity = strength, the need to be the daikokubashira). Yet at the same time, the responses also seem to point to a certain distance between many of the informants and the very same ideals. This came through when I asked them to give me examples of public figures (such as popular culture icons) who embodied masculinity, or rather ‘manliness’ (otokorashisa). The name that came up in both groups was the actor Takakura Ken, the star of numerous films, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s (NEFG Interview: 3, 4; NPFG Interview: 5, 6). There is no denying that the characters portrayed by Takakura Ken embodied many of the hegemonic ‘ideals’ of masculinity; indeed as Standish points out, a kind of ‘hypermasculinity’ (Standish 2000: passim). Yet, not unlike the figure of Sarariiman Kintarô discussed in the previous chapter, the idealized masculinity portrayed by the movie characters played by Takakura Ken, often borders on the

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3 When discussing specific individual informants in this thesis, I refer to them either by their full name in Japanese order (family name, followed by personal name) or, when referring to an individual previously mentioned through the use of the suffix ‘-san’ attached to the informant’s family name. The use of ‘san’ after the name (usually the family name, but in some situations, also after the personal name) is the most common form of address in Japan. However, there are other forms of address too, which also get attached to the end of a person’s name. These include more formal terms such as ‘sama’ (an honorific equivalent of ‘san’) and ‘sensei’ (a term of address generally used for teachers, doctors, lawyers, members of parliament, and other ‘socially respected’ individuals). They also include less formal suffixes attached to names, such as ‘kun’ (for younger males, usually within peer groups, or in situations where a more senior member of the group addresses a more junior member), and ‘chan’ (a familiar term, generally reserved for close friends, younger family members, or children).

4 See also Castro-Vázquez and Kishi (2003: passim).

5 However, rather than a ‘conventionally’ ideal masculinity, along the lines of salaryman masculinity, it was often an anti-hero, ‘lone-wolf’ masculinity associated with yakuza (gangster) and samurai films that Takakura’s characters often embodied (see Buruma 1984; Standish 2000).
parodic. The fact that my informants referred to a *caricature* as a metonym for masculinity, seemed indicative of not just the pervasiveness of hegemonic ideals, but also the disjunctures and distance between the informants’ everyday realities and the ideals.

**Becoming Otoko**

Arguably, to get a deeper understanding of the complexity at stake in the engagements between individuals and the cultural ideals of hegemonic masculinity, we need to start by exploring the informants’ own recollections of the ‘gender project’ – the process by which they became gendered, coming to recognize what the hegemonic expectations were of them as males (and conversely what the hegemonic expectations were for female siblings and peers). In order to get an appreciation of this process as seen by individual males, I asked the informants to reminisce about their childhood – to talk about their families, about relationships with siblings, with playmates, about childhood dreams, about their experiences of ‘coming into’ masculinity (see Appendix 2 for interview questions). Their narratives reveal the richness and complexity at work in the process – the fact that ‘coming into’ masculinity is not just a simple process of learning to conform to the hegemonic discourse, but is fraught with contradictions, confusion, negotiations, and even (sometimes) subversions.⁶

Shin’ya Naohiko, a twenty-two-year-old computer systems technician at the head office of Northern Energy, brought out some of this complexity when telling me about his childhood. This informant came from a regional city on the north-eastern Pacific coast, several hours by train from the prefectural capital where he presently lived. His earliest childhood memories were of his father being away for long stretches of time. The father was a fisherman working on long-range ocean trawlers, and hence away from the home-port for periods of weeks or months at a time. The father continued to be engaged in this line of work until Shin’ya-san was seven or eight. Thus, unlike those informants who came from more typically salaryman-type families where weekends (or at least Sundays) were often times given over to ‘family service’ (*kazoku sābisu*) by the father, Shin’ya-san had no real recollections of the family doing something together as a unit, apart from times when they would visit

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⁶ See also a little-known ethnographic study from the 1960s of an adolescent boys’ peer group club (*shōnen dān*) in rural Japan by Johnson (1975) which brings out some of the richness and complexity at work as boys ‘come into’ masculinity. However, as would be expected for a work published at this
the grandparents’ home-town. As mentioned, his father quit this sea-faring life when Shin’ya-san was in primary school, and established his own small business (*jigyo*, literally ‘self-operated business’), a transport and delivery outfit. In common with owner-operators of many small businesses (Allison 1994: 91, 92), in contrast to the perceived middle-class salaryman pattern of a dichotomized gendered division of labour, *both* his parents, in fact at times, all members of the family including himself, were involved in the running of the business. Indeed, he recalled no differences in even the physical labour his parents engaged in – both parents were equally likely to lift and move heavy boxes (as this was a removalist business). Rather, in his recollection, the “big gender difference in the household was based on who did the cooking” (Shin’ya, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 12).

In other respects though, Shin’ya-san recalled having conventional notions of gender inculcated early on within the family. For instance, he mentioned having memories of starting to cry as his parents left for work leaving him at home, and being told that “boys shouldn’t cry, it’s wrong to cry” (Round 1 Interview Transcript: 6). Although he noted that “at the time it probably hadn’t been such a shock” (6), thinking back now he could see the gender ideology at work in his upbringing. At the same time, he said he could understand his parents’ desire to “want a boy to grow up strong” (7), and maintained that he would probably follow the same course with his own son/s. This almost simultaneous validation and rejection of the dominant gender ideology might initially come across as baffling and contradictory. However, as highlighted earlier, it is *precisely* this type of ambiguity and contradiction that interweaves through the engagements between the individual and hegemonic masculinity.

Another instance when this complexity surfaced was in our discussions about his earliest memories of being ‘a boy’. In common with several of the other informants, he remembered the first distinctions between boys and girls as dating back to his kindergarten years. However, as the following extract from his account indicates, Shin’ya-san seems to recognize the gender *policing* that was involved. Connell, drawing upon Barrie Thorne’s ethnographic study of primary schools, refers to this policing as “borderwork” (Connell 2002: 14; see also Thorne 1993: 64–88)

> From around kindergarten. It was kindergarten, so around five, four, five years, there was this realization of being male (*otoko to iu mono ni taishite*). Well, at kindergarten there was a distinction (*kubetsu*) made in the way of educating boys and girls. So, for instance, with, how do you say it … is it the kindergarten clothes (*enji-fuku*) … the kindergarten uniforms, boys were blue, and girls were
pink. Even from that point, I think there was an understanding that ‘boys are boys’ (otoko wa otoko nan da).

(Shin’ya, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 4)

As mentioned, while many of the informants (as we will see) may have made passing references to similar practices, Shin’ya-san stands out in terms of his recognition (sometimes critical, sometimes approving) of these practices possessing a built-in gender ideology. As he continued with his account, this recognition of the dynamics at work continued to come across:

... I just spoke about the difference in the clothes [boys and girls] were made to wear, well, another aspect that makes you realize [this distinction between] boys and girls is, in the lower grades of primary school they have health examinations (shintai sokutei, literally ‘body measurements’) about twice a year, and although boys and girls did it together, by the middle grades of primary school, from around the fourth grade, they’re separated into ‘boys’ and ‘girls’. So in terms of perception, firstly, you’re made aware that this is a difference in terms of the body. Next, in grade five of primary school, there’s a camp for [students in] the same year organized by the school. And, there, there were separate tents – boys’ tents over here, and girls’ tents over there. And, to an extent, even the teachers start trying to build a wall between boys and girls.

(Shin’ya, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 5)

He saw this inscription of gender through bodily practices as a form of regulation/discipline (kanri), something which became further accentuated as he progressed from primary school, through junior high school and onto high school:

... they often call it ‘disciplining’ (kanri). And then, at the primary school level, as far as my image of what we’d wear, basically we’d wear track-suits, or those kinds of comfortable outfits to school. But once we got to grade five or six, you notice the girls starting to dress up. The girls ... would tie their hair; the boys still had short hair; they still weren’t conscious about things like looking good to the extent the girls were! Then once we got to junior high school, there were uniforms. The girls were made to wear skirts and the boys trousers. And by the time of around junior high, even the construction of the body (shintai no tsukuri) becomes completely different.

(Shin’ya, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 5)

He then went on to describe his experience in high school. He had gone to a technical high school (kōgyō kōkō), which although in theory coeducational, was in actual fact almost exclusively male:

In terms of the system it wasn’t a boy’s high school (danshi-kō), but since it was a technical high school it was mainly boys. And so, in that way, being in a place with only males, you start to feel that males and females can’t do the same things in the future, in terms of work, the work that men are able to do (otoko ga dekiru
and women are able to do (onna ga dekiru shigoto), that men's values (kachikan) and women's values are different.7

(Shin'ya, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 5)

This informant who had only completed high school before entering Northern Energy, had almost certainly never heard of theorists like Foucault. Yet, the above account reveals a surprising level of sophistication in his analysis of these engendering practices through the disciplining of bodies (see Foucault 1979).

While not necessarily demonstrating the level of awareness shown by Shin'ya-san, other informants too were able to recall the complexities of the process through which they came into masculinity. Yoshida Shun'ichi, who had just entered Northern Energy a few months prior to our interview, was an only child in a family where the father was a carpenter (but significantly, as he was not self-employed, Yoshida san referred to his father as a salaryman), and the mother was (and always had been) a sengyō shufu ('full-time' housewife). In terms of realizations of his 'maleness', he mentions being aware of differences between girls and boys quite early on, particularly of the image of "boys are strong" (otoko wa tsuyoi) taking hold, despite the fact that at that stage, in kindergarten, "since they're just kids (gaki), there isn't much difference in strength" (Yoshida, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 3). Describing this 'coming into' masculinity, he made the following observation:

... Is it, umm, a kind of unknowing 'mind control' [uses English term] (shirazu, shirazu no maindo kontorōru)? The environment's already like that. There's always [the expectation] of 'you're a boy, after all'. So right from the time of childhood, without realizing it everyone had formed [ideas about] what a man should be, what a woman should be.

(Yoshida, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 3)

Miura Tōru, a young twenty-year-old recruit, had also entered Northern Energy just a few months prior to our discussion. Like Shin'ya Naohiko, he came from a family where the father had quit regular paid employment when Miura-san was in the first year of junior high school, and had set up his own small business (a car-repair workshop) out of the family home. As was also the case with Shin'ya-san, all members of the family would get involved to some degree in the business - his mother (who also worked part-time at a 'family restaurant') would step in to help during busy end-of-month periods, and he and his sister would also help out when it was busy. Being brought up in such an environment meant that many of the spatial

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7 It was only after entering the workforce, where he encountered quite a few women doing technical work, that Shin'ya-san started to question his earlier assumptions about the non suitability of women for 'men's work'. Ironically, as mentioned earlier, his own mother had engaged in conventionally 'unfeminine' types of work.
(work/home, outside/inside), temporal (work time/non-work time), and gender (male/female, masculine/feminine) boundaries that are thought to characterize the lifestyles of salaryman families were often transgressed in his family. His experience contrasted with the dominant image of the ‘absent’ Japanese father away from the home most of the time (see Ishii-Kuntz 1993; also Itô 1996: 286–308; Kodama 2001), Miura-san had the following to say when I asked him about his father’s work and his childhood interaction with his father:

... you see ... with repair work (shūri-gyō) it went in waves. In winter, the roads get ice-bound, so accidents increase, so of course, winters were busier than summers, [and] generally [he] didn’t have Saturdays [off] in winter. But, on the other hand, in summer he’d sometimes come home at lunch-time on weekdays and have a nap, and on Sundays he’d laze around [the house], that kind of thing. ... he took me to a whole lot of places around the region. On weekdays and Saturdays he would play with me, soccer or kicking a ball around, or, in winter, building snow castles or making [snow] slides. I have memories of those kinds of things.

(Miura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 2)

This is quite different from, for instance, the salarymen fathers in Ishii-Kuntz’s study, and in contrast to what some of my other informants whose fathers were salarymen had to say. Quite clearly, Ishii-Kuntz’s observation, with reference to the men in her study, that “to be masculine ... men accede to work demands that require physical distance from their families” (Ishii-Kuntz 1993: 57) would not apply to Miura-san’s father. I will return to discussing the intersections between fatherhood and hegemonic masculinity in greater depth in Chapter Eight.

Miura-san’s recollection of gender roles in his family also pointed to a non-conformity to conventional expectations. For instance, when I asked him about who used to help with the washing-up after dinner, he laughed and said that his younger sister (who would normally, in keeping with hegemonic gender expectations, be expected to be the one to help) did not do anything. “Normally”, he explained to me,

my mother would do it, but sometimes, they [the dishes] would just be left lying around, and everyone would fall asleep. At those times, whoever’d find them first would just say “it can’t be helped” (shikata nai na) and do them!

(Miura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 4)

There seems to be an almost tongue-in-cheek, playful engagement with the hegemonic gender expectations at work here, within his family. Moreover, when he was growing up, he never felt that his parents worried about his need to conform to expectations of hegemonic masculinity. As he put it, “my parents didn’t really care about those kind of things ... they’d never say [things like] because you’re a male
you have to have a family (katei o motsu) or you have to go out [into the world] (soto ni dero)” (Miura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 6). Indeed, according to him, his family seemed to have almost deliberately encouraged him not to subscribe to the cultural ideals of masculinity. For instance, unlike Shin’ya-san whose parents followed the ‘boys should not cry’ line, Miura-san was actually “told to cry when you are upset [about something]. Have a good cry and get it off your chest, then do whatever you have to do” (Miura, Round 1 Interview: 6).8

His ‘coming into’ realizing the expectations of masculinity came (as was the case with Shin’ya-san) more from institutions like school, his friends and peers, and popular culture (he specifically mentioned television). Whereas his parents may not have expected him to achieve certain standards just because he was a boy, he was told by teachers at school that “since you’re a male, some day you’ll have to support a family and will have to work, so you need to get some kind of qualification now, get some kind of technical skill, find an occupation (te ni shoku o motte)” (Miura, Round 1 Transcript: 6). Indeed, as was the case with Shin’ya-san, his ‘coming into’ masculinity was also closely intertwined with regulatory bodily practices through institutions like schooling. When I asked him about his earliest recollections of ‘being male’, he mentioned that very early on, in kindergarten, the distinction between girls and boys was “all mixed-up (gucha-gucha)”. However, he continued,

... in primary school, at the swimming pool, boys and girls were told to get changed separately. At that time, I think I realized that there are boys and there are girls. Umm, it was roughly around the second year, that incident at the pool. So, since it was grade two of primary school, that would have been around the age of seven or eight.

(Miura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 4)

When I asked him if this distinct sense of difference between boys and girls strengthened as he progressed through junior high and high school, he agreed, and laughingly suggested that “if that wasn’t the case, you’d turn into a ‘weird person’ (ayashii hito)” (Miura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 6). What seems to underlie this statement is an acknowledgment of the need to maintain the sort of gender ‘borderwork’ I referred to earlier.

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8 The significance of the words used by his parents comes across with greater clarity in the original Japanese: “gyaku ni ... kuyashii toki nake to iwaremasita. Naite sukkiin shite kata kodō okose to ka, só ii koto iwareta koto [ga] arimasu” (Miura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 6)
Ishida Naoki, another Northern Energy employee, mentioned a similar childhood experience triggering his awareness of the gendered body. This informant's father had died in his first year of junior high school, and he had been brought up by his mother. Although, as an only child he had no siblings, he did have a female cousin who used to come over, and they used to play together. He recalled first becoming really aware of his male gendered body around the fourth grade of primary school, when having a bath together with this cousin. By the time they had entered junior high school, both he and the cousin felt embarrassed about this (Ishida, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 6).

Imai Shinji, another Northern Energy employee working in the customer relations section, also remembered the first realization of masculinity coming through practices inscribing gender onto the body, particularly the way bodily changes (for example, the voice breaking at adolescence) are read as success or lack of success in maintaining a 'timetable' of masculinity. The following exchange between us brings out this inscribing of gender onto the body:

Romet (R): Thinking back to your childhood, can you remember, when, for instance, you first realized you were a boy?

Imai (I): Let's see now, umm, I wonder ... I suppose, well, around primary school. Well, as you know, the clothing (fuku) for boys and girls [becomes] different, doesn't it? So, I guess from around then.

R: Around when in primary school...?

I: Umm, was it around the lower grades of primary school... [thinking aloud to himself]

R: Around the first grade...?

I: It was around the third grade, perhaps...

R: So, up until then, was it, like, say, for instance, when you're playing together and things, you don't remember being aware of yourself being a boy, and your playmate being a girl?

I: Umm, how should I put it... well, until then, boys and girls would often play together without clothes and stuff. But, I suppose, well, how do you say it...as you became conscious of bodily differences those kind of things stopped. Umm, I suppose I became aware of the differences between boys and girls...I can't really express it properly.

R: Well, I suppose, it's like this idea of boys and girls being different coming into your head around the time of grade one or two of primary school. But, would you say that this difference got more pronounced
as you progressed through primary school, junior high, and high school?

I: Yes, I guess that’s correct. Well, umm, I suppose I first strongly became conscious (tsuyoku ishiki shita) of girls around junior high.

R: Was there, any, if you can remember, any particular incident (jiken), or…

I: Any incident? Well, it’s not really an incident, but, umm, I was a bit late [in maturing] (okureme-gachi). You could say I was late, or, possibly my growth (hatsuiku) was slow, so my voice was like a girl’s. Even now, my voice is a bit high though…

R: Is that so? [his voice had not struck me as particularly out of the ordinary]

I: Oh, do you think it’s normal (futsu)? [seems surprised and a bit relieved]

R: Well, you know, lots of people’s voices [are high]; I think perhaps I have a fairly high voice too!

I: Well, anyhow whatever the case, on the whole, I had a very high voice. The boys’ voices started changing [breaking], probably from around the third year of junior high, and even the girls started to get shy [around boys]. Like, girls who’d been ‘tomboyish’ (otokoppo) until then, well, they started to become more feminine (onnappoku natta). So you see them changing like that constantly. And you know how … childish junior high school students are; as they become conscious of women’s bodies (onna no hito no karada) they start going to those kind of sleazy places together, or [renting ‘adult’] videos, it’s an age when curiosity about those kind of things is strong. And seeing everyone around me like that, I started to think I should be like that too…

(Imai, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 4, 5)

The above exchange seems to signal an uneasy engagement – an anxiety, almost – with the expectations of masculinity, on the part of those individuals like this informant whose bodies or minds do not quite match up to those expectations. It brings to mind Thorne’s observation arising out of her ethnographic study of primary-school children, that, whereas “early-developing girls … especially if they have large breasts are treated almost as if they are physically handicapped, early-developing boys reap social advantages” (Thorne 1993: 139). Thorne gives the example of two early maturing boys in the class she was observing, who were admired for their sporting prowess and height, in contrast to two late maturing boys.
who were teased for their small size (139, 140). As she notes, “by junior high or middle school, some physically small and weak boys may be labelled ‘wimps’ and ‘fags’; social hierarchies have a loose relationship to somatic type” (140).

A number of my informants recalled themselves as having been ‘behind schedule’ in terms of bodily maturation and ‘coming into’ masculinity. Shimizu Ayaki, a Northern Print employee for instance, mentioned that he was “okute” (late maturing), and hence, did not really become aware of his masculinity until the upper grades of primary school (Shimizu, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 3). Sometimes there was a mixture of early recognition at one level but notions of masculinity and femininity being blurred at another – Matsumoto Tadashi, the Northern Energy accountant who was my liaison person in the organization, recalled being “interested in girls” and “liking a girl” as early as grade one of primary school, but at the same time, also said that notions of male and female remained “fuzzy (aimai) until around the fourth or fifth year of primary school” (Matsumoto, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 5).

Nevertheless, in the case of Imai Shinji, discussed above, the anxiety related to not ‘matching up’ to the schedule of masculinity seemed to be particularly noticeable. His account is somewhat reminiscent of Connell’s discussion in The Men and the Boys of one of his informants, Adam Singer, and the sense of “spoiled masculinity” he developed with reference to himself at school – looking down at his fat, ‘wobbly’ thighs while playing sport one day and feeling a sense of disgust at his body for not matching up to the hegemonic bodily ideal (Connell 2000: 92).9

Unlike Shin’ya Naohiko and Miura Tōru, Imai-san came from a family background where the parents were in salaried employment – both his mother and father were teachers. Perhaps, partly as a result of the parents’ occupation and the consequent influence on the home environment as he was growing up, there appeared to have been a considerable degree of expectation levelled at him to achieve the desired standards of masculinity. Indeed, as the more favoured of the two male siblings in his family, it appears that his parents had placed far more than just the standard expectations of hegemonic masculinity on him. Integral to (what appeared to be) his parents’ expectations of him were expectations directly related to how he should behave as a male; in other words, his embodiment of appropriate masculinity, physically, mentally, and intellectually – for example, not crying:

9 Similarly, Taga (2001b: 98–106) discusses the case of one of his informants, ‘C-san’ who until he was in high school had a similarly uneasy relationship with his body which did not seem ‘masculine’ enough (and was bullied and picked on as a result). This unease with his body was a factor behind C-san’s forced efforts to become ‘a normal male’ (jissā no otoko) through rugby. While, in terms of his
[I was told] that you can’t cry, umm, since you’re a boy you have to endure (gaman shinakya). I was told lots of things like that, umm, when you’re a shakaijin of course that’s the case, but [I was told] things like men have to endure, umm, [or things like] you shouldn’t cause pain to girls ... you can’t cry.

... Well, I wasn’t really the type to have fights. And times when I cried, often, well, I’d really cry hard (wan-wan naitemashita) when I’d see a sad movie. But I didn’t think crying over that was really such a big deal ... [Also] I was told by my parents that because I was a boy, and my future was at stake, I had to go to a good university.

(Imai, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 6)

According to Imai-san, in an effort to live up to his parents’ expectations, he had possibly sacrificed being able to enjoy his childhood and adolescent years. As he put it when I asked him what had influenced him the most during his formative years -- the influence of peers, popular culture images, education received at school, or education (upbringing) received at home (katei no naka no kyōiku):

... in the home, the parents’ influence is strong in terms of upbringing within the home. Well, you can’t not become the type of person your parents want you to. And, especially, since my parents were school teachers ... looking at them, you’d probably become a ‘goody goody’. But those kind of people aren’t interesting or, they lack ‘common sense’ (jōshiki), or they have attributes that cause them to be disliked. Basically, they lack warmth (ataakami ga nai) – it all sounds like me [laughs].

(Imai, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 7)

He now wished that he had had “stood up” to his parents and exerted his “own will” (jibun no ishi) more (Imai, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 7). Elsewhere he mentioned that

... thinking back now, while I do think that it’s been good for me (sore de yokatta), there were also lots of things I sacrificed (gisei ni shimashtta). For example, in high school, while everyone was dating girls, I’d control myself (gaman) and keep studying. Or I’d want to go out and have fun with everyone, but instead of going would study ...

... Basically, my parents’ teaching was if you persevere (gaman) and endure hardships (kurō) now, things will be easy later (ato raku ni naru). However, if you play around now, you’re sure to have hardship later; they’d say that kind of thing

(Imai, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 8, 9)

As it was, he did follow his parents’ advice and did go to a ‘good university’ (where he majored in law). However, in many senses his problematic engagement with the

body, he did achieve this, he continued (as Taga discusses) to have a problematic relationship with the expectations of hegemonic masculinity.
hegemonic expectations of masculinity seemed to remain an issue for him, in the engagements with salaryman masculinity he was negotiating at the time of our conversation.

Several informants mentioned gender expectations and expectations of responsibility on the part of parents (in addition to expectations of teachers or society in general) as being important in shaping their sense of being otoke. Yoshida Shun'ichi, the Northern Energy employee whose account of becoming aware of his masculinity was referred to earlier in this section, provided the following example illustrating the influence his parents (specifically his mother) had on his masculinity:

In terms of the greatest influence [in terms of gender] ... wonder what it is? Maybe, in my case friends...and, it's true, my mother is, you know, a full-time housewife (sengyô shufu). So, this perhaps isn't really relevant, but, how should I say it...for example, let's say, I'm eating. And, say, my mother seems busy in the kitchen, I say I'll go get some more rice myself. So that's what I do. But if I do that, my mother gets angry. She's says "You're a male aren't you? It's [the kitchen] not a place men should normally go into". [Things like] that make quite an impression, don't they? So if you think about that kind of [family] dynamic in relation to men and women in my family it's like, very, how should I say, men should work outside, women should cook ... and follow the man, or, I guess, that the wife should play a supportive role. It was that kind of family. So I think that's had something of an influence on me.

(Yoshida, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 4, 5)

Extended family members also played a role in the shaping of ideas about gender. Matsumoto Tadashi, my liaison at Northern Energy, mentioned that the expectations of masculinity on him came not so much from his parents, but from his grandfather. As he put it:

If anything, in our house, I remember being allowed quite a lot of freedom. You can say it was what's called 'non-interference' (hôninshugi). I wasn't really cautioned by people around me, at least not from my parents. If anything, he's now dead but, I remember being told those kind of things quite a bit by my grandfather, my father's father. But, it was when I was really small ...

... [in response to my question about what kind of things he was told], things like, because you're a boy ... because you're a boy, you shouldn't cry. And, things like, you should do lots of exercise, [boys] need to be strong. I don't really remember that much though.

(Matsumoto, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 6, 7)

This informant came from a middle-class nuclear salaryman family, where both parents worked – his father worked in sales for a firm in the housing industry, and his mother, who had always worked, was also involved in sales (of natural food products). However, while the mother may have been slightly unconventional in some respects (in the sense that by choosing a career outside the home even when the
informant was small, she was not subscribing to the full-time home-maker/mother ‘ideal’), in other respects his upbringing was along fairly conventional gender ideological lines. For instance, when I asked him if there had been any sense of difference between himself as male, and his younger sister, as female, this was his response:

Yes, I think there are, there were [differences]. For example, in my case, I could pretty much come home as late as I liked at night, without there being any problem, and, of course, there was no restriction on me staying over somewhere else overnight. But, if anything, when it came to my sister, there was a certain amount of restriction. Umm, would you call it a curfew (mongen)? So there were restrictions [on her], but for me as a male, I remember being allowed more freedom.

(Matsumoto, Round 1 Interview: 4)

He also mentioned that whereas his sister would help with housework, he hardly did anything. At the same time, he mentions starting to feel, from when he was in upper primary school, a sense that as the older male sibling (indeed, the eldest son, the chôman), at the very least he had a responsibility to “properly look after” his younger sister (Matsumoto, Round 1 Interview: 4, 5).

There were commonalities in the experiences of Matsumoto-san with Fujita Yûji who worked in the sales and marketing section of Northern Print. Fujita-san also came from a family where the father was an “average salaryman (futsû no sariiman)” (Fujita, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 3). The father seemed to have typified the type of salaryman father described in the Ishii-Kuntz study referred to earlier (Ishii-Kuntz 1993). He was strict, and apart from meals together on weekends, had limited interaction with the children. His mother, however, like Matsumoto Tadashi’s, did not really fit the image of the typical salaryman’s sengyô shufu (full-time housewife). She had returned to paid work when Fujita-san had been in primary school, and had continued working ever since. One year before our interview, the mother had established her own business – a trading company importing health-food products from China.

Yet, as with Matsumoto-san, the gender dynamics within his family when he was growing up seemed to operate according to conventional gender expectations. For instance, it was his elder sister, and not he, who helped with household chores. As he put it:

Since she was a girl, she had to learn things like housework (kaji), so, she’d sometimes cook a meal, and also, do the tidying up (katazuke), also things like the laundry (sentaku).

(Fujita, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 5)
With reference to expectations on him as a male, he made the following observation:

Well, it varies, but, well, when you become a junior high student, you think about things like your future course [in life] (shinro). At the time what I came to realize was that, if you were female, umm, this may sound bad, but, as long as in the end you got married you could sit back and let the future take care of itself (koshikake to ka demo daijōbu). But if you’re male you can’t really do that. You’ve got to make sure you get a job, and then, you have to keep working to support your wife. I really felt this responsibility on me because I was male.

(Fujita, Round 1 Transcript: 6, 7)

This observation links back to the point highlighted earlier in the chapter, of the importance of the daikokubashira imagery in constructing and sustaining ‘idealized’ masculinity. Fujita-san’s words seem to reflect both the strength and pervasive grip of the hegemonic gender ideology, as well as the sense of unease – even in childhood/early adolescence – with the ideological expectations of the discourse of the man as daikokubashira. As we shall see in later chapters, this concurrent conformity to, and contestation of, the expectations of hegemonic masculinity would continue to inform and shape Fujita-san’s life-path into adulthood.

**Becoming Sexual Otoko**

Another issue worth considering, alluded to in passing in some of the accounts discussed above, is the connection between this ‘gender project’ of masculinity and being ‘crafted’ into particular expectations of heterosexuality. Significantly, with one important exception which I discuss below, there appeared to be an assumption on the part of all the informants that cross-gender sexual attraction was integral to masculinity. Thus, most of the informants would make reference to developing crushes on female classmates, or becoming sexually attracted to girls from around junior high school (witness Imai-san’s account outlined earlier). These accounts varied from Murayama Satoshi, a thirty-year-old Northern Energy head-office employee, who mentioned becoming fond of and feeling he “had to protect” a female playmate in his first year of primary school (Murayama, Interview Transcript: 18), to Makimura Keisuke, a twenty-three-year-old architect/planner also with Northern Energy, who said he first realized his masculinity in grade two of primary school when he experienced his “first love” (hatsu-koi) towards a “cute girl in [the same] class” (Makimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 3), through to Kimura Kenji, my liaison contact at Northern Print, who blamed the sudden drop in his academic performance when he got to the second year of high school, on his having “learnt
girls" (onna oboeta), or in other words, the start of his sexual relations with the opposite sex (Kimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 8).

However, unlike what appears to be the case with patterns of ‘coming into’ masculinity in so much of the literature pertaining to Australia, the United Kingdom, or the United States (see, for instance, Walker 1988; Mac An Ghaill 1994; Martino 1999; Plummer 1999; Epstein 2001, Mills 2001), the construction of my informants’ masculinity during childhood and adolescence did not appear to be pivoted on aggressively articulated homophobia. Indeed, the possibility of any form of sexual preference other than heterosexual was virtually absent from their (voiced) accounts. This was in striking contrast to the ‘fear’ of homosexuality that seemed to have been such a recurring source of anxiety for the informants of writers like Mac an Ghaill (1994), Walker (1988), or Plummer (1999), in the construction of their masculinities. However, in the case of my informants, the situation was more a case of erasure through non-articulation. Thus, with the exception of a number of occasions when unvoiced cracks in the façade may have allowed for some ambiguity, the assumption on the part of my informants seemed to be of a mutual heterosexuality.

The one case where this assumption of heterosexuality as a composite part of the ‘coming into’ masculinity fell apart was in the case of Arai Jun, a young public sector white-collar employee, who (although not publicly ‘out’ at work) defined his identity in terms of his same-sex attraction; in other words he unambiguously referred to himself as ‘gay’. He came from a fairly typical salaryman family – his father was a bank employee, and his mother, a full-time housewife (although she had apparently worked part-time in the past). At the time of our interview, he was ‘out’ to his mother and younger sister, but not to his father, whom he described as conservative and unlikely to accept his son’s alternative sexuality. When he was growing up, while his mother had encouraged him to help with housework (saying that men would have to be able to do such things in years to come), his father had

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10 See also Castro-Vázquez and Kishi’s paper discussing the ways adolescent boys in a senior high school in Tokyo engage with hegemonic expectations of heteronormativity. As the authors note with reference to their informants’ views of sexuality: “heterosexuality is the natural way of life, or even the only way of life” (Castro-Vázquez and Kishi 2003: 30). Indeed, even within heterosexuality, it is a specific type of heterosexual practice – vaginal sex linked to reproduction – that was privileged in their informants’ views (26, 27). I discuss this privileging of a specific form of heterosexuality linked to the male as producer, provider, and ‘re-producer’ in more detail in Chapter Eight.

11 There may have been a few considerations at play here. Firstly, unlike many of the school ethnographies I referred to, my informants were adults recalling their experiences, rather than adolescents still coming to terms with their sexualities. In addition, the specifics of my researcher relationship with the informants (discussed at some length in the Methodology section of this thesis), may have precluded reference to such ‘sensitive’ issues.

12 As I mentioned in Chapter Two when discussing my research methodology, this informant was not part of my ‘pool’ of informants. However, for reasons outlined in that chapter, I arranged to conduct a discussion with this particular informant. See also Taga (2001b: 91–94) for a discussion about one of his informants who was not heterosexual.
placed great stress on what boys should and should not do. For instance, the father used to say such things as, "a kitchen isn’t a place for a man" (Arai, Interview Transcript: 2), or “cooking is only for women” (3). Yet Arai-san found it hard to accept what he saw as his father’s double standards, when he was reprimanded for coming home in the early hours of the morning after being out on the town when he was already a university student, something that (if his father was to be consistent) was conventionally regarded as a male prerogative (see Matsumoto Tadashi’s account, above, for instance).

Arai-san’s first ‘realization’ of his masculinity came when in kindergarten he became fond of a female playmate in the group of four or five children he used to play with (Arai, Interview Transcript: 3). This did not, however, lead to a progression into sexual attraction towards girls (as seemed to be the case with the other informants). He first developed a crush on a male classmate when he was in the sixth grade of primary school and then on an older senpai (senior) in the club he was involved with in junior high school. At the time he did not think it particularly problematic (Arai, Interview Transcript: 4). He ‘explained’ these feelings to himself by comparing them to the same-sex closeness stage in adolescent development he said he studied about in junior high school, although he now realizes that these feelings were perhaps more than just symptoms of ‘normal’ adolescent development.

It was around this time that the first notions of himself as ‘gay’, in other words a discourse of his whole masculine identity revolving around his sexuality, started to crystallize in his mind. Playing a part in this was a television programme he mentioned watching late one night. From his description, this late-night programme sounded to me like a sort of sensationalistic ‘expose’ of the gay ‘underbelly’ of the Shinjuku Ni-chome gay bar area of Tokyo.13 In his words:

... I remember thinking that homosexuals (dôseiai-sha, literally, ‘same sex lover’, but more generally ‘homosexual’ here) are all in places like Shinjuku. The programme, it was at night, a programme screened at night, was [along the lines of] ‘discovering gays’. The image formed from the media was that they [gay people] lead normal lives during the day, but come outふと at night (yoru da to koso koso koso koso shiteiru). So [that made me wonder] if that was the case in Tokyo, was there anyone else like me in this city ...

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13 The Ni-chome precinct in Tokyo's Shinjuku locality contains over 200 gay bars and clubs concentrated within a few urban blocks. Most large and medium-sized cities in Japan have at least a couple of commercial venues catering to a gay clientele, and there are gay establishments in other areas of Tokyo. However, the sheer numbers of gay establishments and customers patronizing them concentrated in the relatively small area covered by Ni-chome, means that the district comes closest to approximating a ‘gay ghetto’ in Japan. From the 1990s, the media started focusing on this area, either through late-night, ‘expose’-type television documentaries, ‘gay-themed’ television dramas (such as the 1993–1994 Dôsôkai), or features on ‘gay life’ in popular magazines like SPA! (see McLelland 2000: passim).
However, although he had crushes on schoolmates, started to think of himself as gay, and even started to wonder about another classmate, he felt that he could not tell anyone about these things. As he put it, “I didn’t think of myself as strange (hen), but I felt that I couldn’t tell any one, it was a ‘no-no’ (dame da)" (5). As most of his fellow male classmates started talking about and then forming relationships with girls, he too started ‘going steady’ with a girl. They did not have sex though, and he said that he “didn’t even like holding hands” (5).

In high school, he came across the number of a local gay support group in Hot Dog (a popular teenage male magazine), and through them was introduced to his first gay contact – a person who apparently had a very positive influence on Arai-san’s still formative self-image and self-esteem. At university he got quite heavily involved in exploring his sexuality, both through “playing around (asonda)” on the gay scene, as well as through involvement in gay groups and activism (including participating in the city’s Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade). He considered this year of “playing around” as being “a year of ‘experimenting’ … [and] extremely valuable” (7) in his life. Indeed, without having gone through these experiences, he felt that he would not have been able to have moved on to developing the more ‘serious’ facets of his sexuality. These included such things as his involvement in the support group for sexual minorities in which he participated, and the stable, monogamous relationship he had established with his current partner.

At the time of our discussion, Arai-san had graduated from university a few months earlier, and had made the transition to shakaijin life. I will return to his story in Chapter Eight, when I discuss how he negotiates the contradictions between his strong sense of gay masculinity and the hegemonic salaryman masculinity that, as a shakaijin, he is expected to subscribe to. What marked Arai-san out from the other informants was the fact that unlike the other informants, he was far more conscious of the day-to-day engagements with the expectations of hegemonic masculinity. This is true in relation to the issues discussed above, and (as we will see) to his discussion in Chapter Eight. Thus, whereas for the other informants discussed above, their ‘coming into’ sexuality was presented as a relatively unproblematic element of the trajectory of their overall life-paths, Arai-san’s reflections are valuable in that they serve to remind us of Connell’s assertion, mentioned in the Introduction to this chapter, that “gender, even in its most elaborate, abstract or fantastic forms, is always an ‘accomplishment’ … . Gender is something actually done; and done in social life, not something that exists prior to social life” (Connell 2002: 55, [my emphasis]).
Conclusion

As the first of the five interview-based chapters drawing on the individual informants’ voices, this chapter has focused on the ‘doing of gender’ in the context of what I have called ‘coming into’ masculinity – the markers and practices through which the informants recalled their journeys into ‘masculinity’. Their accounts would support the argument that there is no one assembly-line like biologically pre-determined trajectory of this ‘coming into’ masculinity followed by all males. As their stories have brought out, while all of them did have to define their sense of being male vis-à-vis dominant social structures, institutions, ideologies, and discourses, each individual’s experience was his own experience. In other words, the individuals had enough agency to carve out some sense of their own masculinity, albeit with reference to hegemonic masculinity. For some individuals these engagements were relatively un-problematic (at least on a consciously articulated level). For others – for instance Arai Jun, or even Shin’ya Naohiko – it was a process that appeared to involve interrogation, self-reflexivity, and strategic negotiations. For all of them, their ‘coming into’ masculinity was a rich, multi-faceted process, part of the overall ‘gender project’ referred to earlier.

The next chapter (Chapter Six) will discuss the extremely significant weeks and months in the individual male’s life when he first makes the transition from pre-productive, pre-shakaijin student masculinity to productive (and reproductive) adult shakaijin salaryman masculinity.
CHAPTER SIX

BECOMING SHAKAIJIN: ‘CRAFTINGS’ INTO SALARYMAN MASCULINITY

Introduction

The previous chapter drew upon my informants’ voices to explore the ways in which they negotiated the complexities of ‘coming into’ masculinity as boys and adolescents, in their life-paths towards adulthood as fully fledged, ‘socially responsible’ shakaijin. Over the next few chapters, the central concern shifts to the ways in which these individual informants negotiate with the expectations of the hegemonic salaryman masculinity that they are expected to meet once they enter the workforce and become shakaijin.

As David Plath notes in the Introduction to Work and Lifecourse in Japan, the “essence of a career is that it is a predictable sequence of movements, a relay of roles set up to normalize the potentially turbulent flow of persons through an organization” (Plath 1983b: 3). Arguably, this ‘predictability’ has become considerably less so in the two decades or so since Plath wrote these words. However, the underlying notion of a demarcated life-path along which the individual is expected to travel through life, remains an important assumption of hegemonic salaryman masculinity. Moreover, an integral element of this process is the delineation of markers which perform varied (and sometimes contradictory) functions. These include normalizing the “potentially turbulent flow” (3) of traversing the organizational life-path. Such markers also serve a boundary-policing function, to rein in those in danger of transgressing the parameters set by the dominant ideology and discourse.

A number of writers have drawn attention to the significance of such ‘markers’ within an individual’s life-path in relation to various social settings in Japan (see, for instance, Rohlen 1974; Plath 1980, 1983b; Kondo 1990, 1992; Lo 1990; Linhart 1992; Kelly 1993; Okano 1993; Mathews 1996, McVeigh 1997; Roberson 1998; Morris-Suzuki 1984 ).¹ Within the context of the hegemonic expectations regarding

¹ Jeannie Lo, for instance, provides the example of a recruitment pamphlet aimed at potential OLs, produced by Brother Industries, the Japanese organization where she conducted ethnographic research in the mid 1980s, as an example of corporate practices reinforcing such markers in employees’ lives. The pamphlet Lo discusses provided a step-by-step visual instruction for each year of the female recruit’s life between graduating from high school at eighteen, preparation for marriage at nineteen (by undergoing ‘bridal training’ while still at work), meeting and then dating ‘Mr. Right’ at twenty, and quitting for what is perhaps the major ‘marker’ in a woman’s life (in the context of the hegemonic
masculinity, these ‘markers’ at various points of the individual male’s life trajectory would include ceremonies marking the transition from one level of education to the next (for instance high-school graduation and entry into university or other tertiary education), entry into the workforce and shakaijin life, progression through various stages of his career, and subsequently retirement and ‘honorary’ shakaijin status. Intersecting with this life-path is another significant marker – marriage, and the public acceptance by the man of the culturally sanctioned role of husband (and by extension, provider). Of the various ‘markers’ at these different points within the life-course, three are particularly significant – induction into salaryman masculinity, marriage (which publicly affirms the connection between hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity), and the moment of exit, either through retirement, resignation, or retrenchment. All of these serve as reminders of the presence and ideological reach of this hegemonic discourse. Moreover, all three also function as delineating ‘markers’ between different stages of masculinity – non-productive student → productive shakaijin, ambiguous single status → unambiguous married heterosexuality, and productive shakaijin → non-productive, retired ‘honorary’ shakaijin.

This chapter will highlight the first (and arguably the most significant) of these ‘markers’ of hegemonic masculinity – the new entrant’s ‘induction’ into salaryman masculinity in the liminal first weeks and months of his shakaijin life. Although, as stressed in earlier chapters, multiple masculinities coexist (and sometimes conflict) within the same individual through his life, the ambiguities, and conflicts and tensions resulting from the interplay of different discourses of masculinity are perhaps most apparent over this period. On the one hand, the new entrant is still influenced by discourses of adolescent/youth/student masculinity. This influence manifests itself in a variety of areas – in his fashions, his hairstyle, his verbal and body language, his time-management, his daily schedule, his friendships, his sexual and emotional relationships, his interests and hobbies, indeed even his politics. At the same time, there is the expectation (even on the part of the individual) that he will ‘progress’ to the next stage of masculinity – that of shakaijin salaryman masculinity – and that the discourse hinged around this form of masculinity should now be the primary influence on all areas of his life. As mentioned above, this sometimes results

discourse and ideology of gender) – getting married and settling into the role of wife and mother-to-be (Lo 1990: 63–67).

\footnote{This tension in this ‘school-to-work’ transition period in the lives of young men has been explored in the works of various writers, including Willis (1977), Walker (1988), Connell (1989), Fine et al. (1997), and McDowell (2001b, 2002). For discussion in the Japanese context see, for instance, Roberson (1995b). Satô, in his ethnographic study of bôsōzoku youth biker gangs, discusses a similar transition from one discourse of masculinity to another in the lives of his informants. However, in the case of his informants the transition was not so much a ‘school-to-work transition’, but rather a ‘gang-member-to-respectable-shakaijin’ transition (see Satô 1991: 157–177).}
in situations of ambiguity and instability, as the new entrant attempts to negotiate these (seemingly) contradictory expectations of his masculinity.

This chapter will explore some of these issues with reference to my informants’ experiences of making the transition from one set of expectations surrounding their masculinity to another. As in the previous chapter, I will draw upon the informants’ voices as they reminisce about the initial weeks and months accompanying their entry into the workforce. I will also supplement the informants’ accounts by drawing upon discussions held with human resource managers responsible for selecting and training new staff, and on my own observation of the induction training for new staff at one of the organizations. Drawing upon these various sources will allow us to get a sense of the complexity that characterizes the individual male employee’s engagements with the expectations of the hegemonic ideals of salaryman masculinity over the initial weeks and months of shakaijin life.

**Miura Tôru’s Confusion**

The complexity underlying a new shakaijin’s negotiations with the expectations of salaryman masculinity comes across vividly in the following account of one of my informants. Miura Tôru was a twenty-year-old informant, who, as mentioned in the previous chapter, had made the transition from student to shakaijin a few months prior to our discussions. Thus he was still in the process of negotiating his way through the uncertain, ‘fuzzy’ liminal zone of being a shinnyû shaiin (new entrant/employee), still learning the ropes at work, and still trying to sift out acceptable behaviour for a salaryman from unacceptable (or at least, disapproved of) behaviour.

At our first meeting during the focus group discussion with Northern Energy informants, Miura had not said very much, perhaps due to the presence of more senior colleagues. He had, however, made reference to the adjustment he was trying to make from student life to his new shakaijin self. In his mind, the ‘marker’ separating the two stages to his life, was the way he saw himself in relation to those around him. As a student, he had enjoyed himself, partying and staying out all night, without any real regard for the ramifications for himself and those around him. However, as a shakaijin, he had to be conscious of the impact of his actions on others, the “inconvenience” (meiwaku) he could potentially cause others (Miura, Focus Group Interview Transcript: 6). For Miura-san, this ‘responsibility’ to others
seemed to be at the core of his new identity as an adult *shakaijin*. Moreover, although prior to becoming a *shakaijin* he had been aware of the different set of expectations that would operate once he entered the workforce, it was only after actually making the transition that he could really start appreciating these differences. As he noted:

> Before entering the company, even though I knew that as a *shakaijin* I would no longer be able to carry on the way I had until now, even though I knew that I would have much greater responsibility to bear, even though I knew [all] this, thinking back now, I realize that in actual fact there was so much I really didn’t understand when I entered the company!

(Miura, Focus Group Interview Transcript: 7)

At this point, during the focus group discussion, and at our first one-on-one interview a few weeks later, Miura-san was quite definitely in this liminal zone of negotiating his way from his student masculinity towards ‘perfecting’ his new salaryman masculinity. He was very conscious of the slippery, unstable position he was in. Moreover, he was also aware of the need to *consciously* work towards perfecting his new masculinity over this period of transition. Talking about his first days and weeks as a company employee, he mentioned being

> fairly tense. Every day, every day! I didn’t understand the work, and on top of that, still hadn’t learned appropriate *shakaijin* conduct at all ... I knew that as a *shakaijin* I was supposed to be able to deal effortlessly with ‘common sense’ matters (*jōshikitekina koto*), but I had no idea what constituted this ‘common sense’ ... how do I put it? It felt like I was spinning round in circles without going forward! (*karamawari shite iru*).

(Miura, Focus Group Interview Transcript: 7)

This often left him perplexed and confused and, even resentful. However, given his status as a ‘newcomer’, this was not something he could express to his seniors (*senpai*), or colleagues very easily. On the other hand, my status as an unconnected (but nevertheless sympathetic) ‘outsider’ allowed some of this frustration and

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3 One of the ‘adult male’ attributes Miura Tōru (by his own admission) lacked, when I first met him, was the ability to drink alcohol. Yet, when we met the following year, during the second round of interviews, he proudly told me that one of the ways he had changed since we had last met, was that he was now able to drink alcohol, as a result of being pld with alcohol (presumably by his seniors) at after-work drinking sessions and get-togethers (*nomi kai*). However, since he did not normally drink (i.e. on his own), he tended to let go and lose control at these sessions, becoming physically friendly/affectionate (*"karada no sesshoku o motomeru".*). There has been quite a bit of discussion revolving around the role of alcohol and drinking in the construction of masculinities (both hegemonic, and non-hegemonic). See, for instance, Vale de Almeida (1996), for a discussion of the place of drinking culture in rural masculinity in Portugal, or McBee (1999) on working-class males’ social clubs in New York and Chicago in the 1930s and 1930s. The importance of alcohol and drinking as part of work and other cultures in Japan, comes up in the works of various writers – Plath (1964), Rohlen (1974), Atsumi (1979), Ben-Ari (1989, 2000), Fowler (1996), Roberson (1998), Sakai (2000), Gill (2001), Spielvogel (2003), among others. I will expand further on the role of drinking in consolidating homosocial bonds in Chapter Nine.
uncertainty to be voiced. This frustration and confusion was encapsulated in one particular incident that he related to me during our first one-on-one interview.

The incident itself did not strike me as being particularly noteworthy. However, the way in which he had constructed it in his mind, and the impact it appeared to have made on him, seemed to reflect the differing ways in which notions of ‘public’, ‘private’, ‘friendship’, and ‘trust’ were constructed within the parameters of pre-shakaijin masculinity and salaryman masculinity. Miura-san, more so than others, placed considerable importance on friendship, something that was possibly a residue from his student days. Within this framework from his pre-shakaijin life, the division between a private (and important) ‘personal’ world of friendship and a ‘professional’ public world was far more fluid and less water-tight than what he encountered in the workplace. An example of this lingering influence of his pre-shakaijin priorities was the emphasis he still placed on maintaining contact with a circle of close friends from his student days. They had all promised to maintain contact and meet up regularly, even after entering the workforce and going their separate ways. At the time of our first interview, Miura-san still took this promise seriously, to the extent of driving the three hours or so to the prefectural capital straight after finishing work at the end of each week to meet up with these friends.

However it was not so much his continued contact with his pre-shakaijin friends that caused trouble, but rather his transposing of ‘acceptable’ behaviour relating to negotiating friendship, from his pre-shakaijin life to his shakaijin life. The incident itself was relatively minor. Over the course of his first few months in the organization, Miura-san had made friends with an employee from a different section located on a different floor and had started corresponding with his new friend through the company’s internal electronic mail system. One day someone overheard Miura-san and this friend talking about a message he had sent. This then apparently travelled back to his own section, where he was berated by a manager for sending personal emails instead of working. To Miura-san this was a groundless and unfair allegation, and he resented being reprimanded for what was quite a minor infraction. However the biggest shock was the realization that shakaijin life was different to being a student, that the transparency and trust that had underpinned friendships as a student did not necessarily apply in his new environment, and that the expectations under which he now had to operate were quite different. This sense of disappointment comes through in his description of the incident:

It came as a bit of a sudden shock. . . . I felt bad. It was like, how do I put it ... you know, like [the saying] ‘ears against the wall, eyes at the sliding paper screen’
(kabe ni mimi ari, shōji ni me ari)? It really brought home to me that you don’t know who’s watching and listening to what you say, where and when! ... I felt really dejected. It made me realize that working in this company isn’t all that straightforward, as you don’t know what’s being said behind your back ...[as a student] people may have bad mouthed me, but I never heard anything directly. It was only after entering the company that I was told off like this. It really was quite a big shock.

(Miura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 19)

As pointed out above, this incident in itself was not really that significant. However, in Miura-san’s mind it came to be construed as a ‘watershed’ that marked his shift from one set of expectations to operate by to another. In this respect, this particular incident, to him, may have been just as significant a marker of his transition from his student identity to his shakaijin salaryman identity, as the more ‘official’ formal markers such as the company entrance ceremony he would have undergone when he entered Northern Energy. Moreover, what his account also brings out is the fact that the tensions and disjunctures between the discourses framed around different masculinities may find expression through specific incidents and experiences which mark this period of transition.

‘Rites-of-Passage’ into Salaryman Masculinity

Rather than being an isolated one-off incident, Miura-san’s experience is situated within a wider ideological framework. Working to consolidate the transition from one set of expectations to another are both wider social and cultural forces (such as the inscription of salaryman masculinity onto the bodies of young male employees through channels of popular culture, as discussed in Chapter Four), as well as the more specific efforts of employers themselves. The effort on the part of the organization to inculcate the values, conduct, behaviour, speech, and body, in other words, to inculcate the desired attributes of salaryman masculinity is at its most intense over the first weeks and months of the employee’s entry into the organization. As we shall see below, over this period, these ‘ideals’ of salaryman masculinity are inculcated and reinforced through the body of the new recruit, by means of repetitive embodied practices.

This period of transition into salaryman masculinity commences with the employee’s formal entry into the organization, marked by a formal entrance ceremony (see Rohlen 1974: 35–40; Clark 1979: 158, 159; Beck and Beck 1994: 75–79). It ends (at least formally) when the new entrant has completed the induction training (which, depending on the firm and the type of work, may be anything from a few weeks to a
couple of months), and takes up his post in the section in which he has been allocated. Indeed, in some organizations the formal entrance ceremony may be held after the employee has successfully completed the induction training, underscoring the significance of this period of transition being a probationary period that the new recruit has to successfully navigate through before being formally recognized as a ‘real’ shakaijin. Thus, this period is not dissimilar to a process of initiation, or a rite of passage that the young men undergo, something that is perhaps compounded by the absence, in postwar Japan, of institutions like compulsory military service, which in many countries (South Korea, for example) serves as a rite of passage (see Vale de Almeida 1996: 55, for instance). For the organization, this represents an opportunity to saturate the recruit with the ideology of the organization during this significant liminal period of transition in his life, and to craft out of this the desired ‘corporate man’.4

The sense of a peer group undergoing a rite of passage together is reinforced by the fact that the new recruits are often isolated from their family and friends (and other employees of the organization) for a period of days or weeks, usually at a separate training facility (kenshū sentā), often located in an isolated, difficult-to-access location. For instance, the facility I visited to observe the induction training I discuss below was located on top of a mountain on the outskirts of the city. There were no other buildings in the vicinity, compounding the sense of separation from the ‘everyday’ world. This process of the new recruit entering this isolated facility as a student and then re-emerging as a newly born shakaijin has resonances with novices being cloistered when taking vows for monkhood, or the ‘boot camp’ training of new military recruits (see Dasgupta 2000: 195, n.23). Indeed, as Frühstück and Ben-Ari in their discussion of the Japanese Self Defence Force (SDF) point out, many private organizations actually send new recruits to programs organized by the SDF which allow civilians to experience military life first-hand. Participants in these programs stay in barracks and get a taste of military-style training and discipline. As the authors note, employers who send their new recruits to experience this training, “testify that the SDF program facilitates the transition into professional life ...[and] are convinced that the program alerts young employees to the importance of rules and to the fact that the company is not an extension of school” (Frühstück and Ben-Ari 2002: 19).5 As far as the recruits themselves are concerned, the experience may

4 See Rohlen (1974) and Kondo (1990) for a discussion of the ways in which corporate ideology is inculcated in organizations as varied as a large bank (Rohlen), and a small, family-owned confectionery manufacturer (Kondo).

5 Dorinne Kondo discusses one such kenshū facility that she and her co-workers were sent to by their employer. Although it was not connected to the SDF, the regime that Kondo and her fellow workers underwent at this so called “Ethics School” they were sent to, was just as rigorous and regimented as military training (see Kondo 1990: 76–115). See also a feature in the popular weekly magazine,
provide an opportunity to start building networks in this next phase of their masculinity with others in the same cohort going through the same traumas and shifts accompanying the transition.

The discussion that follows maps the process by which corporations try to 'craft' out this new masculinity, and the ways in which the new recruits negotiate with these processes of inscription. I start by drawing upon the discussions I conducted with members of the human resources section of Northern Energy, about the 'type' of employee the organization sought to recruit and mould. I then focus on the dynamics at work during an induction training for new employees I had the opportunity to observe. Finally, I draw upon my informants' voices as they reflect upon their own personal experiences of these initial rites-of-passage into salaryman masculinity.

'Crafting' Shakaijin: Conversations with Human Resources Managers

While the focus of my research was on my informants - the young men who were in the process of being crafted into salaryman masculinity - I was also interested in hearing the perspective of managerial staff involved in the crafting of new recruits. Fortunately, I was able to arrange a focus group discussion with members of the Human Resources (jinji) section of Northern Energy, who were involved in the recruitment and training of new staff. The focus group meeting was held on 1 December 1998. Although there was no objection to my taking notes, the request for the meeting had been granted on condition that it not be taped. Consequently, the following points I discuss draw upon my notes, rather than citing specific individuals (as I do with my informants).

While the discussion ranged over a variety of areas, the focus was on the 'type' of employee the organization saw as 'desirable' (and conversely the 'type' not 'desirable'), and the process of selection and training new recruits. The responses to my queries about the selection process, the type of employees the organization wished to recruit, and the processes of training, yielded fairly predictable responses. I was filled in about the channels of recruitment. In past years, such as during the labour shortage during the 'bubble economy' years, visits would be made to high schools and universities throughout the prefecture, but in the lacklustre economic climate of the late 1990s, there was less of a need for an organization of Northern

Energy's size and reputation to aggressively go out in search of potential employees. Thus, most of the current crop of new recruits had been selected through references from local high schools, junior colleges, and universities. In keeping with the general pattern across private-sector organizations, while there had been an overall reduction in the intake of new employees generally, the greatest reductions had occurred in the intake of female-recruits to fill ('OL'-type) clerical positions. In that particular year (1998) the number of high-school and junior-college recruits numbered in the tens, whereas the number of university (and post-university) graduates was around fifty.

In response to my queries about the type of employee the organization looks for during the selection interviews, I was told that rather than looking for especially brilliant individuals, the important consideration was the potential recruit's "humanity" (ningenmi) (Northern Energy Human Resources Discussion Notes, 1.12.98), which hopefully could be gauged by getting the candidate to talk 'normally' during the selection interview. More specifically, the type of new employee regarded as 'ideal' was someone who was 'normal' as a shakaijin, i.e. someone who did not convey an especially strong or striking impression, in terms of appearance and conduct. Of concern was whether the recruit would 'grow' adequately as a shakaijin after entering the company. In this respect the kenshū (the induction training) was, according to these human resources staff, an important stepping-stone in crafting a shakaijin who would become a representative of the organization (and would think of himself/herself as such).

Yet, despite this rhetoric of looking for 'normal'-looking/becoming recruits, competing discourses surfaced from time to time, both during the formal discussion session, and (more so) during the informal (but pre-arranged) social gathering later on. For instance, juxtaposed against this 'ideal' of recruits who had the makings of the respectable salaryman-type shakaijin was the view expressed during the focus group discussion that, given the rapidly changing socio-economic conditions, perhaps what Northern Energy needed to do was hire new employees with more uniqueness and individual colour. Indeed, one of the managers asserted that it might be good to start taking in entrants who were slightly "delinquent (furyō)" (Northern Energy Human Resources Discussion Notes, 1.12.98), though he conceded that in

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6 See Okano (1993) for a discussion of the methods through which employers go about recruiting students as future employees.

7 An indication of the impact of the economic slowdown even on a relatively insulated organization like Northern Energy may be gauged by the fact that in contrast to the four or five hundred odd applicants who would be asked to sit the company entrance test (in June of every year), only around two or three hundred had been taking the test in recent years. See my discussion earlier, in Chapter Three, on the impact of the post-'bubble' recession on the job market for new graduates.
reality this might be a bit difficult to realize. Such views would suggest that, even for management, the reality vis-à-vis the hegemonic discourse (of gender, or of corporate ideology in general) may well be far more diffuse and fragmented than is often assumed.  

As mentioned, the opportunity to hear the voices of these managers directly involved in the training and shaping of new entrants allowed me an insight into the crafting process in a way that may not have been possible had I limited myself to my informants’ accounts. Moreover, the various views expressed during the discussion helped me contextualize the new employee induction training I observed a few months after this focus group discussion.

‘Crafting’ Shakaijin: An Induction Training Session In-Progress

It was the opportunity to actually observe the process of ‘crafting’ and ‘shaping’ new shakaijin first-hand, that really allowed me to gain a full understanding of its significance for all parties concerned. In April 1999, I observed the induction training (kenshū) for new Northern Energy employees. Northern Energy’s intake that year was a mere eighty-six new entrants, a substantial drop from the ‘bubble economy’ boom years of a decade before, when the annual intake had numbered in the hundreds. Still, in the context of an economic slowdown which had hit this prefecture particularly hard, even this figure of eighty-six reflected the size and strength (and appeal) of Northern Energy compared with other employers.

As mentioned above, the training itself was held at a separate training facility (kenshū sentā)9 located on top of a mountain on the outskirts of the main city in the prefecture, thus reinforcing a sense of incubation and cloistering. New recruits were sequestered together for a week, during which their daily regime was regulated in accordance with a finely tuned program of lectures, workshops, seminars, and off-site visits, from the wake-up call at 6:30 am right through to ‘lights-out’ at 10:30 in the evening.

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8 See for instance, Collinson and Hearn (1996: 70–72); also Whitehead (1998).
9 Perhaps reflecting its size and strength, Northern Energy owned its own training facility, unlike many (smaller) organizations which hire these facilities for specific periods.
I was able to observe this training in progress, on two of these days. On the first day, the training I sat in on was for high-school and junior-college graduates, whereas on the second occasion the session was specifically for university graduates and post-graduates. A third group of recruits – those in the technical track – were undergoing their specialist technical training elsewhere, and I was unable to observe their training. Of the two groups I did observe, the first, comprising around thirty individuals, was dominated by female recruits, largely junior-college graduates, destined for clerical work in the various departments and sections throughout the organization. The remainder, about one-third, were males, who were high-school graduates. By contrast, the second group, comprising the university/postgraduate recruits, was overwhelmingly male – of the thirty-five individuals at the session, only two were female. Significantly, this was despite the fact that Northern Energy, like many other large-scale private sector (not to mention public-sector) organizations, adopted a public rhetoric of gender equality, and of encouraging female entry into the managerial track. The reality, however, as noted by various writers, including Brinton (1993), Ogasawara (1998), Okano and Tsuchiya (2000), Kelsky (2001), and Broadbent (2003), is a situation where, despite more than a decade having elapsed since the enactment (and subsequent strengthening) of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law, the elite, managerial fast-track (shōgōshoku) is still overwhelmingly comprised of men, whereas the general, clerical track (ippanshoku) is predominantly made up of female workers.

What struck me about the two training sessions I observed was the difference between the two groups. This was a difference not just in content (as may have been expected), but also in format and style. The overall impression conveyed at the high school/junior college session was that it was largely a mechanical exercise, designed more for the sake of continuing an established precedent, rather than out of any kind of deep-seated desire to really ‘mould’ the new recruits. The format was that of a

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10 As with my discussion of the meeting with the human resources staff, all my observations in this section are based on fieldnotes I took at the time, rather than on direct interviews. Consequently I do not directly quote any one individual (as I do when drawing upon my informants’ accounts).

11 Although the situation has started shifting somewhat, in that limited numbers of male students have started studying at junior colleges (as opposed to four-year universities or technical colleges) particularly in vocational/applied areas like social welfare and health and nutrition, the student composition of these institutions remains overwhelmingly female. Okano and Tsuchiya, drawing upon Ministry of Education data, note that (as of the mid-1990s), whereas 24.3% of females going on to post-secondary education went to two-year junior colleges, only 1.8% of male high-school graduates went on to continue their education in junior colleges (Okano and Tsuchiya 1999: 75). At the same time, it should be pointed out that there has been a trend in recent years for some junior colleges to convert into four-year universities.

12 Ogasawara, for instance, points out that in large organizations with more than 1000 employees (and Northern Energy would fall into this category) women accounted for only 1 percent of managers of the buchō class (general or department managers), 2 percent of kachō (section managers), and 6 percent of even the lowest managerial rank of kakarichō (chief, or sub-section managers) (Ogasawara 1998: 20).
lecture, the contents of which had probably remained largely unchanged over the years. It was delivered by an elderly Northern Energy staff member attached to the training facility, in a listless, unimpassioned manner. The contents were not unlike some of the ‘pop management’-style books and manuals discussed in Chapter Four, revolving around themes of what was and was not appropriate conduct/behaviour for a *shakaijin*. The point stressed was that these entrants were no longer students, and hence could not get away with things they could have as students – the example provided was of instances of ‘shameless’ (*haji no nai*) behaviour engaged in by students (that is, by pre-*shakaijin* youth) such as sitting on the ground in front of convenience stores, or applying make-up in public places like the subway!13 Indeed, a cornerstone of the instruction was the *responsibility* one had to society as a *shakaijin*. Words/terms that kept cropping up through the lecture included *ningen-teki ni seichô* (‘growing/developing as a [proper] human’), *seken* (literally, ‘the world’ or ‘the public’, but a more appropriate rendering would be something like ‘taking into consideration community/surrounding attitudes’), *tokusei* (‘moral quality/fibre’), *shinrai* (‘trust’). All of these terms cropped up with reference to the expression, *shakaijin toshite* (‘as a *shakaijin*’), which was also the title of the afternoon’s session.

The session for university graduates and post-graduates I observed two days later was quite different, both in terms of gender composition, and with respect to the content and dynamics of the session. As mentioned above, with the exception of two individuals, the rest of the cohort was male. Also, more so than with the high school/junior college graduate session, the impression of *kaisha no ningen* (literally, ‘company person’) in the making, as integral to this transition into *shakaijin* life, was far more explicit and visible. This came across, for instance, in such details as hairstyle and dress. Unlike the high-school/junior-college cohort, none of the members in the university/post-graduate group had dyed or tinted hair, and nor were hairstyles noticeably fashionable.14 Virtually all were clad in grey or dark-blue single-breasted suits, with white dress-shirts. All of them appeared to be wearing the lapel-pin with the company insignia, which they would have received at the time of the formal

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13 At this point in time (in the late 1990s), the issue of (apparently) delinquent youth ‘hanging out’ (or rather squatting on the ground) in public places like entrances to convenience stores had become something of a ‘moral panic’ social phenomenon, seen by many conservative observers and commentators as symptomatic of a general moral decline among youth.

14 The relationship between dyed hair and workplace appearance is significant. Dyeing or bleaching hair as a fashion statement started becoming increasingly noticeable from the 1990s (prior to that it had largely been restricted to persons associated with particular sub-cultures or industries like fashion or music). However, as one writer points out, despite the widespread visibility among both (younger) men and women of hair bleached blonde or dyed various shades of red or brown in public, there is still strong disapproval of employees in ‘respectable’ organizations dyeing their hair. This is especially so in the case of male employees (*Lee 2003: 40, see also Asahi Shinbun 8, 9, 10 April for a series on attitudes to male employees wearing ear-studs/earrings*).
entrance ceremony. On the whole, despite the fact that in terms of age (on average) they would only have been a few years older than the high school/junior college cohort, they conveyed a distinct impression of being significantly older.

At the point when I entered the room, the members, who had been broken up into groups of six to eight, were engaged in some sort of simulated decision-making role-play exercise. They were being directed by a very dynamic lecturer, who (I found out) ran her own management consultancy business providing new staff training and professional development workshops to organizations like Northern Energy. The task she had set the class appeared to be designed around themes of decision-making, information exchange, team-work, and leadership. Watching (somewhat self-consciously from the back of the room) the members of groups as they interacted with one another, I could not help but contrast the apparent dynamism and confidence of this group, with the relative lack of enthusiasm of the high-school/junior-college cohort I had observed earlier.

This session was followed by one focused on the ‘essentials’ required of a shakaijin. The session was divided into two sections. The first, entitled Shigoto no susumekata no kihon (‘The Basics of Working’), was devoted to the day-to-day mechanics of work and organizational culture. The second session focused on role-plays with different scenarios such as taking orders from a manager, interacting with co-workers, leaving the office to visit clients, and clearing the desk at the end of the work-day. What came across quite strongly was the message that it is not the knowledge of the work itself that was of prime importance. Rather, it is the way the individual embodies and enacts the expected ‘role’ correctly, in interacting with co-workers, supervisors, management, juniors, and clients, that marks one’s ‘success’ (or lack thereof) as a shakaijin. The training seminar itself emphasized the importance of these embodying and inscriptive practices. The members did not (as had been the case with the previous day’s group) passively sit there and take notes while the lecturer spoke. Rather, they were made to bodily act out, through repetition and role-play scenarios, the ‘ideals’ of the organization. Thus, in the first section, which revolved around the ‘rules’ or ‘etiquette’ of work practices, each of the members present was required to stand up and read aloud from a ‘golden rules’ type of list. This list covered such aspects of everyday work practices as: the need to report back to your supervisor on tasks you have been asked to do before he/she has to remind you; reporting any mistakes you make at work immediately; responding promptly and clearly when someone calls out your name, and going over to that person’s side immediately to take a directive or request or to respond to a question; making sure you strictly maintain the line between public and private with respect to
time, money, and dealing with people; not gossiping about colleagues behind their back; and not divulging work-related information outside of work (translated from ‘Northern Energy’ 1999: 3). In total, there were ten such headings, and every single new entrant present had to read through the list.

The second part of the session, as mentioned above, consisted of practising (essentially bodily memorizing) the rules and etiquette of workplace culture. The session started-off with a demonstration of correct bowing techniques – depending on the degree of formality demanded by the situation, 30 degrees or 45 degrees bending down from the waist with the back held straight. This was followed by a run-through of a stock of standard greetings and polite expressions used in everyday situations with managers, seniors, and clients; expressions such as, itsumo osewa ni natte orimasu (literally, ‘I’m/We’re always in receipt of your favours/kindness’), omachi kudasai (‘Please wait a short while’), omatase itashimashita (‘Sorry to have kept you waiting’), makoto ni mōshiwake arimasen (‘I’m extremely sorry’), and other such expressions. This drill was repeated a second time, following which the new employees were paired off, and made to read out the workplace rules from the pre-lunch session once again, and to practise the greetings and expressions that the instructor had just covered, in an appropriately loud voice, and with the correct degree of enthusiasm.

These drills were followed by role-play exercises which further accentuated this bodily performance of workplace practices. The paired-off employees were given a script on which to base role-plays of simulated workplace scenarios. These scenarios included: coming into the office first thing in the morning; taking instructions from your manager/supervisor; reporting back to her/him; leaving the office to visit a client and leaving instructions with the clerical assistant/s (the ‘OL/s’) to pass on messages; announcing your temporary stepping-out of the office to your immediate supervisor/senior (senpai); returning to the office and announcing your return; checking with the clerical assistant if the instructions left had been carried out; and even tidying up and completing unfinished work before finishing for the day. The following sample of one of these role-play scenarios might help us appreciate the stress placed on the performance (and ultimately, performativity) of these bodily enacted work practices:15

15 While these two related concepts, ‘performance’ and ‘performativity’, are sometimes conflated and used interchangeably, it is important to distinguish between the two. ‘Performativity’ was first coined by the British philosopher/linguist J. L. Austin to refer to what he called ‘performatives’ speech acts (that is, sentences which do something such as performing a marriage ceremony). This was subsequently applied to gender and sexuality by queer theorists like Judith Butler to refer to the creation of identities through the repetitive enactment (‘performance’) of those very identities in the form of rituals and ceremonies; thus it follows that such enactments are much more than socio-
8:40 am  •  Starting Work [shigoto ni torikakaru]
Manager/Supervisor:  “Mr/Ms XX”
(XX-san)

Employee:  “Yes” ([goes over] with memopad and pencil)
(hai [memo to enpitsu o jisan])

M:  “Please take these documents to YY Chief (of subsection) on the second floor.
(kono shorui o ni-kai no YY shunin no tokoro e
todokete kudasai)
[gives instruction]
[shijii]

E:  “Yes, I understand. That’s Chief YY on the second floor, isn’t it?”
(hai, kashikomarimashita. Ni-kai no YY shunin desune)
[repeats to confirm]
[fukushō shite kakunin]

E:  “Manager, I have handed them over to Chief YY”
[reporting (back)]
(kachō, YY shunin ni owatashi shite mairimashita)
[hōkoku]

M:  “Thanks”
(gokurōsama)

(‘Northern Energy’: 4)

As we can see, the dialogue itself is not a particularly complicated or challenging one. What is perhaps more challenging is memorizing and then enacting through the body – bowing to the correct degree, using the appropriate tone of voice, using the

appropriate level of politeness. As each pair went through the role-play, the lecturer would interject when she felt that the individuals were not bodily enacting their roles to a satisfactory level. For instance, when the ‘supervisor’ in the role-play was handing over the documents to be delivered, the lecturer stressed to the individual receiving the documents, that it is important to use both hands when receiving something from a senior. Indeed, throughout the various scenarios acted out the lecturer constantly gave advice and tips on a range of matters. Her advice ranged from tips about the proper protocol when interacting with your manager, to advice on appropriate workplace language, through to points about the correct way to tidy your desk before leaving the office. Observing the employees going through these various performances, I could not help but be reminded of the detailed guidance and instruction found in the employment manuals and books of the ‘how-to’ school of ‘pop-management’ literature, such as those discussed in Chapter Four. It was almost as if the one-dimensional images of the manuals and guides had suddenly been transformed to a real-life setting in front of me.

For the final task for the afternoon, the new recruits were again (as had been the case for the first task in the morning) broken up into smaller groups of six to eight members, and given a couple of topics to brainstorm around. The topics revolved around what contributions they felt they would be able to make as employees of Northern Energy. Each group was asked to discuss this question in relation to their work (shigoto), managers/supervisors and seniors (jōshi/senpai), customers (okayakusama), self (jibun), and the local community (chiiki shakai). The lecturer delegated one of these areas to each group, and they were all given three-quarters-of-an-hour to brainstorm around the topic. At the end of the forty-five minutes, the ‘findings’ the group members had agreed upon were written up on large sheets of butcher-paper and posted on the whiteboard. A spokesperson from each of the groups was asked to come up to the front and explain the findings of her/his particular group to the room.

As soon as the spokesperson for the first group came up and began presenting on behalf of his group, the lecturer interrupted him, as his manner of presentation did not conform to the ‘appropriate’ format for work presentations. A ‘proper’ presentation, in the context of an organization, according to the lecturer, needed to follow the following sequence: opening greeting (aisatsu), stating your name and area of placement within the company (shozoku), the main body of the talk, mention

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16 This sense of usage of the appropriate level of politeness (in other words using keigo, honorific language) being as important as the correct body language, does not really get conveyed in the
of your name once again, and finally, an aisatsu of thanks to close the presentation. Once the desired format had been clarified, the spokespersons for each of the five groups came forward and summarized the views of each of their groups. Questions were encouraged after each of the presentations, although in reality, it was mostly the lecturer who asked the questions. Certain common themes appeared to cut across all the presentations and the ensuing discussions – the importance of ‘team work’, the recognition that as ‘newcomers’ to shakaitjin life they had to maintain the correct protocol when interacting with managers and more senior employees (senpai), the importance of reporting (hōkoku) and seeking guidance (sōdan), and the fact that the very reputation of the company (in the eyes of the wider community) rested on the shoulders of each and every individual employee in the room. Indeed, the word that kept cropping up several times through the presentations was the term, Northern Energy-man, along the lines of other occupational identity descriptions (probably harking back to English language-derived terms such as ‘businessman’ or ‘salesman’) such as ginkō-man (banker), hoteru-man (hotel employee), shōsha-man (trading company employee), and of course the more generic sarariiman (salaryman).17

At one level it would appear that just over the course of a day the training had succeeded in crafting out of the pre-shakaitjin mass of students, the disciplined bodies and minds of future managers and executives of the organization. Yet, the dynamics at work are a lot more complex than they might initially appear from the above discussion. This process of crafting the model Northern Energy-man (or for that matter the salaryman of any organization) is not simply a case of the organization forcibly moulding the new recruits into subservient, disciplined automatons. There are inherent contradictions in the process and in the discourse/s surrounding the crafting of new shakaitjin, something that comes out in the discussion in the following section, where I draw directly upon the informants’ voices.

"I Learnt ... I Was No Longer a Student": Memories of Becoming Shakaitjin

Whereas my reflections based on observing the training or on the views of human resources personnel do reveal some of the dynamics involved, a real sense of the

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17 There is a strong gender ideology at work here. The implied assumption is that the employee is male, or ‘honorary’ male – for instance, despite the fact that trading companies (such as Mitsubishi Trading or Mitsui Bussan) have large numbers of female employees performing clerical work, the term shōsha-man refers to the male, permanent employees in executive positions, or on track to
complexities involved can best be gauged through reference to what those who actually went through the process not so long ago have to say. Among the many areas discussed in my interviews with the informants, their recollections of this first formal induction into shakaijin life (and consequently salaryman masculinity) was an area I was keen to get some insight into. While I had expected some amount of cynicism on the part of the informants, the extent of this cynicism was somewhat surprising. Informants from both organizations expressed the sentiment that the shinnyū shain kenshū (the new staff training) had not been particularly useful. Nor had it (in their view) significantly influenced their notions of self. Yet, there was also a realization on the part of most of the informants that this was a necessary step in the transition to shakaijin status. Moreover, many informants were able to appropriate aspects of the experience for their personal empowerment. As we shall see, many credited the kenshū experience for friendships formed with other cohorts, friendships which sometimes transcended organizational and spatial boundaries. Hence, from the standpoint of the informants themselves, what emerges is a complex, richly nuanced interplay – basically a mixture of compliance, resistance, agency, and appropriation. I will start off by drawing upon the informants’ memories of being taught proper shakaijin conduct. This includes their accounts of being taught some of the very same embodied practices I observed during the new staff induction discussed above, and which appear in the training manuals and guides discussed in Chapter Four. Following these accounts, the discussion will focus on some of the complexity and contestation vis-à-vis the organization’s attempts to inculcate the ideal attributes of salaryman masculinity – the disjunctures between what the organizations hope to achieve, and the informants’ readings of the dynamics at work. As we will see, one aspect of this complexity is the way in which the induction process worked to cement bonds of friendship between the new entrants, bonds which many of them valued far more than the instructions about ‘becoming shakaijin’ they were subjected to.

**Being Taught How to Perform Shakaijin-ness**

An ideal entry into these voices would be those informants who, at the time of the interview, had only recently undergone the process. Mina Tōru, the new Northern Energy employee, whose anxieties and confusion about the transition to shakaijin life were discussed earlier in the chapter, provides an ideal starting point. Unlike

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*become executives. The few women who are on the managerial track (for instance the two females among the thirty-odd recruits in my discussion above) become almost ‘honorary’ males by default.*
many of the other informants, for whom the passage of time may have somewhat blurred the exact details, Miura-san was able to provide me with a detailed description of the experience. For instance, he clearly remembered the daily schedule that he and his fellow new entrants had to follow during the ten days of the kenshū:

Each day, was the same time [schedule] as the company’s – seven hours and forty minutes, not including lunch. That’s because, at that point, we were already treated like [regular] employees … after that was free time (jiyū jikan) until lights-out at 11:00pm, you could do pretty much whatever you wanted to. Except that you couldn’t go out [of the training facility] … but there was a gym (talikukan) … and they had competitions and such. And there was a common room with a television in the corner, where everyone [got together and] had a laugh.

(Miura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 12)

As I highlighted earlier in the discussion, this sequestering of the recruits from the outside world for a period of time serves to accentuate this transition from an earlier identity (pre-shakaijin student) to the new shakaijin status. It also has the (unstated) consequence of strengthening bonds of friendship and solidarity among the recruits, bonds which, as we will see later in the discussion, are retained in the informants’ memories of the training experience. Miura-san also described some of the specific instruction they received during these “seven hours and forty minutes” each day:

First of all, of the things we studied about company life (kaisha seikatsu) in Northern Energy … the proper conduct (manda) within the company; as you might expect [we studied] etiquette the most … [things like] greetings (aisatsu), learning how to apologize properly when you make a mistake, also how to answer the telephone …we spent a whole day having lessons on practising using the phone.

(Miura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 11)

In his view this instruction on how to talk properly (as a shakaijin) on the telephone was the most useful thing gained out of the kenshū:

Honestly, if that [instructions on talking on the telephone] hadn’t been [a part of the training], I wouldn’t have been able to [work as a shakaijin] from day one! You see, I didn’t have the basics (kiso). Because, until then, I’d really only spoken to friends or my parents [on the phone]. So if you’re talking about customers or business counterparts, I had no idea of the correct way of talking (kotoba-zukad) to them … [expressions] such as ‘would you mind waiting a short while’ (shōshō omachi kudasai),18 ‘honorific language’ (keigo), the difference between everyday speech (futsū no kotoba) and keigo is the most difficult thing, after all. It sure was difficult.

(Miura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 13, 14)
Satô Hiroshi, although a few years older, had also entered Northern Energy the same year, and had been subject to a similar training regime, revolving around "etiquette for a shakaijin (shakaijin toshite no manâ)". This included such things as, "the proper way of interacting with customers, ...bowing and the proper way of expressing gratitude (orei no shikata) ... and also things like how to exchange business cards" (Satô, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 15). This informant also mentioned the concept of the Northern Energy-man (mentioned in the previous section) being talked about in discussions and lectures during the induction. According to him, one of the strongest memories he retained from the training were lectures and discussion sessions around themes such as "living as a shakaijin" and "how I want to live as a Northern Energy-man from now on" (Satô, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 14).

This notion of the Northern Energy-man also cropped up in my discussions with twenty-six-year-old Imai Shinji, whose sometimes difficult engagement with parental and societal expectations of masculinity was discussed in the previous chapter. Imaisan worked in the customer relations section of the organization, and had been with the organization for four years. Yet he still remembered the details of the training he had undergone when he entered the company, and was able to provide me with a rich account of the experience. A significant part of the training revolved around what he called "kokorogamae" (literally "preparing your heart") as a shakaijin. Expanding on this, he equated this kokorogamae with

... well, 'professional' [original English term used]. What you have to do to become a professional as a 'Northern Energy-man'. Well, more than just as a 'Northern Energy-man' probably more like what to do as a shakaijin.

(Imai, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 26)

When I asked him what this had specifically involved, he mentioned practices the others had also talked about, such as the proper way of exchanging business cards and answering the telephone:

also things like practising greetings. Well ... generally things like being taught to be punctual, in order to lead a 'correct' shakaijin lifestyle (shakaijin toshite kisoku tadashii seikatsu). After all, those who are not careful about time, get into trouble ...[and] of course ...things like work habits ...matters like informing [the office] where you are. For instance, things like, making sure you say "I'm stepping out of the office" (gaishutsu shite kuru) to someone close-by. And ...greetings and things, like bowing to forty five degrees ... Sometimes, for instance, you'd get shouted at to put more fight into you. Also we were formed into groups (han), and each group was given a topic, which we had a discussion

18 As opposed to the less formal (and, among friends and family, more common) chotto matte kudasai (please hold on/please wait).
around. Umm, and also, we listened to talks by managers (jōshi), or rather ... the President (shachō) and Vice-President (juku-shachō). Apart from that, specialists in that area, you know, the kind of person whose work is giving lectures came and gave talks about what we needed to be like as shakaijin.19

(Imai, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 26)

Another Northern Energy employee, Makimura Keisuke, who worked as a planner (he was an architect by training) in the general administrative division, provided me with the following account of his kenshū experience a year prior to the interview:

The contents were pretty much like what’s written in a textbook. Things like greetings, and answering the telephone, also the correct way to interact with people. It really was a ‘textbook-like kenshū’ (kyōkasho dōri no kenshū). Speaking about what I learned (mi ni tsuite),20 I wonder what it was...? It went for ten days, so I guess a ‘sense of time’ (jikan no kankei). The kenshū followed the same time schedule as when you’re working. [so] start at 8:40, have lunch, until just after 5:00. So by following this schedule I was able to develop a bit of a sense [of time].

(Makimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 13)

He felt that the biggest change for him in the transition from student to shakaijin was the “reduction of stimuli” (shigeiki) and “decrease in amount of [free] time” (Makimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript 12) In contrast to his relatively easygoing life as a student, he now had to deal with various expectations:

Wake up on time in the morning, put on a suit, and come to work ... at university you could be quite ‘flexible’ [uses the English word] in choosing your classes. I’ve started to lose that [relaxed] feeling. I’ve started to live a regular life [jikan dōri no seikatsu].

(Makimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 12)

Taoka Kiyoshi who had also been part of the same intake as Makimura-san, felt that for him, being taught the difference between “conduct as a student” and “business conduct” had been important:

The main training was about things like work conduct for a shakaijin, and also, [being taught about] the main features of the company (kaisha no gaiyō). And, if you ask me what was useful for example, I wonder what it was ... being able to learn the difference between ‘business manners’ (bijinesu mondai) and ‘student

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19 When describing these practices for which the recruits underwent training, he also mentioned “serving tea” (ocha-kumi). This took me by surprise, as this practice in particular marks the gendered boundary between salaryman masculinity and OL femininity in the workplace (for further discussion, see, Ogasawara 1998: 40–43). Northern Energy would have been a very progressive organization indeed, if it instructed both female and male recruits in the correct way of serving tea! However, this was not the case, as Imai-san, quickly corrected himself and clarified the fact that the male entrants were not instructed in the etiquette of serving tea.

20 This expression, mi ni tsuite, is generally used with reference to acquiring skills. Thus, it is usually translated as ‘learning’ or ‘acquiring’. However, the literal translation would be something along the lines of ‘getting attached to/connected to the body’, pointing to the significance of bodily practices in the process.
manners’ (gakusei manō) was a great lesson ... things like answering the telephone, what else ...? Well, things like ‘this is the way to dress’, or else the way to talk, also things like talking properly (kotoba-zukai), also learning about the company, what the different areas within the company are ...

(Taoka, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 12)

What comes across in the accounts of all five of the informants discussed above is the emphasis during their training on how to conduct oneself properly, how to embody and perform shakaijin-'ness' correctly through the disciplining of body and mind down to minute details. In this regard, their accounts resonate both with my description of the induction training I observed, and the instructional employment training manuals and ‘how-to’ genre of ‘pop-management’ literature discussed in Chapter Four. Hearing these experiences actually being voiced by these individuals who had only recently gone through the process, however, allows us to appreciate this crafting process as individual lived experience.

Matsuzaka Kōhei, a twenty-year-old Northern Energy Accounts employee, also brought out this disciplining aspect when reflecting on his experience during the induction kenshū, two years prior to our interview. Like Makimura-san discussed earlier, Matsuzaka-san juxtaposed the ‘discipline’ and ‘regularity’ of shakaijin life against the irregularity (or, depending on the slant taken, freedom) of student life. According to him, towards the end of high school, students get quite ‘slack’ about attending school, and keeping regular hours:21

But over those ten days [of the kenshū], you had to get up at the right time in the morning, and go to sleep at a set time. So you had to do things like that properly for ten days. Also the various things about proper etiquette for a shakaijin. In this regard, during high school I had been involved in [sports] club activities (bukatsu) so I was familiar with it [already]. We were taught things like with junior-senior (senpai-kōhai) ... would you say the ‘proper way to talk’ (kotoba-zukai)? ... basically ... how to talk properly.

(Matsuzaka, Round 1 Interview Transcript:19)

One of the interesting issues that emerges in this account is the cross-over between the disciplinary practices of sports teams and clubs, and similar regulatory and disciplinary practices in the shakaijin crafting process. This is something that Makimura Keisuke, the informant discussed earlier, also brought out in his account. In his student days Makimura-san had played American grid-iron football, the training and practice for which had apparently been rigorous. In fact, he felt that compared with the harsh training regime he had to endure in the sports team, the

21 He is talking about the very tail-end of high school, by which time all the relevant entrance examinations (for higher education or the workforce) would be over, and there would no longer be an
kenshū he underwent when entering Northern Energy, was “easy” (amai). Prior to undergoing the Northern Energy kenshū, he had expected it to be “a lot stricter” (Makimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 14). However, it turned out to be no different to “following a textbook (kyōkasho dōri)” (14). In his view, spending a week at his sports club training camp had been far more rigorous than the shakaijin induction. The accounts of many of the informants made reference to practices such as the emphasis on voice-training drills which some of the Northern Print informants remembered from their induction (and which I discuss further on), which had resonances with the disciplinary training regimes of sports clubs. However, what makes Makimura-san’s account especially significant is the actual recognition by him of the continuities between his sports club experience, and his training for shakaijin life.

The physicality aspect of these disciplinary practices came through in many of the accounts of informants from both the organizations, particularly those destined for technical placements. Yoshida Shun’ichi had, like Miura Tōru, entered Northern Energy earlier that year. However, unlike Miura-san and many of the others, since his placement was in a technical area, the kenshū had extended over three months. Over this period he and his fellow recruits were accommodated in the training facility four to a room where “privacy was barely maintained” (Yoshida, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 14). The training he had to undergo was a lot more rigorous than the training for those destined for desk jobs, and included such things as getting familiar with the basic specialist knowledge involved, learning about various kinds of equipment and operating systems involved, and even simulated exercises ‘in the field’ which involved such tasks as learning to climb poles of heights of fifteen metres, something that “at first was frightening” (15). However, even though this recruit will probably continue to be employed in a technical capacity, he still had to undergo the same training as that described by Miura-san and the others, to “study the real basics of being a shakaijin” (15) prior to undergoing the technical kenshū. Perhaps due to the extended period of training he underwent, more so than some of the others Yoshida-san felt that he had been transformed quite significantly through the training – in his own words: “I lost the feeling of being a student (gakusei kibun

22 For a discussion of some of these practices in the context of a Japanese high-school rugby team, see Light (2000). Also, as noted earlier, Dorinne Kondo’s description of the ‘Ethics School’ where she and her co-workers underwent a gruelling physical and mental schedule of military/sports club-like ‘self-improvement’ training provides an excellent account of the incorporation of these practices into the workplace arena as a means of ‘crafting’ bodies and minds (Kondo 1990: 76-104). See also, Frühstück and Ben-Ari (2002:19) on ‘courses’ offered by the Self Defence Force to private organizations.
ga nuketa) ... over those three months, I guess what I learnt the most was that I was no longer a student” (16).

Many of the Northern Print informants also drew attention to the ways in which the training had been reinforced through physically embodied practices. Shimizu Ayaki was a twenty-six-year-old computer systems/technical support officer at Northern Print, who had been with the organization for about eighteen months at the time of our interview. Recollecting his induction training he commented that he and his fellow inductees had undergone “voice practice drills (hassei renshū) and the correct way of greeting” (Shimizu, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 10). Shimizu-san was not the only Northern Print employee to make reference to these ‘voice drills’ (hassei renshū), during which new entrants had to articulate loud greetings in a forceful manner, and respond vigorously to questions/directives from seniors, in a style reminiscent of a military ‘boot camp’. Kajima Daisuke, a twenty-eight-year-old manager (kachō) in a technical area of Northern Print recalled similar practices from his induction training when he had entered the organization:

You see in the case of our company (uchi no kaisha), they’re really fussy about, or rather put a lot of effort into greetings. So, we were made to do drills (kunren) where we had to practise greetings at the top of our voices in various places – inside the company, up on the roof-top of the company, out in the street ... basically, voice drills, lots of practice using a really loud voice.

(Kajima, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 8)

While elements of this thinking extend across most organizations, the less sophisticated, aggressive military-style training and discipline, such as the voice practice drills referred to in the above account or the harsh physical regime at the ‘Ethics School’ described by Kondo (1990) or the Shūkan Asahi feature on company initiations referred to earlier in this chapter (Hayashi 1995), seems to be more common among smaller and medium-sized firms. Thus, with respect to my informants, whereas informants from both organizations talked about the disciplinary practices accompanying shakaijin training, informants from Northern Print seemed to recall an almost military-like fervour with which these practices were inculcated.

Shakaijin Contestations

When reminiscing about their first weeks and months in the organizations, many informants expressed reservations about the usefulness of the induction training in transforming them from ‘irresponsible’ students to ‘responsible’ shakaijin. For
instance, Shimizu-san, referred to above, mentioned that prior to entering Northern Print, he had a glamorous preconception of working life, where he thought that "a wonderful [work] environment would be ready and waiting into which I'd ease in effortlessly" (Shimizu Interview Transcript: 8). The reality, however, as we saw above, was a bit different, with him having to undergo an almost military-like induction training. However, despite the intensity of the training regime, and the efforts put in by the organization, he was dubious about the success of the project. He commented that "no one, including myself and all my peers [who entered at the same time], was transformed overnight from student life into a shakaijin. It was just for appearance (katachi dake)” (11).

Shin’ya Naohiko, the Northern Energy computer systems operator, whose memories of his boyhood were discussed in the previous chapter, reflected quite deeply on the training he had undergone when he had first entered the organization. Since, as a systems engineer, his placement was in a technical area, he had undergone both the general training aimed at all new entrants, and a more specialized technical training. Reflecting on both types of training he had the following to say:

For the [induction] kenshū ... we had training for different areas – for instance kenshū with themes like ‘As a shakaijin’ (shakaijin toshiite), ‘What’s a shakaijin?’, or ‘What’s a Salaryman?’ (sarariiman to wa nani ka?) through to specialist training related to engineers and system engineers. Speaking for myself, I hated those ‘What’s a shakaijin’ type of kenshū. The contents were really simplistic things that wouldn’t be much use elsewhere ... for instance, things like telling you about work practices ... like planning a schedule and then writing it down on paper. I realize that these kinds of work habits are important, but [in reality] when you’re really busy you just don’t have the time to faithfully write down [the details of] your schedule one-by-one. And someone who knows this [reality] tries to teach us [such practices]! Somehow, I feel, no matter how wonderful [the kenshū] might be ... there are too many contradictions (mujun) between the aims (shūi) and the contents (naiyō).

(Shin’ya, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 21)

He felt that there was too much of this type of (what he regarded as) ultimately useless training for new entrants, which in the final analysis was little more than “an ideal drawn on a picture” (Shin’ya, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 22). As this comment indicates, his assessment of the efforts of the organization to create ‘ideal’ shakaijin reveals an awareness of the ‘real’ agenda behind such training. He commented on how he negotiated with these efforts to ‘mould’ him in a certain way:

If you ask me how I deal with this – the company’s just brainwashing us ... basically this training can’t be seen as anything other than for the purposes of making ‘company persons’ (kaisha ningen) through this [kind of] ‘personnel training’.

(Shin’ya, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 21)
Rather, it was the technical training received that he considered to have been far more useful. Not only had it been useful in terms of his work in Northern Energy itself, the technical knowledge gained had also had beneficial effects on interpersonal relationships with individuals from outside of the firm. For instance, the chance to "study the technology of today's Japan in 'real-time'" (Shin'ya, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 21) had, he felt, come in handy when talking to suppliers (22). Consequently, he saw this specific technical knowledge as "in some respects imparting ethics or rather, values" far more than the standard training to become a shakaijin (22).

This awareness of efforts to shape specific types of behaviour, values, and even bodily conduct, extended to other informants too. For instance, Kimura Kenji, my liaison contact in Northern Print, who worked in the sales and marketing section of that company, did not mince words when asked to talk about his early training. According to him, the year he entered Northern Print an election was on the horizon. As a firm involved in the printing industry, this meant things were very busy at Northern Print due to the pressure of deadlines for the printing of posters and other election materials. Hence, when Kimura-san first entered the organization, he found himself dispatched to help with the election work, before undergoing the regular training sessions:

We started the regular kenshū, by first [practising] greetings, then being made to memorize the corporate motto (kaisha no shakan) and corporate mission statement (rinen). Then we were broken up into groups and each group had to write down the slogan and the mission statement and make a presentation. Then some old guy (jiji) from Tokyo came to instruct us in the same old stuff like greetings and things all over again ... basically telling us things like "It's going to be really tough!" ... That consultant came for three days, and, apart from that the regular stuff like the morning greetings went on for two ... no, three weeks, and within that, we had things like presentations about understanding the company motto (shakan no rikai) or understanding accounts (keiri no rikai) in each of the weeks, and that was it.

(Kimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 12)

When asked what he thought had been the most useful thing he had gained out of the experience, his response was an unequivocal "there's nothing (nai desu)". The ensuing exchange between myself and him is worth reproducing as it brings out his feelings on the matter quite nicely:

Romit (R): Nothing?
Kimura (K): Absolutely [nothing] (zenzen). I really think there’s no need for such things anymore (imada ni iranai).

R: But, do you think, for example, that through the kenshū your life might have been changed, or you really changed from a student to a shakaijin, or some such ...?

K: No. Since I’m not that ‘pure’ [innocent] (sonna pyua ja nai kara)! [says this while laughing]

R: [also laughing] Is that so?

K: [becomes serious] Somehow, I could clearly see through the real intention (kontan), so I was thoroughly bored.

(Kimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 12, 13)

While Kimura-san’s response may come across as excessively cynical and ‘world-weary’, similar, albeit less colourful, sentiments were echoed by other Northern Print informants too. For instance, Nakamura Tetsuya, a twenty-six-year-old employee who worked in an area dealing with customers’ orders, was sceptical of the extent to which he had been ‘transformed’ into a shakaijin, despite an induction training that he recalled going on for a month or two. This scepticism comes out in the following exchange between us:

R: Do you think that as a result of undergoing the kenshū, you yourself ... your values (kachikan), changed?

Nakamura (N): No, I don’t think so.

R: Don’t you perhaps think that maybe as a result of the kenshū you may have suddenly (totsuzen) been changed into a shakaijin or a company person, or something like that...

N: [repeats to himself] Suddenly became ... no. It was all unidirectional (ippôteki) ...

R: Is there anything that was useful, is still useful now?

N: [repeats to himself] Something useful even now...No, there’s nothing in particular, but maybe, friends made as a result [of the kenshū].

(Nakamura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 9)

This reference to friendships formed as an unanticipated consequence of the shakaijin induction process is significant, and is an issue I will return to below.

Perhaps the strongest indication of the reservations many of the informants held about the induction training practices of the organizations was the view expressed by
Kajima Daisuke, the Northern Print manager (kachô) whose recollections of the ‘voice training’ exercises he had undergone were presented above. When I asked him whether he thought such repetitive training practices were beneficial, his response was that he did not really think there was a need for such old-fashioned (mukashikusai) practices to teach correct greetings, or what he referred to as “greetings that make you feel good” (Kajima, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 9). Unlike Kimura Kenji, who displayed an overall attitude of smug cynicism, Kajima-san by-and-large was supportive of the policies of Northern Print management. Indeed, his appointment as manager at a relatively young age was perhaps evidence of the dividends of this support, and he struck me as someone destined for senior management within a couple of years. Yet, his assessment of the ‘uselessness’ of aspects of the induction process was really not unlike the views of Kimura Kenji, or Shin’ya Naohiko of Northern Energy.

From some of the above accounts of the ways in which the employees themselves ‘read’ the shakaijin moulding process (and its intentions), it might be tempting to come to two equally simplistic conclusions. On the one hand, there is the danger of reading the dynamics at work as a simple case of the organizations imposing and imprinting the hegemonic ideologies onto the passive bodies of these individual males as they make the transition from pre-shakaijin to shakaijin masculinity. Alternately, particularly if we take into account the views of informants like Kimura Kenji, Shin’ya Naohiko or Shimizu Ayaki, there is an equal danger of extrapolating from some of the cynical views expressed, and reading resistance into every little criticism levelled or disparaging comment made by the informants at the process (and the organizations).

However, as stressed in Chapter Two, the engagement between the individual (and his masculinity) and the discourse of salaryman masculinity he is moving into is far more nuanced and complex than a simple situation of either ‘resistance’ or ‘compliance’. Resistance and passivity coexist (or rather intersect and interact) in what can sometimes appear to be a bewildering and confusing interweaving of responses in the same individual. This emerges in the account of Inoue Toshifumi, a Northern Print informant who reflected quite deeply on many of the issues we talked about. He felt that the kenshū (or, aspects of it) had been useful – in particular being taught “how to come up with concrete plans (gutaisaku) that can be put into action” (Inoue, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 10). This, he felt, was “of great importance to a person” and he had himself “taken it on board” and used it whenever he needed to
make specific work-related plans (10). Yet, a bit further on we had the following exchange:

R: Was there anything else that you took on board (mi ni tsuita), or has come in useful?
Inoue (I): Not really.
R: Is that so? Well, on the other hand, not necessarily just things specifically related to work, but as a result [of the kenshū] were you able to make new friends, or get close to your peers?
I: Yes.
R: Also, as a result of the kenshū, do you feel that, you yourself became more like a shakaijin, or a ‘company person’ (kaisha no ningen)?
I: No.
R: No?
I: Felt like I’d been duped (yarareta) [laughs]

(Inoue, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 10)

What emerges from this short exchange are shifting or simultaneously interweaving strands. There is a mixture of what could be seen as resistance (his feelings of being ‘duped’, his reluctance to consider himself to have become a kaisha no ningen), as well as conformity and appropriation of elements of the induction experience for his own interests (his utilization of specific teachings of the shakaijin crafting project).

Neither Contestation nor Conformity: Unanticipated Fallout of Becoming Shakaijin

What also came out in many of the accounts of the induction training, touched on in passing above, was the importance placed on the friendships that emerged as an unanticipated side effect of the experience. I will be discussing homosociality and ‘friendship’, as one of the axes along which the individual male’s masculinity gets crafted vis-à-vis the discourse of salaryman masculinity, in more detail in a later chapter. At this point though, I would like to return briefly to some of the informants’ accounts of friendships formed over the induction period.

Makimura Keisuke of Northern Energy, who as a student used to play American football, made the following observation with reference to the friendships formed:

Yes, I suppose the bonds [created] with my peers were the most important thing. Drinking and talking together at night was far more of an education! [laughs] …
There were clever guys who came from good universities, others who played different types of sport, guys who'd been abroad; listening to them talking was far more interesting.

(Makimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 14)

I asked him if he still maintained contact with his fellow-entrants from the previous year (despite the fact that they would have been given placements in different sections of the organization, and, in many cases, different cities). He replied that he did maintain contact, and intended to continue doing so in the future. Yoshida Shun'ichi of Northern Energy, whose extended kenshū experience was touched on earlier, went even further. According to him, at the time he had not really appreciated the experience. However, looking back now on the friendship and camaraderie born out of sharing the common experience, he felt he had been fortunate (shōwaense):

I guess it was the friendships. Before entering the company I hadn't thought I'd be able to find such close friends, the kind of friends you can talk to about anything. So, with my peers ... because we lived together for three months, [the friendships] are an asset for life (isshō no zaisan). So quite apart from the work, this was my greatest lesson, or rather, what I acquired the most over [those] three months.

(Yoshida, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 16)

As he stressed, it was not as though he had not had close friendships as a student. Rather, he had not expected that he would form such friendships once he started working. Prior to joining Northern Energy, his “image of [working in] a company had been one where everyone just said ‘goodbye’ [and went their separate ways] at the end of the working day” (Yoshida, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 16).

These two accounts resonate with Miura Tōru’s promise, discussed earlier in this chapter, to his friends when he was at technical college to continue to meet even after graduation. Miura-san also stressed the friendships created during the course of the kenshū. Recall, for instance, his description of the training facility where there was a common room for everyone to get together and socialize in the evenings. Speaking of the memories of the occasion, and the friendship and camaraderie born, he said that it was “a once-in-a-lifetime experience, like the ‘school trip’ (shūgaku ryokō).” Miura-san continued to stress the importance of friendship in the workplace. Indeed,

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23 The shūgaku ryokō, particularly the one in high school when longer trips are made either to traditional destinations like Kyōtō and Nara, or (increasingly) to more “out-of-the-way” destinations in Japan (Okinawa, Hokkaidō) or even overseas, often occupies a special romanticized place in memories and imaginings of youth and adolescence. For many students (particularly those from the regional areas like Hokkaidō, Kyūshū, or Okinawa), it might be their first experience of an extended trip away from home, and sometimes (particularly in the past) their first experience of aeroplane travel. In terms of its construction in popular imaginings, it has bittersweet connotations of the impending end of youth and innocence and (often) first love – for instance, flashbacks to the shūgaku ryokō are often featured in romantic television serials (see Gordon 2002: 440, for background information on shūgaku ryokō).
as we saw earlier in this chapter, it was the weight he put on friendship that brought him into conflict with the official corporate discourse regarding the public/private binary.

The significance of the unanticipated friendships formed during the induction training in relation to the overall process of moulding shakaijin was best reflected in the words of Taoka Kiyoshi, a Northern Energy employee who was Miura-san's peer. According to him, the kenshū, rather than necessarily directly making him "think of himself as a kaisha no ningen (company person)", had created a strong "sense of camaraderie with his peers (dōki no nakama ishiki)", and in that sense may have indirectly made him into a kaisha no ningen (Taoka, Round 1 Interview: 13). This points to an aspect of salaryman masculinity I will be exploring at some length in Chapter Nine – the ambivalent position of homosocial bonds within organizational culture. As I discuss in that chapter, homosocial bonds such as same-sex friendship have played an important role in sustaining and reinforcing salaryman masculinity. Yet, at the same time, the very same bonds may also contain within them the seeds for disrupting some of the core underpinnings of salaryman masculinity, including compulsory heterosexuality.

Conclusion

Whereas the concern of the previous chapter (Chapter Five) was the ways in which my informants were crafted into masculinity itself, during their childhood and adolescence, this chapter has been concerned with the processes at work in crafting them into a specific form of masculinity associated with the discourse surrounding the salaryman. As outlined in the Introduction, this ‘crafting’ of salaryman masculinity occurs throughout an individual’s active working life (and to an extent, beyond it) and is signalled by various ‘markers’ – entry into the organization, marriage, promotion, fatherhood, retirement. However, as argued in this chapter, of these various ‘markers’ of salaryman masculinity, it is perhaps the first one – induction into the workforce – that is especially significant. On the one hand, the new entrant is still influenced by his earlier pre-shakaijin identity in terms of his values, behaviour, physical appearance, deportment, and other attributes. On the other hand, over these first weeks and months of his entry into shakaijin life, the individual is subject to very active efforts on the part of the employer to attempt to mould him to the ideological expectations of the organization. Crucial to this ideological ‘crafting’ is the induction training, lasting from several weeks to several months, that the new entrant undergoes before becoming a ‘formal’ member of the organization. During
this induction training, or shinnyū shain kenshū, the individual is often sequestered away with his fellow-entrants, and immersed in an environment where he is almost constantly subject to the ideological expectations of salaryman masculinity. This inculcation takes place through a variety of methods, such as lectures, seminars, group exercises, and drills, with an emphasis on moulding the ‘ideal’ employee, not just in terms of his thinking, but also in terms of the way he bodily manifests the desired attributes of salaryman masculinity. In theory, the outcome of this period of induction training would be the re-shaping of the new entrant into someone who both subscribes to, and visibly embodies, the ideals of salaryman masculinity. The reality, however, as this chapter revealed, is far more complex and nuanced. In many respects, this period is akin to a ‘liminal’ period of transition when many of the contradictions and faultlines surrounding hegemonic masculinity get thrown into relief.

In order to explore some of the complexities at work during this transition period, the chapter drew upon a combination of approaches. These included discussions with managers involved in the recruitment and training of new employees, and direct observation of an induction training kenshū in progress. This allowed us to get an appreciation for the ways in which organizations actively work towards crafting their new recruits. The discussion of the induction training observed, for instance, looked at the ways in which the ideological expectations are inculcated and reinforced through repetitive embodied practices. The discussion with members of management brought out a sense of what kind of person constitutes an ‘ideal’ of salaryman masculinity and what kind of person does not. However, the same discussion also revealed that individual managers sometimes had views which did not necessarily conform to the ideals of salaryman masculinity. What this points to is that management, rather than being a monolithic bloc, is also characterized by individual positions and engagements vis-à-vis the hegemonic ideals of salaryman masculinity.

This complexity was revealed in the discussions with my informants recalling their own induction training experiences when they became shakaijin. Their accounts support the argument that the individual’s engagements with hegemonic masculinity cannot be analysed simply in terms of outright conformity and compliance, nor in terms of constant resistance and/or marginalization. Rather, as the voices of informants like Miura Tôru, Kimura Kenji, Imai Shinji, Shin’ya Naohiko and others reveal, the process of being crafted into shakaijin salaryman masculinity is characterized by the simultaneous existence of dynamics of conformity, co-option, appropriation, playful engagement, marginalization, refutation, resistance, and perhaps even subversion.
CHAPTER SEVEN

WORKING WITH SALARYMAN MASCULINITY

The previous chapter discussed the crucial weeks and months following a new recruit’s entry into organizational culture and his induction into the requirements of salaryman masculinity. However, while the negotiations undertaken by the individual male entrant vis-à-vis the discourse of salaryman masculinity he is expected to fit into are at their most intense over these initial weeks and months, the adjustments are not restricted to just this period of his life. In reality, as noted in earlier chapters, this process of engagement is an ongoing part of the gender project of masculinity (Connell 2002: 81, 82). These engagements take place with reference to specific expectations or sets of expectations that accompany his life-path through the organization, and even after his formal retirement from the workforce. The relative weights of expectations of the individual vary over the trajectory of his life – some (for instance the expectation that he be married) are less important earlier on in his career, whereas others (such as the centrality of work) remain constant through his life-path within the organization. What needs to be stressed is that we are not talking about some kind of pre-determined, mechanical escalator-like journey through the life-path, where the individual passively takes on board the expectations of the hegemonic discourse. Rather, as Connell argues,

[a] life-history, and a gender project within a life history ... involves a number of distinct moments or stages, in which different gender commitments are made, different strategies are adopted, or different resolutions of gender issues are achieved.

(Connell 2002: 83)

In other words, as is evident in the accounts provided by informants in the previous two chapters, we are talking about a situation where agency, resistance, subversion, appropriation, conformity, and subservience may (and do) all coexist and interact at any one point during the life-path in any one individual.

With this in mind, this chapter will continue to explore, through the voices of my informants, the ongoing individual negotiations and engagements with the expectations of hegemonic salaryman masculinity. The focus of this chapter is the link between the idea and reality of ‘work’ and the significance it has in determining salaryman masculinity. Specifically, in this chapter I explore the ways in which my informants framed this link between work and masculinity in their minds, in their negotiations with the work/masculinity nexus on a day-to-day basis. The first part of
the chapter sets out the conceptual framework situating the work/masculinity nexus. I will then bring in the voices of my informants in order to explore such themes as the importance of work in defining their sense of masculinity, the types of work they associate with masculinity, or the lack of it, their imagining of the discourse of the salaryman in the context of the work/masculinity nexus, and the lived experience at the individual level with the work/masculinity nexus. As was the case in the previous chapter, the informants' voices bring out the complexity and contradiction that characterizes their engagements with the expectations of hegemonic masculinity.

Men and Work

Chiff Cheng in his Introduction to his edited collection Masculinities in Organizations notes that "masculine identity is socially constructed through work which is embedded in an occupation and often within an organization" (Cheng 1996b: xiv). This link between work and masculinity has been discussed at length by a variety of writers over the last two decades or so (see for instance, Willis 1979; Game and Pringle 1983; Collinson and Collinson 1989; Collinson 1992; Hood 1993; Roper 1994; Collinson and Hearn 1996a, 1996b, 1996c; Goodwin 1999; Beynon 2002; Hearn 2002; Wilson 2003). For instance, David Collinson, in his discussion of intersecting masculinities on the shopfloor of a vehicle components manufacturer in the United Kingdom, makes the following observation with respect to the ways in which shopfloor workers deploy the concept of 'real', productive work to reinforce their sense of masculinity:

Workers protect their dignity and elevate their identity over others by investing in specific highly masculine discursive practices of: sexuality; family breadwinner; production; the 'practical'; 'common-sense'; being a working man . . . .
(Collinson 1992: 98)

Collinson's observation is in the context of blue-collar/working-class masculinity. However, middle-class masculinities are just as dependent on work for a sense of identity and definition. As John Beynon comments:

[s]uccessful professional masculinity has come to be firmly associated with the business suit, the mobile phone, the flashy car, beautiful and compliant women, and the large house or penthouse suite, all indicative of entrepreneurial masculine values ... which, as much as working class masculinity, excludes the feminine.
(Beynon 2002: 21, 22)
Similarly, Michael Roper, in his fascinating study of the first postwar generation of professional managers in Britain, also draws attention to the importance of work and work practices for men in management to ‘prove’ their masculinity (and to ‘prove’ the masculinity of their work). As he notes, given the traditional equation of ‘hard’ masculinity with the shopfloor and physical labour, men working in white-collar management jobs often “felt a particular need to prove their masculinity” (Roper 1994: 107). With reference to the managers he had interviewed, Roper observes that these men described a constant struggle to quell suspicions that they were unmanly or ‘soft’ ... they graded management hierarchies according to the level of aggression required to perform at each level ... and ranked different industries according to how masculine they were ... [However] despite the common tendency for men to endorse the cult of toughness in these ways, they often felt that they had failed to assert a sufficiently ‘hard’ masculinity. Qualities which they experienced as feminine kept resurfacing, hampering the will to power. Management was a constant struggle to keep fear at bay and hide sensitivity to others.

(Roper 1994: 107)

Thus, regardless of whether we are talking about shop-floor workers, managers, or entrepreneurs, the common denominator of ‘work’ intersects with the respective discourses of masculinity.¹

With reference to Japan, as highlighted in Chapter Three, the concept of ‘productive’, salaried, non-household work was (and is) axiomatic to the discourse of salaryman masculinity. Anne Allison, in her 1994 ethnographic study of corporate masculinity in the context of the ‘hostess club’, observes that,

... although a larger proportion of women than ever before are now working in salaried jobs outside the home, work is still considered, ideologically and culturally, an activity that is more important for men and that identifies the male more than it does the female. A woman may work, but her social status and place in society is not defined primarily as a worker. When a man works, by contrast, it is to his work that he commits most of his energy, time, and loyalties, and it is as worker that his place in society is assigned.

(Allison 1994: 91)

These types of sentiments are echoed in the work of several other writers. For example, Glenda Roberts, in her study of blue-collar women’s lives, notes that “the notion that a woman’s primary responsibility is to her home remains strong ... and employment policies and practices ... are largely premised upon a male career mode”

¹ The significance of work as a cornerstone of masculinity gets conveyed quite acutely in studies which deal with men who are not working – for instance, studies of the ways in which men who have been laid off, have been unemployed over a long-term period, or have retired, negotiate with the
(Roberts 1994: 25). Consequently, as Roberts argues, “the concept of full-time, career-oriented employee carries with it the expectation that this employee will be, first and foremost, a company man” (25).<sup>2</sup> Ishii-Kuntz’s 1993 study of Japanese fathers also brings out the importance of work (specifically the role of family provider) as being crucial in defining their identity as males, fathers, and husbands – this is a theme I will expand upon in the next Chapter (Ishii-Kuntz 1993). Similarly, earlier works by Rohlen (1974), Vogel (1971), and Plath (1964), as well as more recent works such as the study of managers in the buoyant economic conditions of the 1980s by Beck and Beck (1994) draw attention to the centrality of work in the lives of men, even though they were not scrutinizing men as men. Even the studies by Fowler (1996) and Gill (2001, also 2003) on day-labourers bring out the importance of work in defining masculinity for men existing on the margins of hegemonic masculinity, far from the salaryman ideal.

The Meaning of ‘Work’

In light of the above, it would be useful at this point to bring in the voices of my informants, and explore their reflections on the intersections between work and masculinity (and more specifically salaryman masculinity). An appropriate starting point would be the responses I got from the informants during our focus-group interviews when I asked them about how they regarded work in relation to themselves, and specifically their sense of being male. The following range of voices provides a sample of the views expressed:

I’d say I have an image of what you’d call a ‘daikokushira’ [literally, ‘central pillar of a house’, but more loosely ‘breadwinner’], working diligently to support a family.

(NEFG Interview Transcript: 1, 2)

Well … in this day and age, I think ‘work’ still … occupies a big part in a man. There’s [the consideration] of how this will change in the future. [But] for now … I think work is probably by and large the main thing. Once you get to the age when you’re working, certainly, compared with other things, work becomes quite

expectations of hegemonic masculinity (see for instance, Solomon and Szwabo 1994; Connell 1995: 93–103).

<sup>2</sup> As stressed in an earlier chapter, and as also noted by Allison, above, this is despite the reality (as borne out by the working women in Roberts’ study) that women have always been engaged in ‘productive’ non-household labour in Japan. This participation has been widely documented in the works of a range of scholars (see for instance, Bernstein 1983; Kondo 1990; Saso 1990; Lebra 1991; Nagy 1991; Brinton 1993; Osawa 1993; Ogasawara 1998; Broadbent 2003, for a discussion of women’s workforce participation in a variety of areas). Yet, despite this, as reflected in the passage quoted from Allison’s study, the hegemonic ideal still operates along the lines of male = (paid) work outside the household, female = (non-paid) work within the household.
a large part of yourself. Also, I guess there’s hobbies and things, but … I think work occupies a big part of myself.

(NEFG Interview Transcript: 2)

Of course I think work’s important, but I think men, in contrast to women, need to support, financially as well as mentally, their families, or else women. Of course I think there are areas where men are given support by women, but I personally think men should be the mainstay.

(NEFG Interview Transcript: 2)

At the point I joined this organization … I expected to continue in this job for life; and thought I’d get married, and after a child was born, on the salary I receive, would support a family (kazoku o yashinau); that was my thinking. And, since now I’m in that state [of being married and having a family], I [still] think that. But, generally I haven’t really reflected on it ‘as a male’.

(Northern Energy Head Office Focus Group Interview Transcript: 2).

This sample of voices would appear to reinforce the dominant paradigm of work being unproblematically and almost unconsciously accepted as pivotal to an individual’s sense of being male, as reflected in the studies of Anne Allison or Ishii-Kuntz cited above. This sense of work being essential to a male in some kind of intrinsic, almost biological way is reflected in the exchange with Murayama Satoshi, a thirty-year-old Northern Energy head office employee working in the general affairs (sōmu) section. During the course of our interview, the discussion turned to the question of whether he thought he would have been a different person had he not been in his present job, or if he was not working. The thought of not working (i.e. being unemployed) did not sit comfortably with him.

… if I didn’t have a job, just thinking about a situation when I may not have a job is scary!
… [in response to my question “why?”] It’s frightening … [it’s like you become] an animal which can’t hunt/find its food (esa o tote korenai dōbutsu ni natte). Because an animal which can’t get its own food, at that point, probably, within the animal kingdom that signifies death.

(Murayama, Interview Transcript: 45)

Earlier in our discussion he had noted with disapproval what he labelled his younger brother’s “lax/cheap” (anchoku) lifestyle (Murayama, Interview Transcript: 29). His brother had apparently “drifted” (pura-pura shiteita) through university and had not been able to graduate even after eight years. At the time of our interview the brother had just found a job (12). Elsewhere, Murayama-san expressed his disapproval of unemployed men “who hang around (pura-pura shite) the labour exchange and get an allowance, and use that to live or go off and do things like play pachinko” (64). This led me to again ask him what he would do if, in his forties or fifties, he was
suddenly laid off. The ensuing exchange between us is worth reproducing, as it conveys the importance of the concept of work, any kind of work, being crucial to this informant’s self-worth as a man:

Murayama (M): If I’m laid off, umm, ah, you mean if I’m told not to come in [to work] from tomorrow?

Romit (R): Yes.

M: In that case, I’d think that my own ability is really poor, and would get quite depressed. [laughs] Things like I must be a completely useless person … why when there’s also ‘A-san’, ‘B-san’, ‘C-san’…

R: [So you’d want to ask] Why me…?

M: I’d think it was because I’m disliked, the line’s being drawn at me, and at such times, I think I’d worry about why there was this disparity.

R: In other words, would that mean, that it’s not just [losing] the job, but … your whole sense of being itself receives a shock?

M: You know, I, well, even if there were a drop in income, if I could find another job, the shock would be softened considerably. Any kind of job I could go into … . For instance, in the worst case scenario, I’d even want to live by making râmen [noodles] in a stall, pulling a hand-cart …

(Murayama, Interview Transcript: 64, 65)

Ogasawara Takurô, another Northern Energy employee best summed up this connection between work and masculinity, when he told me that the time he “most felt his ‘masculinity’(otokorashisa … ga ichiban kanjiru)” was when he had successfully accomplished a piece of work (Ogasawara, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 2). Elsewhere, talking about a particularly challenging work project which he had successfully completed, he talked about the sense of strength or empowerment he had gained: “Once I was able to finish it, naturally, how do you say it … I was able to gain confidence in myself? I achieved the ability to say to myself that ‘No way am I going to lose’ (koryû makenai yo)” (5). While this statement, does not specifically mention masculinity, given other statements he had made about the
significance of work in constructions of masculinity, it would be hard not to see the underlying extension of this sense of achievement and winning to his own masculine self-esteem. Indeed, what perhaps best summed up the centrality of work to masculinity in his esteem was his explicit condemnation of the type of man he disliked: “the [kind of] man I dislike is someone who doesn’t work and, … doesn’t give importance to [looking after] his household (uchи o taisetsu ni shinai) – his own family” (12). This statement seems to sum up the sentiments of many of the informants regarding the ‘fundamental’ qualification for shakaijin masculinity – being the daikokubashira, supporting and looking after the family.

‘Manly’ and ‘Un-manly’ Work

The above section points to the centrality of work in defining my informants’ sense of masculine self-worth. However, feeding into this intertwining of work and masculinity is the fact that the category of work itself is constructed through a gendered prism. Certain types of work may be regarded as more ‘masculine’ than others. Conversely other lines of work are constructed as ‘feminine’. Moreover, as Rosemary Pringle has pointed out: “Not only are jobs defined according to a clear gender dichotomy, but the gendering of jobs has been important to the construction of gender identity” (Pringle 1993: 130). In this sense, ‘being a man’ is shaped as much by the type of work engaged in as it shapes (and genders) a particular type of work. Thus, in order to better understand my informants’ engagements with the expectations of salaryman masculinity it would be useful to get a sense of where they situated the kind of work associated with salaryman masculinity, within the scale of ‘manly’ and ‘un-manly’ occupations.

One of the themes raised by my informants was their personal imaginings of ‘manly’ (otokorashii) and ‘un-manly’ (otokorashikunai) lines of work. While the specific occupations listed varied from informant to informant, there was a common strand that appeared to link attributes such as the (perceived) degree of physical strength required for the job and/or technical skill. Several of the informants mentioned policemen as exemplars of ‘masculine’ work.3 Some informants listed occupational

3 The reasoning provided by one of the informants, Nohara Nori of Northern Energy, for this association of policemen (especially, in his case, plain-clothes detectives), with masculinity was interesting. According to him, in addition to the fact that “they caught criminals”, the way they were represented in the media was behind this masculine appeal; as he put it, “I know I’ve been influenced by television, but, well, [the way they’re shown] wearing suits and sunglasses, I think that’s really (sugoi) macho” (Nohara, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 12). As a child, one of the jobs he had apparently been attracted to had been police and detective work (as well as working in the public service) (10, 11).
categories connected to construction and building such as labourer/construction worker (dokata), artisan (shokunin)/carpenter(daikai), or construction engineer (dôboku). Other occupations that came up included fishermen, truck drivers pilots, and professional athletes, such as sumô wrestlers, baseball players, and car and motorbike racers.¹⁴

The range of otokorashii occupations provided often had a bearing on occupations that the informants had been attracted to in childhood or during adolescence or even still remained attracted to. Thus, Fujita Yûji, an employee in Northern Print’s sales office, who had offered car and motorbike racing as his choice of otokorashii work, had himself dabbled in motorbike racing and up until university had wanted to make his career in either professional racing or automobile design. He justified his choice in the following terms:

> Whether you talk about cars or motorbikes, you can classify them [races] as being engaged in competitive sport. Quite often, it’s the apparent glamour that’s seen. But I know the underlying serious (jimina) aspects [of the sport] ... only a person who’s exceptionally tough mentally can survive.

(Fujita, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 11)

For others, the association of particular occupations with masculinity was a combination of both childhood and adolescent attraction to culturally privileged attributes of masculinity and the individual’s own perception that he did not quite measure up to these cultural ideals. Ishida Naoki, a twenty-one-year-old Northern Energy accounts employee touched upon this issue during our interview. Talking about occupations and kinds of work he had been attracted to in the past, or continued to find attractive, he commented that as physical activity was not his “strong point”, he had been “attracted by things like sport, where you can earn an income through physical activity” (Ishida, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 10). He noted that as a child he had been attracted to Ultraman, a popular children’s superhero popular culture icon, and had wanted to become a “monster” (kaijû) (11). As he grew older, despite his lack of sporting prowess, he continued to idealize physical strength and sporting skill; as he commented: “I’m attracted to what’s missing [in me]” (10). His response to my question about occupations he associated with ‘manliness’ reflected this anxiety about his perceived lack of physical prowess and strength.⁵

¹⁴ Not a single informant made reference to the military (which in the Japanese context would be the jieitai, the Self Defence Force) when talking about occupations they associated with otokorashii. As noted when discussing the historical construction of discourses of masculinity in Chapter Three, the military effectively ceased to be a masculine 'ideal' after Japan’s defeat in World War Two.

⁵ See also Laga’s discussion about the problematic relationship one of his informants, C-san, had with his body, and how this shaped his constructions of his own masculinity vis-a-vis cultural ideals about
Let's see ... of course it would be in sports-related areas, since they'd require using the body. I think that compared with women men can perform better and show better results. In that sense, I guess it's when the body's being used and it's related to physical attributes of the body (nikutai teki na tokuchō) that things like otokorashisa or the good things about being male come out.

[in relation to my question asking him if he could think of more general kind of occupations that he associates with masculinity] It's a bit different from otokorashii, but there're things that men are possibly geared towards more. For instance ... people like construction workers (dokata) working as labourers, things like that since they're jobs that require strength (chikara) and endurance (tairyoku).

(Ishida, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 11)

What seems to come through in many of these associations of particular lines of work being ‘manly’, is the notion of the body being engaged in physical labour. Moreover, these were occupations which could (in the view of the informants) only be carried out by the male body. Takahashi Yoshio of Northern Print brought out this assumption of certain types of work being specific to the male body in his response about otokorashii work; as he stated when I asked him about the type of work he associated with masculinity:

... if you talk about men, well quite definitely it would probably be physical work, wouldn't it? ... In that sense, things like construction-related [work]...how do I put it, things like line-work-related stuff (genba kankei)6 ... I guess, women wouldn't be able to do it ....

(Takahashi, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 6).7

Conversely, informants were also able to come up with occupations they associated with a lack of masculinity – otokorashikunai shokugyō, literally ‘un-masculine/manly’ occupations. For many of the informants these were often areas that they associated with women and stereotypically ‘feminine’ lines of work, suited

masculinity (Taga 2001: 98–106). Similarly, Connell's discussion in The Men and the Boys of two of his informants - Steve Donoghue, an 'on man' champion exemplifying the bodily ideals of hegemonic masculinity, and Adam Smit, an informant whose relationship with his body was far more uneasy - also illustrates this relationship between self-perceptions about the body and hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2001: 69–101).

6 The connotations of the word genba are difficult to convey in English. Tom Gill, in his discussion of day labourers (hiyaton ni shokushu) notes that the term literally refers to “actual/present place” which in the context of his subjects referred to the construction worksite (Gill 2003: 152). Kenkyusha's New Japanese-English Dictionary (1974: 324) lists several possible English renditions, including “the (actual) spot; the scene; the locale; ... the scene of labor; a job site; ... a building site; a construction field”. Generally, it refers to the actual worksite where physical (as opposed to white-collar) labour is carried out; thus, for example, my informants from Northern Print would use genba when talking about the actual printing press on the shop floor.

7 Another Northern Print employee, Kajima Daisuke, also mentioned construction work (dokata) as representative of a masculine occupation. However, he then acknowledged the inherent contradictions in what he had just said by noting that “recently there’re quite a few women [doing that type of work]. If anything, seeing them entering in among all the men, it makes me really respect them” (Kajima, Round 1 Interview Transcript 7)
to the ‘female body’ and ‘personality’ (seikaku) – what one informant, Imai Shinji, referred to as “occupations requiring delicacy” (Imai, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 14). Thus, by implication, these occupations were considered to be lines of work not suited to men, reflecting Christine Williams’ assertion in her introduction to a collection of papers on men working in areas considered to be ‘women’s work’, that “the man who crosses over into a female-dominated occupation upsets ... gender assumptions embedded in the work ... he is suspected of not being a ‘real man’” (Williams 1993b: 3). The list of such otokorashikunai occupations mentioned by my informants encompassed areas such as nursing, childcare workers, beauticians, florist, bakery/cake-shop salespersons (eki-yado), and flight-attendants. However, in contrast to the listing of otokorashii (mainly) work, where the informants generally seemed to be quite clear in their minds about occupations that matched ideals of ‘manliness’, the responses to otokorashikunai (un-masculine) work seemed to be less certain, revealing a greater degree of ambiguity and contradiction. Firstly, there were a number of informants who told me that they could not think of any occupation that was not masculine, or was not suited to men. Others came up with responses that brought out the contradictions in the gendering of categories of work. Thus, for instance, Matsumoto Tadashi of Northern Energy, who mentioned nursing as one of the occupations he associated with a lack of masculinity, also acknowledged the contradiction in his position by distinguishing between kangofu, the female-specific term traditionally used for the term ‘nurse’, and kangoshi, the gender-neutral term which takes into account the growing visibility of male nurses in recent years (Matsumoto, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 9). Ishida Naoki, whose association of physical strength with masculine work, as discussed earlier, was linked to his perception of his own lack of physical prowess, made the point that

recently you’ve gradually seen the emergence of the occupation of kangoshi. And, since there’s quite a bit of physical work required in caring for patients, it would be good to let men be responsible for those tasks, and leave the rest to the female [nurses].

(Ishida, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 13).

This kind of contradiction in demarcating which type of work is or is not suited to men, comes out nicely in Hamada Shigeru’s response. Hamada-san was the son of the President of Northern Energy, and at the time of our interview was being rotated through different sections of the organization, quite clearly as part of the process of being groomed to take over the mantle of the organization somewhere down the

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8 The informant who mentioned this, Imai Shinji of Northern Energy, noted that his association of a lack of masculinity with selling cakes was restricted to the sales staff (miko), and not to actual bakers (yaku-hito) (Imai, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 8).
track. When we met, he was working on the printing-press on the shop-floor. Like many of the others, he had mentioned the physical work done by male employees on the shop-floor of the press as an example of *otokorashii* work (Hamada, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 9). When I asked him about work not suited to males, he responded with "work not suited to myself" (10). When I asked him for specific examples, he mentioned "jobs where you have to do the same kind of repetitive work day-in-day-out" (10). He expanded on this point using the following example:

Well, you know, if you go to large factories you have assembly-line work (*nagare-sagyō*), don’t you? Seeing work like that, I, well, couldn’t even consider it – this doing exactly the same thing every minute! I guess, with that kind of work in large firms ... the pay might be good, and you can return home at a fixed time everyday. That’s great, but I really don’t think I’d be able to do that! (Hamada, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 10)

Ironically, repetitive assembly-line work is not really that different to the type of mechanistic, repetitive work Hamada-san was engaged in on the print shop-floor, a type of work that he associated with ‘manliness’. This reflects the point I raised above about the complex dynamics involved in the ways in which gender ideologies both shape how occupational categories are constructed and are also shaped by those categories. Thus, reading into Hamada-san’s imagining of *otokorashii* and *otokorashikunai* work, we could say that assembly-line work is associated with ‘un-manliness’ *because* of the fact that in the popular imagination, women constitute a significant proportion of such workers (see for instance, Roberts 1994). Conversely, work on the shop-floor is associated with ‘manliness’ as a consequence, not of the nature of the work, but rather due to the fact that men are numerically dominant.

Another example of the ambiguity in the understanding of the gendered construction of occupational categories was provided by Fujita Yūji, the Northern Energy salesman who had spoken about sports professionals exemplifying masculinity. In response to my question about ‘un-masculine’ occupations, Fujita-san responded by mentioning as an example the “*hosuto*” or ‘host’ – a male escort, whose job servicing female clients is in many respects a mirror of the female bar-hostess servicing male clients (see Lunsing 2000: 174, 175; for a discussion of the female bar-hostess, see Allison 1994). When I expressed some surprise, mentioning their (hetero-) sexual appeal (*josei ni moteru*) as underlying their masculinity, Fujita-san elaborated on his choice by telling me that “it is precisely that kind of thing [i.e. the use of their sexual appeal] that probably explains the view that it [being a *hosuto*] doesn’t have *otokorashisa*” (Fujita, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 11). A response such as this

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9 From the term used – "stewardess" – it seemed that flight-attendants were exclusively female in the
opens up questions about what is often considered to lie at the very core of hegemonic masculinity – heterosexual virility. Yet, ironically, using Fujita-san’s line of reasoning, this very heterosexual prowess explains the male escort’s lack of masculinity.10

The Salaryman Viewed through Informants’ Voices

The question that needs to be explored is where, in the view of my informants, would the salaryman fit on this scale of ‘manly’ and ‘un-manly’ occupations. After all, despite its pervasive hold on discourses of masculinity in Japan, the kind of white-collar desk work usually associated with being a salaryman is a far cry from the exemplars of ‘manly’ occupations, such as policemen and construction workers, mentioned by my informants. This tension between the informants’ everyday reality, and the idealized imaginings of what constitutes ‘manly’ work, as expressed above, is reflected in the following account by Ogasawara Takurō, the informant who had told me that he “most felt his ‘masculinity’ (otokorashita … ga ichiban kanjiro)” when he had successfully accomplished a piece of work (Ogasawara, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 2) Ogasawara-san, who worked in the Site Planning (ritchi) section of Northern Energy struck me as an ‘ideal’ representative of salaryman masculinity. At our very first meeting he had come across as bright, articulate, outgoing, and sure of himself,11 but at the same time considerate of others around him,12 diligent in his attitude to work and the organization, and ‘safely respectable’ in

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10 There may be several factors at work here. Firstly, despite the male host’s apparent sexual virility and appeal, the fact that he is the object of commodified female desire disrupts the traditional active male/passive female binary underpinning ideologies of gender and sexuality. This is not dissimilar to the ‘feminization’ of men who occupy the passive (‘female’) role in male same-sex relations in many societies (e.g. Latin and circum-Mediterranean societies) (see, for instance, Loizos and Papataxiarchis 1991b: 227, 228; Gutman 1996: 127–129; Vale de Almeida 1996: 57, 98; Murray 1997: 28–32).

11 My interview notes make the point that he was one of the very few informants who felt comfortable enough, not to have any qualms about smoking in front of me during our discussion (Ogasawara, Round 2 Interview Notes: 1)

12 For example, the interview notes mention his offer to help carry some of my things after the interview had finished – having come straight to the interview from work. I was lugging around a large number of files and books. He had also apologized for not being able to offer me any refreshments during the interview (Ogasawara, Round 2 Notes: 1).
his general views regarding such issues as gender roles, organizational culture, and society at large. Perhaps indicative of this quiet confidence in his own ability was, for instance the certainty (relative to other informants) with which he said that he expected to be in a management position by the time he was thirty-five (that is, ten years down the track) (Ogasawara, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 9). He was also quite certain that he would stay with Northern Energy until his retirement. Yet, despite this apparent sense of confidence and certainty in himself and his career within Northern Energy, he also displayed a certain ambivalence about himself as a white-collar worker. He talked with admiration and nostalgia about the casual work he had done in his student days as a newspaper delivery person. According to him, there was "a trend in Japan today for physical labour like newspaper delivery to be belittled" (3):

If you say to those people who slight [physical labour], "okay, go and do it yourself" I bet they wouldn't be able to. Even I won't be able to do such work anymore ... Regardless of whether your job is a prestigious one or a humble one, the most important thing is to put in every bit of effort. I suppose, even when I was working part-time [as a student] I used to think so. This may, well, sound offensive, but I'm a white-collar salaryman, right? But still, how do I put it ... I really think people sweating away doing actual physical work have it really tough (taiken), and I have strong feelings of gratitude towards them.

(Ogasawara, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 3)

If this kind of tough, physical work conjured up images of 'manliness', what were the associations with the figure of the salaryman? This was a question I also posed to the informants. The following is a sample of the responses I got during the focus group discussions when I asked the participants to talk about their image of the 'typical salaryman' (tenkeitēkina sararimān):

A typical salaryman...? Works late into the night. That's in a positive sense!

Wearing a suit of course, carrying things like a briefcase and mobile phone as he walks, that kind of image...

In terms of image, work, work, ... to me someone you'd call an average salaryman, is exclusively [about] work (shigoto nomi). He doesn't really conjure up an image of family or hobbies or anything private. There's the image of a man living for his work associated with the word 'salaryman'.

If you mention his appearance, it's a standard appearance (futsū no kokkori) – wearing a suit and tie, neatly pressed trousers...

(NEFG Interview Transcript: 8, 9)

The image [of a typical salaryman] is ... [someone] wearing a suit, carrying a briefcase ... and also, someone who spends the whole day doing rounds (sottomawari) or spends the whole day at a desk.
Quite definitely (yappari), if you say 'salaryman' [he's someone] wearing a suit... wears a suit, has glasses... a 7:3 (shichi-san) haircut.  

(NPFG Interview Transcript: 10)

Such views were also echoed in the individual interviews conducted with the informants. Makimura Keisuke, the former grid-iron player who had trained as an architect at university and was now employed as a planner in the general affairs section of Northern Energy, provided a caricature of the 'typical' (tenkeitekina) salaryman that could have been straight out of some of the tongue-in-cheek popular culture representations of the salaryman discussed in Chapter Four. His view of the 'typical' salaryman was someone who

[g]ets up early in the morning, puts on a suit and tie, reads the newspaper while eating breakfast... this, of course is an image. And, well, carrying a briefcase he goes into a multi-storeyed building, sits down at a desk, faces a computer, and works... Then, around six in the evening, he finishes [work], has a quick 'one-for-the-road' drink, and returns home with a something for the family (omiyage).  

(Makimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 11)

Yoshida Shun’ichi, a twenty-year-old technician with Northern Energy who had entered the workforce just six months prior to our interview, had the following to say about his image of the 'typical' salaryman:

You’re asking me about my image [of the salaryman]? ... It’s pretty much (sore koso) like what appears on TV. A salaryman... he’s short... and, wears a suit, every day squeezes himself onto a jam-packed train and goes to work. [He] doesn’t really do that much work... puts in just enough effort, then goes and lets off steam at an izakaya, and then, goes home and retreats back into himself. That’s the kind of image I have.  

(Yoshida, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 11)

Matsuzaka Kôhei, another twenty-year-old Northern Energy employee from the accounts section, said that the first thing that came into his mind when he thought about a 'typical' salaryman was “someone who works from morning till night, and seems to come home just to sleep” (Matsuzaka, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 15). Arai Jun, himself a public sector employee involved with customer service, saw the 'typical' salaryman as a “a cringing, obsequious person” (peko-peko shita hito), the

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13 As explained in an earlier chapter when talking about the ‘JTB-Man’ caricature, this refers to a hair-style neatly parted at the side in a seventy: thirty ratio. It is one of the visual signifiers of respectable, dependable white-collar, salaryman masculinity.

14 Translated in dictionaries such as Kenkyusha’s New Japanese-English Dictionary), as "a tavern; a bar, a public (licensed) house" (Kenkyusha 1974: 574). However, more so than in the case of pubs and taverns in the West where the primary motive for patronizing the establishment is (usually) the consumption of alcohol while socializing with friends/coworkers, the emphasis in an izakaya is as
kind of person who “works single-mindedly” (shigoto hito-suji), or makes a hobby of his work” (Arai, Interview Transcript: 13).

The above three informants were relatively new to shakaijin life, and hence their holding such excessively caricatured views of the salaryman is perhaps not particularly surprising. However, even those informants who had made the transition to shakaijin life a number of years prior to our discussion often held not dissimilar images of the ‘typical’ salaryman. Satô Hiroshi, who at the time of the first interview had been with Northern Energy for three years, also presented a caricature of a person “usually wearing a suit and tie ... [who] leaves home early in the morning and works hard until late at night” (Satô, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 12). Moreover, this was a person who was constantly plagued by the “difficult dilemma of balancing the demands of home and work” (12). Nohara Noi, although only nineteen years old at the time of our first interview, had also been with Northern Energy for three years. His view of the ‘typical’ salaryman drew upon similar stereotypes: “wears a suit and tie, commutes by train, works until late at night, returns home also by train, goes straight to bed” (Nohara, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 13). Moreover, in terms of the personality he associated with this ‘typical’ salaryman he noted that “my image of the salaryman ... [is someone] without much motivation, kind of like just going along with the flow”(13).

Nakamura Tetsuya, a Northern Print employee who at the time of our interview was in the eighth year of his career with the organization (and whose father, prior to retirement, had spent his entire career as an employee of a local bank), also reinforced such characteristics during our discussion. For instance he saw the ‘typical’ salaryman as someone “meticulous (kichômen), who follows rules ... is very stiff” (Nakamura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 6). In terms of appearance, he also held an image of a bespectacled, suit-clad figure with a “seven-three (shichisen)" haircut, commuting to work in a “jam-packed train". Significantly, Nakamura-san also felt that such a ‘typical’ salaryman was “valuable" (kichô) in terms of the economy and society (6). Takahashi Yoshio, who was into the fourth year of his employment at Northern Print, presented me with similar characteristics, but added that, in his mind, this ‘typical’ figure was married and “supported a family" (katei o motteite) (Takahashi, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 7).

Thus, what the above accounts seem to point to is the lack of ‘manliness’ associated with the discourse built up around the salaryman. One Northern Energy informant mentioned above, put it quite bluntly:

much on eating a variety of cooked snacks/finger foods, as it is on the consumption of alcohol. In this sense, the izakaya is possibly akin to a Spanish tapas establishment.
My thinking’s changed now. But before I started working ... before that, perhaps, I had something of what you’d call a fixed idea ... of a suit-wearing [person] merely doing the same things everyday, definitely not an *otokorashii* image.  
(Yoshida, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 11)

Yet, as I argue in this thesis, it is the discourse of masculinity surrounding the salaryman and not the builder or the carpenter, that has occupied a hegemonic position in contemporary Japan.  

However, as I also argue, hegemonic masculinity (the discourse of salaryman masculinity in this instance) need not necessarily be the culturally exalted model in all contexts. As observed earlier in this thesis when discussing the emergence of the salaryman model as the hegemonic discourse and its dissemination and reinforcement through channels of popular culture, the salaryman, and all that he connotes has been as much a caricatured figure for ridicule and disparagement as a culturally respected ‘ideal’. This is echoed in the informants’ accounts discussed above.

At the same time, as argued in Chapter Two, the dynamics underlying hegemonic masculinity constitute what Demetriou refers to as a “hybrid bloc” (Demetriou 2001: 348). As pointed out, there may be dynamics of appropriation, integration, resistance, subversion, and playful engagement at work simultaneously in the relationship between hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities. Conceptualizing hegemonic masculinity in this way allows us to reconcile otherwise contradictory dynamics, such as the apparent power of the salaryman discourse coexisting with some of the derisive and critical stereotypes mentioned above. This complexity is reflected in the informants’ responses to where they situated themselves vis-à-vis the image of the ‘typical’ salaryman they presented me with. As the following section brings out, their responses consisted of a variety of (often contradictory) strategies and positions.

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15 In fact, as Roper notes with reference to his study of managers in Britain, “class and masculine hierarchies operated in different ways ... Middle-class managers more often imitated their inferiors in class terms, than the reverse, emphasizing their practical experience as a way of shaking off the effete image of the pen-pushing professional” (Roper 1994: 56; see also Collinson 1992). However elsewhere Roper notes that “despite the popularity of ‘hard’ masculinity ... those managers seemingly most successful in flaunting their aggression were not the most successful in career terms” (110). Specifically, discussing the case of one of his informants, a former navy boxer who was now the managing director of a small firm, Roper cautions against assuming a direct correspondence between the culturally admired ‘hard’ shop-floor-style masculinity and actual success in terms of career. This informant of Roper’s, Reg Johnson, had carried over his aggressive style of ‘hard’ masculinity from his boxing days into his management style. This “ensured that people would carry out his orders” (110), but at the same time made him “a lonely man, with a broken marriage and a self-admitted difficulty in ‘getting close’ to people” (111). ‘Mr Johnson’s example’, according to Roper “reminds us that the cult of toughness does not guarantee managerial success, despite the fact that managers of all kinds use combative language when they portray management ... one might argue in Johnson’s case that the further growth of his firm is constrained by his inability to relinquish control. ‘Hard’ masculinity dovetails with a management style in which there is no compromise ... Not only does this inhibit business; it places untold burdens upon the tyrants themselves” (111).
Individual Negotiations with the Salaryman Stereotype

Despite these often caustic views of the ‘typical’ salaryman outlined above, the informants also had a very real sense of having to engage with the same attributes of the caricature in their everyday lives. This gets reflected in their responses to the question I posed about where they positioned themselves in relation to the stereotype presented.

With some informants, what came across was a reluctance to admit that the salaryman label applied to them. Yoshida Shun’ichi of Northern Energy was an example of this. For instance, when he presented me with his image of the ‘typical’ salaryman, he had stressed that, “with regards to what you’d call salarymen, I felt particularly defiant (hankōteki)” (Yoshida, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 11). Perhaps, due to the non-white-collar/desk-work nature of his work at Northern Energy, this sense of ‘resistance’ to defining himself as a salaryman seemed particularly pronounced:

In fact, that’s [the non-desk-work aspect] also an attractive aspect of this job. You don’t get the feeling that you’re just an average salaryman. Well, in fact, although the work does involve working on a computer in the office, there’s also labour, physical labour (nikutai rōdō), so it’s a really broad-ranging job. That’s why I don’t feel like I’m a salaryman, compared with the image.

(Yoshida, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 12)

However, at the same time, for many of the informants, there was also a degree of resignation – that no matter how much one might endeavour to do so, it was ultimately futile to try and prevent slipping into the ‘markers’ of the ‘typical’ salaryman. Thus, when I asked Makimura Keisuke, the Northern Energy planner who had provided me with a caricature of a ‘typical’ salaryman which could have been straight out of an advertisement for energy drinks, if he saw himself falling within the parameters of the description he had provided, he mentioned that he had “started to think so a little, of late” (Makimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 12). Specifically, it was particular day-to-day practices of salaryman life that brought about this self-perception:

Umm, well, such things as waking up in the morning, putting on a suit, and coming to the office. Making sure you arrive at the set time. In that respect, at university ... I was able to fit in my classes quite flexibly. Of late, I’ve started to lose that sense [of freedom], and it feels like my lifestyle has become a punctual and regular one.

(Makimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 12)
To me, this self-appraisal came as a bit of a surprise. Among the Northern Energy informants, Makimura-san had struck me, in terms of appearance and personality, as quite *atypical* of a salaryman. If anything, his appearance and the views he expressed seemed to signal to others that as an architect, he was different to the run-of-the-mill, pen-pushing salaryman. For instance, my interview notes for both rounds of the individual interviews with him make reference to his ‘unconventional’ (by salaryman standards) appearance and deportment – coloured (as opposed to the standard white) dress-shirt worn for both interviews, hair that was visibly tinted, fashionable rimless glasses.

Matsuzaka Kôhei, whose description of the ‘typical’ salaryman, as a stubborn, suit-clad, forty-year-old who only came home to sleep, was referred to above, thought that although at the moment he did not consider himself to be like this caricature, “I’ll probably end up like that someday, even though I don’t want to” (Matsuzaka, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 16). Takahashi Yoshio, who, as mentioned above, worked in a technical capacity on the shop-floor of the Northern Print plant, also did not think that his present life conformed with his image of the ‘typical’ salaryman. However, he felt that if he continued on in his present job and got married, he would end up becoming like the caricature he presented me with (Takahashi, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 7).

Nohara Nori of Northern Energy, who talked about an association of the salaryman image with a lack of self-motivation and merely going along with the flow of things, said that of late he had started to question the increasingly salaryman-like pattern of his own life – “going to work as a matter of course in the morning, then, working until late, grabbing some food, and going straight to bed” (Nohara, Round 1 Interview Transcript 13). In fact, Nohara-san’s job was quite a non-white-collar one; yet he, like Takahashi Yoshio of Northern Print who also worked in a non-white-collar capacity, saw no contradiction in using the label ‘salaryman’ when talking about himself. Arai Jun, who had described his image of the ‘typical’ salaryman as a deferential, fawning workaholic, already saw himself fitting this stereotype sometimes, particularly when he was “doing work that involved dealing with customers (*sekkyaku no shigoto*)” (Arai, Interview Transcript: 15). Nakamura Tetsuya, who had thought that white-collar office work was not *otokorashii*, saw himself fitting into the salaryman mould at times when he could not “retort back to a supervisor, [or] refuse an allotted task” (Nakamura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 7).
Another situation when Nakamura-san felt his ‘salaryman-ness’ surface, was when he was “pouring drinks (sake o tsugu)” for a superior (7), an action which not only reinforces junior-senior status hierarchies, but may also be seen as analogous to the tea-serving role associated with the female OL (see Ogasawara 1998). Like Ishida Naoki of Northern Energy, this informant’s sense of ambivalence with regards to his assessment of his own masculinity, as well as his position within the organization, was quite palpable. For instance, earlier in the interview, when we were discussing what kind of physical and emotional characteristics in a person he regarded as otokorashii, he told me that he thought of himself as otokorashikunai (not masculine) because he “was not assertive enough when talking” (Nakamura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 5). Moreover, when I jokingly suggested that given that he had been with Northern Print for a number of years, in all likelihood he was the one who had drinks poured for him by his juniors (kōhai), his (also joking) response was: “this doesn’t happen very often, unfortunately” (7). Nor did he think this was likely to be the case in the future. Rather, if anything, he mentioned feeling uneasy about the whole dynamics involved, including aspects of himself when he was operating in this kind of salaryman ‘mode’. Seeing himself in such situations gave him a sense of “seeing my future”, one where, ten or twenty years down the track, he would be “overworked (kōki-tsukaware yaku), and grovelling to the boss (jōshi ni heko-heko shiteiru)” (7).

Even with informants who appeared to be more ‘integrated’ and struck me as being on the track to becoming exemplars of hegemonic salaryman masculinity, there were times when this kind of ambivalence or contradiction came through. Thus, Murayama Satoshi, the Northern Energy employee who had likened being unemployed to being an animal unable to hunt for its food, also discussed what had been lost by the wayside since becoming a shakaijin:

What’s been lost after becoming a shakaijin? … Well, step-by-step, both in a positive sense and a negative sense, you end up getting fixed in your views, so conversely . . . lots of things are lost.

… These things that I’ve lost, well, you know, quite often when you’ve got to work together with everyone to produce something, and you’re told to come up with new ideas, and there’s lots of opportunity [to do so]. But, because that set way of thinking’s become entrenched, I think my ability to be creative (hassō-ryoku) has become really weak . . .

(Murayama, Interview Transcript : 57)

16 The etiquette surrounding the pouring and serving of drinks in formal settings reflects and reinforces gender and status hierarchies (see Allison 1994). For discussion of some of these conventions surrounding the offering of alcohol, see Ben-Ari (1989: 48–52) and Smith (1992: 143–147).
Murayama-san seemed to link this inability to be original in his thinking with the expectations of being a salaryman – as he put it:

when I’m doing something new, I just can’t suddenly (toppatsu) come up with new ideas … even if I think of something in my head, somehow there’s a part of me that thinks that I musn’t let myself get surprised by my ideas.

(Murayama, Interview Transcript: 57)

This sense of regret at what may have been lost in the process of becoming a respectable salaryman, was perhaps best summed up in his statement: “I dislike this me that’s stopped worrying about things” (58).

Statements such as the above seem to reflect the complexities weaving in and out of the day-to-day engagements between my informants and the discourse of salaryman masculinity that to varying degrees formed their reference point. In order to better appreciate these complex and sometimes contradictory dynamics, the remainder of this chapter will focus at some length on two specific individual informants – Matsumoto Tadashi of Northern Energy and Kimura Kenji of Northern Print. Both were the designated liaison person for my research for their respective organizations. In the course of my interactions with them I was able to get a sense of what Roper terms “the pleasures and discontents of masculinity in their work” (Roper 1994 215).

**Matsumoto Tadashi – The ‘Good’ Salaryman**

Matsumoto Tadashi, who worked in the accounts section of Northern Energy, became my liaison contact for Northern Energy, quite early on in the interview process. Consequently, I had a considerable degree of interaction with him, since he was the person I went through in arranging interviews with the other informants. Indeed, it was thanks to him that the interview schedule with the Northern Energy informants progressed smoothly. He brought to our dealings a meticulous attention to detail. For instance, for each round of the interviews, he would provide me with a carefully organized typed schedule of dates and times, and was in regular touch with me about confirmations and last minute changes.\(^\text{17}\) In terms of personality and appearance, he seemed to embody many of the ‘ideals’ of hegemonic salaryman

\(^{17}\) He revealed that he had originally wanted to study medicine and become a doctor – also a line of work demanding a strong sense of responsibility and careful attention to detail. Unfortunately, he was unable to obtain the score to get into medical school at the university entrance examinations, and ended up shifting his focus to business school, which ultimately led to his job with Northern Energy (Matsumoto, Round 1 Interview: 8, 9).
masculinity. My notes for instance mention that “overall, [he] gives the impression of being conservative, in a nice, wholesome way” (Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Notes). In terms of appearance he was not unlike a younger, slightly more stylish version of salaryman caricatures like the ‘JTB-Man’ mentioned in the Introduction, or the images from the manuals discussed in Chapter Four. He was of average height and build, pleasant looking without being exceptionally good looking, wearing glasses and with a neat conventional hairstyle. At all our meetings he dressed in a ‘respectable’ salaryman fashion – understated ties and white dress shirt, for instance. His personality, too, projected a similar sense of dependability and responsibility. Indeed, the word ‘responsibility’ (sekimin) was one that often cropped up in our interviews, and he admitted that he probably felt this sense of responsibility more than many of his peers. For instance, in response to my question at the start of my second interview with him, about what kind of changes there had been since our last meeting, he made the following observation:

“I suppose, right from the outset I’ve tended to feel quite a strong sense of responsibility towards my job. If anything, I’m probably one who ends up taking too much on my shoulders…”

[Interjection from me] Yes, if anything, I guess it’s because you’re quite conscientious (majime)…”

[Informant]: Yes, yes. To tell you the truth, I think so too when I analyse myself. In that respect, the fact that the responsibility’s increased, that for instance, the time spent at work has increased, or the amount of free time for myself has gone down … With respect to the responsibility towards my job in particular, I’ve always felt [a strong sense of responsibility], so that hasn’t really changed. However, the amount of responsibility others impose on me has changed.

(Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 2).18

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18 When I then reflected that this was perhaps due to the fact that his colleagues relied upon and trusted him, he made the point that more than that, it was the fact that (unusually for an organization of its size) the proportion of university graduates was quite low – in his own work-team, for instance, only two (including himself) of the eleven members were university graduates. This, according to the informant, placed an added sense of responsibility and workload on himself and the one other tertiary graduate (Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview: 2). This point about the relatively low proportion of employees who were university (as opposed to high-school or technical college) graduates for an organization of Northern Energy’s size and prestige was rather surprising. According to this informant, one of the reasons for this lay with “demands (yōhō) from local [communities] (jimōto) to hire their high-school leavers” (3). Northern Energy’s status as being not that different from a public service provider, and the Prefecture’s largest employer, coupled with the high unemployment rate in that prefecture (particularly for high-school graduates) resulting in a haemorrhage of young people leaving to seek work in urban centres like Tokyo and Osaka, reinforced this sense of the organization needing to fulfill altruistic social needs. This was brought home to me during my interviews. I had initially assumed that of the two organizations, Northern Energy and Northern Print, the proportion of university graduates would undoubtedly be greater with informants from the former. However, despite the fact that Northern Print was a relatively insignificant local operation, the proportion of university graduates among my informants was actually higher than with the Northern Energy informants. The difference however lay with the quality of the universities concerned – whereas the Northern Print university graduates were overwhelmingly from low-ranked local and private universities, the Northern Energy university graduates were often from top-ranking national, prefectural or private universities. Matsumoto Tadashi himself was a graduate of the Commerce Faculty of a university renowned in the Prefecture for the quality of its business program.
Matsumoto-san’s sense of ‘responsibility’, almost a sense of obligation, was also echoed in his approach and attitude to his employer, and the people around him. For instance, my query about how he had changed since becoming a shakaijin, led to the following exchange:

**Matsumoto (M):** Wonder what it is...? That’s a tough question, isn’t it? Yes, I think I’ve probably changed ... well firstly, ... I feel that inevitably I’ve been putting more stress on work responsibilities. Also, ... I feel that ... since ... interactions within work have increased significantly, other [i.e. non-work] relationships have, of course, been becoming restricted.

**Romit (R):** So, [relationships] within the company have increased and...

**M:** Yeah. And relationships [with people] outside the company (shagai to no tsukiai) have been decreasing. Well, I guess, you adapt to the environment, don’t you?

**R:** But, somewhere [within yourself] do you sometimes think you regret it? That you’re losing friendships from the past...?

**M:** Yes, I suppose there’s a certain amount ... yes there is some [regret]. But, I suppose, well, I still do meet them [non-work friends] when I can. However, certainly, since entering this company, compared with when I first entered, definitely, my work responsibilities (shigoto no sekinin) have increased, and accordingly I’m allocated a greater workload. So I sometimes feel I’m losing my freedom ...

(Matsumoto, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 10)

In keeping with his keen sense of ‘responsibility’, Matsumoto-san also conveyed a sense of personally embodying the organization, the notion of the ‘Northern Energy-man’ discussed in the previous chapter. For example, he mentioned that, compared with many of his colleagues he had “a stronger sense that his place in society (shakaitekina bubun) was that of a part of the company (kaisha no ichi-in), even when away from work” (Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 21). Indeed, he confessed that even outside of work he was conscious of his behaviour reflecting negatively on the organization (21).
This sense of his work and the organization providing an important reference point came through in our discussions about his projected life-path. This was something I got all the informants to reflect upon, to conjecture on themselves at various stages down their life-paths – ten years down the track, twenty years, and then after retirement. As discussed in Chapter Two when exploring some of the theoretical underpinnings of this research, the use of life-course/life-history research allows us to appreciate the dynamics between the socio-cultural and economic structures and processes from within which hegemonic masculinity is ‘crafted’, and the individual male’s engagements with hegemonic masculinity (see Roberson 1998: 16, 17; Connell 2000: 70; also Linhart 1992; Plath 1983b). Thus, with Matsumoto-san, who at the time of the interview was in his late twenties, I started off by asking him to present me with a picture of himself ten years down the track, in his late thirties. As was the case with many of the other informants, in addition to work-related matters, the future picture of himself that he presented also included discussion pertaining to marriage, fatherhood, and the kind of family he wished to build. I will be focusing on marriage and fatherhood in the next chapter, so I will restrict the discussion below to his visualization of himself in relation to work and career. The following exchange between us gives a picture of how he saw himself ten years down the track.

Romit (R): What do you think you’ll be like in ten years’ time? With regards to work, [and] in terms of family?

Matsumoto (M): In terms of work, chances are, probably, I would have made it to some extent into middle management-type (chûkan kanriteki) [jobs] like section manager (kachô)...

R: Out of interest, do you think you’ll be in the same company?

M: [without any hesitation] Yes, I think so. Basically, there’s no reason to quit. Thinking about the ways things are now...

R: I see.

M: I’ll be in this company and would have made it to a reasonable level of management. And ideally, I’d like to continue doing accounts-related work, and well, am aiming to become a specialist [in that work], so I’ll probably be doing that.

(Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 8)
He then went on to talk about how he saw himself as a husband and father, a topic I will return to in the next chapter, but one of the issues that came up that bears some connection with the present discussion was the certainty (and indeed lack of questioning) with which he saw himself being transferred and leading a single tanshin-funin life away from his family for a couple of years. Moving further on down his life-path, he once again stressed the likelihood of him remaining with Northern Energy over the course of his career, and saw himself, twenty years or so down the track, as a buchô, or departmental manager. As he put it, talking about the way he saw himself in his fifties:

Well, to tell the truth, if conditions go favourably for our company ... as long as I do my best, and since I’ll definitely continue on that premise, basically I don’t think there’ll be any major changes in terms of where I work.
(Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 10)

He then, in response to my question about whether he thought he would attain the rank of buchô by his late fifties, confidently stated that “that’s how I imagine myself (sō iu fû ni sōzô shiteimasu)” (Round 2 Interview Transcript: 10). His quiet confidence (and I stress quiet; as mentioned earlier he was extremely unassuming and modest about himself), both in his own future career success, and in his continued association with the same organization, seems to me to be indicative of his relative closeness to the hegemonic ideal of salaryman masculinity. In many respects, Matsumoto-san came across as an ‘exemplar’ of salaryman masculinity (see Connell 2000: 70–85).

Yet, for all his apparent closeness to exemplifying the ideals of salaryman masculinity, there were faultlines and disjunctures vis-à-vis the hegemonic ideal which he appeared to be not unaware of. This awareness is reflected in the following introspective comment, triggered by his inability to clearly articulate his image of himself after retirement when he would no longer be a salaryman:

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19 See my discussion of the tanshin-funin phenomenon in Chapter Three. As I pointed out, the term usually refers to married employees (often of mid-management rank) who are transferred by their companies either with Japan or overseas, and live away from their families, sometimes for periods of several years, ostensibly in order not to disrupt their children’s education.
20 Indeed, as Beck and Beck point out, whereas the chances of attaining the rank of kachô by the time salarymen are in their forties are quite high, the likelihood of attaining buchô rank is far slimmer. According to a 1977 survey conducted by President magazine that the authors cite, only 3 percent of tertiary graduates made it to the level of buchô (Beck and Beck 1994: 80). The authors, using figures based on Ronald Dore’s 1960s study of Hitachi, argue that the chances of reaching higher levels of management were greater in large corporations than in smaller organizations. My research, however, seems to suggest that it was in fact easier (and quicker) to rise up the corporate hierarchy in the smaller, local organization (Northern Print), than in the larger, relatively elite Northern Energy. Indeed, as I pointed out earlier in this chapter, one of the Northern Print informants, Kajima Daisuke, was at twenty-eight, already a kachô – something extremely unlikely in a large organization like Northern Energy. Roberson also notes the relative flexibility and pragmatism guiding such decisions as promotion in smaller firms (see Roberson 1998: 59–62).
Well I suppose, at the end of the day, work still takes up a fairly large part of my thinking. At the moment, I've started to realize this of late. When we talk about things like this, I realize that there isn't much besides work [in my life].

(Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 11)

Moreover, despite his (apparent) closeness to the salaryman 'ideal', his negotiations with the expectations of salaryman masculinity had not necessarily been any less complicated than, for instance, informants like Miura Tôru, discussed in the previous chapter. As I discuss in more detail in Chapter Nine, when exploring the *senpai*.*kôhai* dynamics, Matsumoto-san had been at the receiving end of some unsavoury victimization and bullying from a senior colleague when he had first become a *shakaijin*, which as he put it, "resulted in a lot of pressure, stress" (Matsumoto, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 18). This confession indicated that the complexity underlying individual negotiations with salaryman masculinity, "the pleasures and discontents of masculinity in ... work" (Roper 1994: 215) referred to above, is as relevant for an (apparently) 'exemplary' individual like Matsumoto-san, as for someone like Kimura Kenji of Northern Print, who I discuss below, and who deliberately defined himself in opposition to many of the ideals of salaryman masculinity.

Kimura Kenji: The 'Recalcitrant' Salaryman

Kimura Kenji, whose rather caustic observations about the employee training process we encountered in the previous chapter, worked in the sales section of Northern Print. He was Matsumoto Tadashi's Northern Print counterpart. Like Matsumoto-san, Kimura-san had been designated as the liaison person for my research project. This, however, was where any similarity between the two ended. Even the manner of interaction in their liaisons between myself and the other informants was as different as could be envisaged. In contrast to Matsumoto-san's meticulous, organized style, Kimura Kenji sometimes struck me as chaos and disorganization personified. Given that he worked in sales and was out on sales rounds for much of the day, he was often virtually impossible to get through to, unlike Matsumoto-san who diligently returned every call. Also in contrast to Matsumoto-san's carefully planned and neatly typed interview schedules, the schedules Kimura-san came up with were invariably hurried hand-written jobs, passed on to me a few days before the interviews were to commence. However, despite all this, I found his style rather refreshing, and the truth was that in the end, he always came through and the interviews would progress smoothly.
Even in terms of appearance, in contrast to Matsumoto-san's neat, respectable, understated 'typical' salaryman-like appearance, Kimura-san projected a decidedly un-salaryman like impression. For instance, his hair reached below his collar, and the glasses he wore were reminiscent of a style more likely to be favoured by a fashion designer or someone working in advertising or the music industry (an area with which, as I discuss below, he did in fact have close ties) than a respectable sales executive. In all our meetings I never once saw him wear a white dress-shirt. In fact, as my notes indicate, through his appearance (and, as I discuss below, his behaviour and comportment) he seemed to be deliberately trying not to fit into the parameters of salaryman masculinity (Kimura, Round 1 Interview Notes).

This trait was reinforced by his personality and his behaviour during our interactions and interviews. He was very articulate and did not mince words nor shy away from expressing an opinion. This lack of hesitation in saying what he felt, could (and sometimes did) result in negative reactions from co-workers and managers. However, his way with words, as well as his outgoing, 'street-smart' demeanour suited his work in sales, where he was required to deal with a wide range of individuals and organizations. Consequently, I got the sense that he was able to get away with much of his un-salaryman like behaviour precisely because he was effective at his job, and quite clearly an asset to the organization in terms of bringing in sales orders from customers. In fact, at one point during our interview, he admitted this himself. Talking about his disenchantment with certain work practices and policies insisted on by management, such as the need to go away to refresher training/professional development workshops on weekends, he mentioned that although all his colleagues in the sales section felt the same way, only he and one other person publicly expressed their dissatisfaction (Kimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 13). However, he acknowledged that "had my [sales] figures not been that good" (14), it may have been more difficult to be so vocal with his complaints. Quite clearly, as I discuss in more detail below, Kimura-san seemed to bask in appearing as non-conformist as possible within the allowable limits of acceptable bodily and behavioural non-conformity.21

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21 In some respects, the fact that he worked for a relatively non-bureaucratic, essentially family-run small firm which had been established a generation ago by a fairly flamboyant, non-conformist entrepreneur, may have allowed him some leeway in expressing this 'un-salaryman'-like behaviour. It would have been difficult to imagine a member of the sales staff at Northern Energy displaying (in public) similar traits; as a large bureaucratic concern, the corporate culture in Northern Energy emphasizes the flattening out of 'individuality' more so than is the case with a smaller firm like Northern Print.
As mentioned in passing above, Kimura-san had connections with the music and entertainment world; throughout his university years he had been heavily involved in this scene, working at various jobs including as a bartender and disc-jockey at nightclubs. Even after joining Northern Print, he had continued his involvement with the music scene – organizing music events on a freelance basis on weekends, for instance. The first time we met, he presented me with both his ‘official’ Northern Print meishi (business card) and one for his alter-identity (with his nickname, ‘K-man’ rather than his actual name printed), almost as a means of stressing his difference from the ‘average’ salaryman, and ensuring that I was made aware of this distinction. This emphasis on marking himself out from those going down a more mundane, everyday, well-trodden path came across when he was recounting to me his reasons for joining Northern Print:

Well, you know generally around the time just before you graduate from university, you look for employment (shūshoku kaisūdō) don’t you? But, in my case, I didn’t engage in a formal process of looking for a career. At the time I was asked by [someone] from the ‘night-sector’ (yoru no hō) if I wouldn’t consider joining the ‘night’ [entertainment sector]. I thought to myself “Well now...what should I do?”, but then ... at that time I thought about the future, you know after working for about four years, you have some idea about the ins-and-outs of the ‘night’ [world/sector], don’t you? So consequently, at that point although I thought that “maybe someday I’d like to give it a shot” – even now I think that - I gave up [on the thought of making a regular career in the ‘night-world’], and thought I’d learn about [work in] a ‘normal company’ (futsū no kaisha), so I took the [entrance test for and] joined this company [Northern Print].

(Kimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 9)

This sense of having become a salaryman almost by a quirk of fate, seemed to be quite influential and coloured the way that Kimura-san related to himself, his colleagues and superiors at Northern Print, and to his future within the organization. He had very little in the way of a sense of loyalty to the organization, and, unlike Matsumoto Tadashi and many of the other Northern Energy informants, did not really see his future as tied to the organization. Admittedly, this was generally the case with many of the Northern Print informants, and reflected the pattern of higher job-mobility and lower ‘loyalty’ in the small and medium-firm sector (see for instance, Roberson 1998: 122–131). However, with Kimura-san I got a sense that although, like many of the other Northern Print informants, dissatisfaction with the working conditions or the low salary did underlie his attitude, there was also an almost egotistical sense that he was far better than an organization like Northern Print deserved. This found expression through a sort of ‘devil-may-care’ breezy defiance towards his superiors and the organization in general, as well as being manifested in his everyday negotiations with specific work practices and expectations. The following exchange regarding his work schedule on an “average
work-day” (goku futsū no heijitsu) (Kimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 15), brings this out quite well:

Kimura (K): Generally, the usual workday is from eight in the morning until 5:30, but in sales we’re told to come in at 7.30.

Romit(R): I see.

K: Anyhow, I’m a ‘regular’ at running late every morning, arriving at 7.40…between [7:] 45 and 50, coming in late by twenty minutes, on late days, around thirty minutes…

R: Was that the case right from the beginning?

K: It was like that right from when I was a fresher (shinnyū shain).

R: Really?

K: That wasn’t looked upon too favourably (ki ni kuwanakatta).

R: umm, so didn’t you get told off?

K: I sure did! I’d get scolded and scolded! And for about the next day I’d go [on time] but, I’m pretty incorrigible (mikka bōzu). They [the superiors] ended up giving up on me! [laughs]

... 

K: I keep saying that going in early just to clean [i.e. prepare for the day] isn’t my work, so...

...

K: Well anyway, during the day [I’m ] usually on outside [sales] rounds (soto mawari). Then, when I get back [to the office] there’s desk work to be done. When, on the rare occasion when there’s nothing to do, I’m able to finish up and go home early around 6.30 [in the evening].
Apart from that, usually around 7.30 or 8. If it gets a bit busy, 10, 11 o’clock.

R: Is that right? I see.

K: At such times, I rest during the day, you know...

R: Yes, I guess with sales, because you have to meet so many different people, you need to have a rest to get re-charged, right?

K: Yeah, I do things like say I’m going over to a customer’s place and instead slack off (sabori shimasu [sic])

R: Um, so how do you ‘slack off’? Things like going to a coffee-shop?

K: Sometimes go to a coffee-shop, sometimes go home and take a nap!

...

K: Yes ... you get really ... so sleepy, and I think that if you go over to a client when you’re sleepy and can’t concentrate you won’t have much success ...

R: Well, I guess...

K: Yes, well, this may be a bit extreme, but sometimes I go for a whole week without doing any work at all!

(Kimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 15, 16)

At one level, exchanges such as the above may open up the possibility of reading ‘resistance’ and/or ‘subversion’ into these acts of insubordination and avoidance mentioned by Kimura-san. However, while recognizing that such responses form part of the complex interplay of engagements between the individual and the expectations of the hegemonic masculinity, it is also important not to read (as stressed in Chapter Two) too much resistance into (relatively) random acts of insubordination or non-compliance. Indeed, Kimura-san’s account reflects some of the issues I raised when setting out the theoretical contours of this thesis in Chapter Two – that individuals do not operate in nicely compartmentalized categories of resistance or compliance, subordination or subversion. Rather, as Kondo notes in relation to easily identifiable
acts of resistance along the lines of James Scott’s argument, “people can be caught in contradictions ... they simultaneously resist and produce, challenge and appropriate meanings ... inevitably participate to some degree in their own oppressions, buying into hegemonic ideologies even as they struggle against those ideologies” (Kondo 1994: 187, 188).

Kimura-san himself recognized this – the fact that people end up becoming agents of their own compliance to the hegemonic discourses – albeit, more in relation to others in the organization, than himself. Talking about how he saw his future in the company, he stressed that he was “really not thinking about the future at all. You don’t know what’s going to happen, when” (Kimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 14). We then went on to have the following exchange:

R: That’s true, I suppose

K: I’ve really got nothing in particular to make me stick to this company.

R: I see. So, with respect to this company you don’t have any particular sense of something like what you’d call ‘loyalty’ (aichaku)?

K: No I don’t.

R: How about other people ... is it generally the same kind of feeling?

K: No, I don’t think so. I can’t speak for the people inside (naka no ningen) [i.e. shop-floor employees], but with sales that’s not the case. Well, I guess I just had a kid too, but for those further up [in terms of age and seniority], they’ve got kids, and have taken out home loans, so they’re pretty much resigned to it ...

(Kimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 15)

Elsewhere, there were echoes of this sense of (what appears to be) ‘resistance’ to the expectations of salaryman masculinity. For instance, by the time of the second interview, he had gone from not being sure whether or not he would remain with Northern Print into the future, to being “ninety percent sure” that ten years down the track he “would not be here” (Round 2 Interview Transcript: 4). With regards to how ‘representative’ he felt he was of Northern Print, unlike Matsumoto Tadashi (and many of the other Northern Energy informants) he was quite blunt in stating that
even in situations where his behaviour in public might reflect negatively on his employer, "the thought never crosses my mind"(13).

What seems to come across here, once again, is a sense of Kimura-san’s conscious marking of himself as not being the same as everyone else (or at least his colleagues), of refusing to buy into the expectations built around the hegemonic discourse, and consequently not being affected by the expectations of salaryman masculinity. Thus, when early on in the first interview, I had asked him about the changes he felt he had undergone since becoming a shakaijin, his reply was an unqualified "nothing’s changed" (Kimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 11). Nor did he think he had “lost anything” (11), since entering the workforce. His response at the end of the same interview to my query about what had been his most positive experience since entering the organization, was also a blunt, unequivocal, “nothing (nai)!” (17). Yet, at the same time, my question about what he felt had been the most negative experience since entering the company, brought forth the following response:

K: The worst aspect … wonder if it would be the most negative thing? Probably, having to go over to see a customer... go to see a customer who’s some irritating old ‘geezer’ (hara [ga] tatsu oyaji), and have to acquiesce to him.

R: So, having to humble yourself to a client, but at the same time…

K: Yup. Except in my case, even while I’m ‘lowering my head’[while bowing] I let my dislike [of the person] show quite clearly on my face!

(Kimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 17)

This extended to the management of his own organization too. With the exception of the president of the company whom he admitted admiring, and the manager of his own section, he considered everyone else to be “inept” (Kimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 20). Indeed, when I followed this statement up by asking if there was anyone he “respected as a person”, he responded with, “the person I respect as a human being is myself” (20).

At one level, Kimura-san’s attitude to work may come across as the antithesis of the sense of solid responsibility and respectability conveyed by Matsumoto Tadashi. Yet, what comes across from both their accounts is that both were negotiating with the
demands of the ideals of salaryman masculinity in their own ways, highlighting the aspect of continual engagement that informs the crafting of salaryman masculinity.

Conclusion

This chapter, while continuing to employ the voices of my informants, has shifted the focus of the discussion from the informants’ memories of becoming male and then becoming salarymen, to their accounts of everyday engagements with salaryman masculinity. This discussion was located within the informants’ own framework of how they looked at the concept of work itself (and its significance to their masculinities), before examining where the discourse of salaryman masculinity sat (in the informants’ eyes) in terms of socio-cultural notions of ‘masculine’ and ‘un-masculine’ areas of work. The informants’ accounts appear to point to a contradiction in the ways in which hegemonic masculinities are constructed – the culturally pervasive/powerful hegemonic masculinity (salaryman masculinity) may not always be the culturally ‘idealized’ hegemonic masculinity (which is often equated with the physical embodiment of masculinity, as with some of the examples provided by the informants).²²

In order to get a deeper appreciation of the complexity and nuances in the informants’ day-to-day negotiations with salaryman masculinity, the second part of the chapter focused specifically on the accounts of two individual informants, whose narratives crystallized many of the concerns and issues raised by all the informants.

The next chapter will continue the discussion through the informants’ own voices, but will shift the focus to examining the intersections between salaryman masculinity and discourses of heteronormativity expressed through marriage, and fatherhood.

²² *Sararimon Kintaro*, discussed in Chapter Four, is an example of an attempt to marry the two (culturally idealized and culturally pervasive) into one.
CHAPTER EIGHT

WORKING WITH HETEROSEXUALITY: SEXUALITY, MARRIAGE, FATHERHOOD AND SALARYMAN MASCULINITY

The previous chapter explored the centrality of ‘work’ as a pillar around which salaryman masculinity is constructed. Specifically, the discussion revolved around the often complex ways in which my informants negotiated with the demands of work in their lives, and in relation to their sense of masculinity. However, as suggested, work, important as it may be, is not the only aspect of salaryman masculinity. Intersecting with work are other elements which are just as significant in the individual’s engagements with the expectations of hegemonic masculinity. Arguably, of particular significance among these expectations is the notion of the male as the provider, as the primary breadwinner upon whom the whole family unit depends for sustenance. Thus, merely becoming a shakaijin and earning a regular income is not enough as far as the expectations of salaryman masculinity are concerned. Rather, the individual’s ability to conform to a specific public and visible discourse of (hetero-)sexuality – one signified by the public ‘markers’ of marriage and (to a lesser extent) becoming a father1 – has a bearing on his ‘success’ at salaryman masculinity. It is through publicly acquiescing to these culturally privileged ‘markers’ that he demonstrates his successful transition from one stage of masculinity (unproductive, non-adult, pre-shakaijin/student) to the next (productive, mature, shakaijin salaryman). Indeed, as Lunsing points out, “in order to become ichininmae no shakaijin (a fully adult social being) one has to marry … men who do not take upon themselves the responsibility of supporting a household are not considered fully mature and thus can not be given responsibility for the most independent or powerful types of work” (Lunsing 2001: 74, 75).

This chapter will focus on the ways in which a particular discourse of (hetero-) sexuality, at the core of which lies the institutions of marriage and fatherhood, intersects with salaryman masculinity. The first part of the chapter sets up a conceptual framework for this discussion. The second part of the chapter then moves on to focus on the ways in which my informants negotiated with the expectations of

1 I have deliberately avoided using the term ‘fatherhood’ here. As I discuss further on in this chapter, ‘fatherhood’ suggests more than just being the male progenitor of an offspring. Rather, as LaRossa observes in his Introduction to his historical study of American fatherhood, ‘fatherhood’ implies a particular image – one which has become institutionalized – of the father as “economic provider, pal, and male role model all rolled into one” (LaRossa 1997: 1). With regards to salaryman masculinity, while these attributes may be seen as desirable, it is the act of becoming a father in itself, irrespective
salaryman masculinity revolving around the public expression of sexuality. These cover such issues as what 'marriage' and 'fatherhood' represented to the informants, both as an institution and at a more personal level; the intersections between conformity to the required discourse of sexuality and 'status' at work; how their imaginings of husband and father intersected with the envisaged life-paths they mapped out for me; as well as issues such as friendship and homosocial workplace relationships.

Organizational Masculinity and Sexuality

As discussed in an earlier chapter, an integral element of the project of industrial-capitalism – within which salaryman masculinity emerged as a visible and pervasive discourse of masculinity – was the regulation of sexuality and desire. Historian John D’Emilio draws attention to the importance of the regulation of sexuality as a cornerstone of capitalism:

On the one hand ... capitalism has gradually undermined the material basis of the nuclear family by taking away the economic functions that cemented the ties between family members. As more adults have been drawn into the free labor system, and as capital has expanded its sphere until it produces as commodities most goods and services we need for our survival, the forces that propelled men and women into families and kept them there have weakened. On the other hand, ideologically, capitalism drives people into heterosexual families: each generation comes of age having internalized a heterosexist model of intimacy and personal relationships. Materially, capitalism weakens the bonds that once kept families together so that their members experience a growing instability in the place they have come to expect happiness and emotional security.

(D’Emilio 1997: 174, 175)

This significance of heterosexuality to hegemonic masculinity has been recognized and commented upon by a number of writers. Connell, for example, points out that "the most important feature of contemporary hegemonic masculinity is that it is heterosexual, being closely connected to the institution of marriage; and a key form of subordinated masculinity is homosexual" (Connell 1987: 186). Pyle Frank highlights a similar point, noting the dominance of heterosexual hegemonic masculinity within the political economy (Frank 1987: 160, 161; see also, Hanke 1990; Kimmel 1994; Connell 1995; Vale de Almeida 1996; Bird 1996; Beynon 2002). The intersections between sexuality, hegemonic masculinity and organizational culture have also been examined in the works of numerous authors, both from the perspective of gender studies as well as the area of management and
organizational studies (for example, Burrell and Hearn 1989; Hearn et al. 1989; Collinson 1992; Hearn 1992; Roper 1994; McDowell 1995; Cheng 1996; Collinson and Hearn 1996; Pringle 1996; Reed 1996; Mills 1998, Aalton and Mills 2002; Hearn 2002; Wilson 2003). As many of these authors observe, although organizational culture may appear “to be a sexless, rational realm” (Hall 1989: 125), sexuality is in fact a pervasive (but unacknowledged) aspect of organizations (see Ackroyd and Thompson 1999: 121–143). For instance, Rosemary Pringle, in her discussion of the strategies adopted by female secretaries in their day-to-day engagements with the dominant gender regime in the office notes that

[Far from being marginal to the workplace, sexuality is everywhere. It is alluded to in dress and self-presentation, in jokes and gossip, looks and flirtation, secret affairs and dalliances, in fantasy, and in the range of coercive behaviours that we now call sexual harassment.

(Pringle 1989: 162)

However, as Pringle stresses, this pervasive sexuality (at least at the level of public discourse) is “relentlessly heterosexual” (164). Reflecting on her own experience in the organization where she conducted research, she notes that

Rich’s notion of ‘compulsory heterosexuality’... can be applied here for the sexual ‘normality’ of daily life in the office is relentlessly heterosexual. This takes place in concrete social practices ranging from managerial policies through to everyday informal conversations ... It involves the domination of men’s heterosexuality over women’s heterosexuality and the subordination of all other forms of sexuality. It was striking how few homosexuals, either bosses or secretaries, we turned up in our workplace visits. This was despite the fact that half of the interviews were carried out by homosexuals who offered cues that it was ‘safe’ to talk about the subject ... The only lesbian secretary who was completely open about her sexuality was a woman who had been married and had children and could thus claim to have paid her dues to ‘normality’. She said, ‘I think I’m good PR for lesbians ... because I’m so bloody ordinary. You know, I’ve been married, I’ve had children, I own a house, I own a car. I’m Ms Middleclass Suburbia!’

(Pringle 1989: 164, 165; see also, Hall 1989; McDowell 1995: 84, 85)
This observation points to the argument that while sexuality (including same-sex homosocial/sexual sexuality) circulates through and indeed underpins organizational culture, it is a discourse of (public) heterosexuality that is hegemonic. Moreover, rather than any kind of heterosexuality, it is the signifying of a particular discourse of heterosexuality through markers such as marriage, parenthood, and home ownership that is particularly privileged. Thus, in a sense, the fact that at the time (of her conversation with Pringle) the employee referred to above was not heterosexual was immaterial. Rather, it was the fact that she had ‘proved’ her ability to fulfil the expectations of hegemonic heterosexuality through her former marriage and through being a parent that was of greater consequence.

For male employees, ‘proving’ this heterosexuality in public is thus closely linked to hegemonic masculinity. Moreover, while displays of unregulated heterosexuality (for instance, promiscuous [hetero]sexual behaviour) may fortify an individual’s claim to hegemonic masculinity (see, for example, Collinson 1989:190–192; McDowell 1995: 85, 86), this is true up to a point. Beyond a certain age, and/or a certain level of seniority however, regulated heterosexuality through marriage (and subsequently fatherhood) becomes an important condition for access to the dividends of hegemonic masculinity. Michael Roper, in his study of managers in the United Kingdom, highlights the importance of marriage as a ‘marker’ of entry into hegemonic masculinity:

Marriage forms a further rite of passage in the managerial transition to manhood. All the men in my sample married, most a few years after being appointed to management. Memories of ‘freedom’ in early career ... are associated with being unattached...

Yet by the time a man reaches his thirties and mid-career, marriage was expected ... . Managers in my sample ... saw men who had remained unmarried as marginal figures. They were recalled by reference to this supposed lack, identified at first mention as ‘the bachelor’. A work culture based on fraternity gave way in mid-career to one in which family men were advantaged. Marriage was frequently an informal prerequisite for promotion.

(Roper 1994: 83, 84)

Such expectations are not confined to management executives. As Collinson’s study of shop-floor workers highlights, being a married family breadwinner is pivotal to determining a sense of masculine self-worth (Collinson and Collinson 1989; also, Collinson 1992). Thus, regardless of whether we are talking about white-collar managers or blue-collar line workers, regulated heterosexuality is integral to the day-to-day dynamics of corporate industrial-capitalism.
Sexuality, Marriage, and Salaryman Masculinity

The issues raised in the previous section are of particular relevance to the discourse surrounding salaryman masculinity. As a lead-in to discussing some of these issues, I will draw upon a 1992 film directed by Nakajima Takehiro, which engages with issues of particular relevance to our discussion. The film in question, entitled Okoge,\(^4\) revolves around two main male characters Tochi, a middle-aged married salaryman, Goh, his younger male lover with whom he is having an extra-marital relationship, and a female character, Sayako, who is infatuated with the male couple.

Tochi makes constant reference to the pressures of having to maintain the appearance of married heterosexuality in his workplace. In one scene, he is shown forcing himself to laugh along with everyone else at a homophobic comment made by a work colleague. The relationship between the two men is discovered by Tochi’s wife, who gives him the choice of either giving up his boyfriend and maintaining his marriage, or being ‘outed’ at work.

Needless to say, his relationship with Goh does not survive. However, neither, in the end, does his marriage and his salaryman identity. In a telling scene towards the end of the film he chooses to publicly ‘come out’ in quite a spectacular fashion in front of his work colleagues, thereby effectively opting out of salaryman masculinity. The setting for this is an occasion which is perhaps as significant in a salaryman’s life-path as any, and which signifies in a very public manner his inclusion in this discourse of masculinity – a wedding. Moreover, it is the wedding of one of Tochi’s junior colleagues, and he has been asked to officiate as the nakôdo, the symbolic match-maker or go-between, for the couple. The role of nakôdo, as Walter Edwards in his study of Japanese weddings notes, although largely symbolic, is an extremely important one within the ceremony (1989: 15). It is usually performed either by an older male relative or a work superior, who effectively becomes a guardian or guarantor for the newly-wed couple. As Edwards points out, the nakôdo “must be a married man ... one who has already demonstrated his ability to lead a stable married life. He is likely to be considerably older ... and should be socially prominent and respected as well” (Edwards 1989: 15). The scene in the film has Tochi arriving at the ceremony, not with his wife, but with a male partner who is dressed (not very

\(^4\) For discussion of the film, see Buckley (2000), Hall (2000), McLelland (2000: 98–101). The title plays upon a modified version of the slang term for a male homosexual, okama. An okama can also refer to the pot that rice was traditionally cooked in. The burnt rice that sticks to the bottom and sides of the pot is known as okoge. Hence, if the other meaning of okama (i.e. homosexual male) is deployed, okoge refers to (heterosexual) women who ‘stick to gay men’ – i.e. prefer the company of, or are infatuated with, gay men. In English the equivalent street term would be ‘fag hag’, which is the
convincingly) as a woman in a formal kimono and hairstyle befitting the wife of a nakôdo. Tochi formally introduces his ‘wife’, announces his resignation from the company, and performs a parodied children’s song (with concealed sexual references) much to the horror of the bride and groom and assembled guests (including all his work colleagues). As Sandra Buckley observes:

This ‘coming out’ at a company-sponsored wedding ceremony, in front of his wife, her family and his boss marks Tochi’s decision to refuse to continue to perform the roles of sararininan ... and household head/husband. His mockery of the wedding ceremony as the public performance of the confirmation of the contract of entry into the heterosexual nuclear family structure, is final punctuation mark to the death sentence Nakajima [the director] has articulated across the film narrative.

(Buckley 2000: 241)

The film as a whole, and in particular this specific scene, brings into sharp relief the intersections of marriage, household, heterosexual performance, and company which underpin the hegemonic discourse of shakaijin salaryman masculinity. Becoming a shakaijin involves more than merely entering into paid work upon completion of education. Rather, for both men and women, linked into the status of becoming shakaijin is the notion of becoming “ichininmae no shakaijin (a fully adult social being)” through marriage (Lunsing 2001: 74). The implicit assumption behind this line of reasoning, as Lunsing notes, is that a person is not fully adult unless married with the accompanying responsibilities. Walter Edwards also draws attention to the parallels between the public validation of adult shakaijin status when entering into productive labour, and when getting married. Discussing addresses given at weddings he notes that:

Wedding speakers ... use shakai and shakaijin to assert a change in the status of the bride and groom. Because of their marriage, the speakers will say, the couple now enter society anew or have finally become full members of society. Such statements often preface injunctions to the couple to conduct themselves in a socially responsible manner ....

(Edwards 1989: 117)

For the groom, this acting in a “socially responsible manner” involves being the daitokubashira,5 and for the bride, it translates to being a wife and mother,

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5 Lunsing points out the gender bias at work in the term — whereas, for men ichininmae in itself connotes a fully adult status, women, “in relation to the concept of ichininmae, at most become ichininmae no onna (fully adult women), which is a fully adult but gendered being ... derived from the male norm, a position that is obtained by marriage and having children” (Lunsing 2001: 75).

6 Tom Gill captures the essence of the term perfectly in the following description: “Perhaps the most telling traditional metaphor of static Japanese manhood is that of the daitokubashira, meaning the
sustaining and nurturing the household from within. This, as highlighted in earlier chapters, is despite a reality over the postwar decades (and to an extent, over the pre-war era too) of women always having played a significant role within the paid employment sector (not to mention the generally unpaid, household/family business sector). However, regardless of the reality, femininity in its construction and representations has been inextricably linked to notions of ryōsai kenbo (good wife, wise mother) and sengyō shifū (professional housewife). Until quite recently, paid work for a woman was ideologically constructed as a sort of ‘finishing school’ between the end of study and the commencement of the ‘real’ career as housewife and mother (Lo 1990: 60–67; Ogasawara 1998: 58–63). Paid work after marriage was regarded either as necessary for bolstering the family income, or as a sort of ‘hobby’ or indulgence for bored housewives once child-rearing responsibilities have eased somewhat (Roberts 1994: 19–32; Broadbent 2003: 90–118).^7

Thus, for both men and women, marriage signifies acquiescence to widely held socio-cultural notions of “jōshiki” (common sense, what is considered normal, natural) (see Lunsing 2001).^8 It also signals conformity to the expectations of good citizenship – the hegemonic ‘ideal’ of which is embodied in the salaryman/professional housewife pairing. For men, the social, economic, and personal dividends accruing from becoming a husband are reflected in Lunsing’s observations on the views of some of his informants regarding marriage. He notes that his older married male informants saw marriage as signifying comfort and warmth. For them marriage represented

great central pillar that supports a house … . In the image of the daikokubashira, man merges with pillar. It is an image of reliability, of strength, of stasis” (Gill 2003: 144).

^7 Both Glenda Roberts and Kaye Broadbent highlight the contradictions inherent in such assumptions. Roberts (1994: 19–21), for instance, describes an address given by the president of the hosery company she was conducting her research in, the theme of which was the moral degeneration of Japan as a consequence of women not fulfilling their duty of looking after the household and raising children. This address was given to all the company employees on the occasion of the organization’s anniversary, including the garment production workers, the majority of whom, as Roberts notes, were women. Moreover, not only did many of these women consider work to be a necessity for themselves and their families, the company, despite all the (President’s) rhetoric about ‘good wives’, actually needed these female workers. This kind of ‘double standard’, emphasizing the ideology of the ‘professional housewife’ while simultaneously being dependent on (cheap, often part-time) female labour, has worked to the advantage of both corporations and the state. As Broadbent, in her recent study of female part-time work highlights, “governments through welfare and social policies institutionalise the gendered division of labour by privileging spouses/families where women remain dependent on male incomes” (Broadbent 2003: 90). Moreover, as she notes further on in the discussion “women as Japan, while encouraged to become a part of the paid workforce, are not encouraged to remain in the workforce during the child-rearing years when family demands keep them in an exclusively domestic role … . In emphasising industrial development, successive governments in Japan have created a welfare state with the ‘family’ as its foundation” (91).

^8 As the title of his work (Beyond Common Sense) suggests, this notion of jōshiki as an underpinning in people’s constructions of their world-view is a core thematic pillar of Lunsing’s work. As he points out: “Few scholars mention common sense as an important organizing principle in Japanese. Although many must be aware of its existence, it is seldom explicated. The Japanese language has a number of terms that might be translated as common sense, … rhetoric … or generally prevalent ideas. The most all-encompassing is jōshiki … .” (Lunsing 2001: 5).
a transition to an easier life in which they may actually gain freedom because, if they were living alone and taking care of themselves, they no longer have to do their own shopping, cooking and cleaning. This gives them more time to spend as they please ... Their main role is in the workplace and when they marry they receive spouse benefits. Their position is enhanced by having become ichininmae because they have taken upon themselves the responsibility of supporting a household, which makes them more trustworthy in the eyes of their superiors at work.

(Lunsing 2001: 84)

Conversely, not getting married carries the implication of being not ichininmae, but rather, "hanninmae, ... half of a person ... not independent individuals but like children waiting to grow up, no matter what their age is" (Lunsing 2001: 75). Indeed, not getting married may be seen as non-compliance to, or even active rebuttal of, the responsibilities of good citizenship. An example of men who may be regarded as revoking – or at least, opting out of – these requirements of proper male citizenship would be the day labourers discussed by Tom Gill (Gill 2003; also Fowler 1996; Gill 2001). These men, in many respects, represent the antithesis of the model of responsible salaryman masculinity (Gill 2003: 149). Apart from not having steady, regular incomes, most of them, as Gill points out, have either never married, or are divorced, or have abandoned their families (147, 148) – a clear marker of their exclusion from (or rejection of) the role of daikokubashira.10

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9 Lunsing observes that this line of thinking, which sees an unmarried person as not fully developed, is reflected in language. As he points out, until recently the only term applied to an unmarried person was mikun (not yet married), and it has only been in recent years that alternative terms such as shinjuru (single) or hikon (unmarried) have come into use (Lunsing 2001: 85). There is, however, another term for an unmarried person, which Lunsing does not mention, and which has positive (or at least, neutral) connotations. This term is dokushin, a compound of the two kanji characters for independent/single/lone (doku) and body (shin). It is used in such contexts as dokushin kizoku (literally, 'single aristocrats') a term that came into vogue during the affluent bubble economy' boom years, and applied to young, single men and women who were able to indulge in consumption-based lifestyles unavailable to older, married couples (see for instance, Greenfeld 1994). Indeed, it was during these years that the media started talking about various 'social trends related to young people (usually young women) choosing to stay single. These included such phenomena as Nariita Rikon (Narita Divorce) whereby a young couple would get divorced upon return from their honeymoon overseas – hence the reference to Narita, Tokyo's international airport – since the wife had realized how socially inept the man she had married was, and decided that being single was not such a bad option, after all. Other 'social phenomena' picked up by the media during these years included the kekkon shinai ka mo shirei 'za shokkōgun (the 'Perhaps-I-won't-get-married-after-all' syndrome), and the kurowassan shokkōgun (the 'Croissant Syndrome, Croissant being a popular young women's magazine which supposedly encouraged women to be independent, and thereby supposedly discouraged them from getting married) (Lunsing 2001: 87). As Lunsing correctly points out, the application of pseudo-psycho-pathological labels like shokkōgun (syndrome) and byōri (pathology) by the media to these trends indicated a deep-seated anxiety and disapproval about this reluctance to get married (87), a disapproval also reflected in the more recent label 'Parasite Singles' (discussed below).

10 In a slightly different context, criticism of individuals rejecting or opting out of marriage-centred shokkatō status, is also reflected in recent journalistic and 'pop' academic-style social commentary on the phenomenon of 'parasite singles'. This expression was coined by the sociologist and commentator Yamada Masahiro to describe adults who, for supposedly 'selfish' reasons, refuse to get married and take on adult responsibilities, opting instead to continue depending on (financial and psychological) parental support (Yamada 1999). While the term 'parasite single' itself is gender-neutral, and has on occasion been applied to men, it tends to be generally reserved for women who choose to remain single (and in the work-force). The implication is that by not doing their 'duty' and becoming wives
Thus, while marriage and becoming *ichininmae* carries with it both tangible and intangible dividends, remaining single often has negative social and career repercussions. Murata Yōhei, a researcher at Kyoto University, discusses some of these in a study on the ways in which single, middle-aged men interact with public spaces (Murata 2000). One of the findings that emerges from his study is the variety of ways in which this sense of alienation and exclusion circulates through the workplace. His informants talk about such things as being passed over for promotion beyond the level of *kachō* (section manager) as a consequence of being unmarried, or anger at the expectation that not having a family means that you have more time, and hence should not complain about a heavier work-load (Murata 2000: 541).

Even where there may be no negative consequences *per se*, single men still have to negotiate with expectations of heterosexuality, particularly assumptions centred around marriage and taking on the role of provider. Lunsing mentions these expectations from family and colleagues as an issue his gay male informants had to contend with. It is also the focus of the April 2000 issue of the periodical *Queer Japan* which published a collection of essays, interviews and survey data, entitled *Hentai-suru Sarariman* ('Queering the Salaryman'). Several of the questions that formed the basis of the survey on gay salarymen focused on issues of sexuality and work, including whether the respondents had experienced "marriage pressures (kekkon atsuryoku)", and how these had been dealt with (*Queer Japan* April 2000: 67–103). One of the strategies adopted, both by many of the *Queer Japan* survey and mothers, these women are responsible for Japan's declining birth-rate, aging population (and implicitly, its social and economic decline).

11 Wim Lunsing also brings this out in his research. Among his informants were individuals such as a gay male who claimed to have been dismissed for refusing to marry, and a sixty-year-old office-cleaner, who because he "always thought that it was wrong for a gay man to marry and persisted in his principles" had "spent his life changing from one job to another and knew very well that the fact that he was not married increasingly restricted his job opportunities" (Lunsing 2001: 112). Lunsing also observes that gay men make up a significant proportion of unmarried day labourers in areas of Tokyo, Osaka, and Yokohama where day labourers congregate (113; see also Gill 2001).

12 This sense of alienation also extends to non-work spaces. His informants talk about such consequences of being middle-aged and unmarried as being treated disdainfully by the apartment caretaker when repairs need to be carried out (Murata 2000: 542), being regarded with suspicion by female sales-staff when shopping for provisions at the supermarket during lunch-break from work (543), or the non-availability of recreation spaces (outside of bars and gambling venues) where middle-aged men, not accompanied by wives or families, can feel comfortable (545).

13 I have chosen to translate the expression *hentai-suru*, as 'queering'. *Hentai* which is more commonly used as an adjective or noun, can either be translated as 'queer, perverted, abnormal', or as 'metamorphosis, transformation'. *Suru* is the verb for 'to do', and can be used to make nouns and adjectives into verbs (as in, *denwa-suru*, literally 'to telephone'). Hence, the title *Hentai-suru Sarariman* would appear to be a deliberate choice, which could be read as either 'To Queer/Make Abnormal the Salaryman' or 'Metamorphose/Transform the Salaryman'. (Translations based on Kenkyusha's *New Japanese-English Dictionary*)

14 These questions elicited a variety of responses. A respondent who called himself 'Kenzō', for instance, mentioned the work atmosphere as being one where "getting married is considered natural (atarinae), if you don't get married you can't become ichininmae. If you're forty and still single,
respondents and by some of Lusing's informants as part of these engagements with expectations of heterosexuality is what Lusing refers to as "gomakasu, ... avoiding answering a question, ideally in such a sophisticated manner, that the questioner does not notice that one is evading the subject" (Lusing 2001: 221). Examples of these include being evasive, flippant, claiming to be too young to marry, being vague about gender pronouns when asked about wives or girlfriends (something easier to do in Japanese than in English), and other hedging strategies (Queer Japan April 2000: 68–103; Lusing 2001: 217–229).¹⁵

What emerges from these accounts is a specific model of regulated heterosexuality revolving around being the family provider that becomes privileged in the context of the dominant gender ideology at work. At the same time, another issue that needs to be borne in mind is that of the complexities involved in the engagements with these expectations. While the pressures to conform to the expectations of married, daikokubashira masculinity may indeed be very real, it is not a simple case of naked coercion, or of individuals being 'brainwashed' into subscribing to the hegemonic expectations. Rather, as the gomakasu strategies discussed above indicate, individuals can, and do, engage in a variety of (sometimes contradictory) interactions in their negotiations with the hegemonic ideal.

The remainder of this chapter will draw upon my own informants' voices in order to bring out some of this richness and complexity. The discussion will focus on the ways in which my informants negotiated with those expectations of salaryman masculinity that revolved around the public expression of sexuality. These cover such issues as: what 'marriage' and 'fatherhood' represented to the informants, both as an institution and at a more personal level; the intersections between conformity to the required discourse of sexuality and 'status' at work; and how their imaginings of husband and father intersected with the envisaged life-paths they mapped out for me.

**Marriage and Salaryman Masculinity in Informants' Lives**

Due to its significance as an underpinning of salaryman masculinity, marriage was one of the key questions I covered with my informants. As explained when outlining

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¹⁵ Among the many strategies mentioned by Lusing's informants and the Queer Japan respondents, one struck me as particularly resourceful (if rather extreme). This was from a female informant, who in response to the stock 'Why aren't you married?' type of question, 'came up with... 'I was married but he died last week in a plane crash'" (Lusing 2001: 229).
their general profile in Chapter Two, the informants included both single and married individuals. A few who were single at the time of our first meeting were married by the end of my field research. Of the various issues covered in my interviews with the informants, marriage was one of the easier ones in terms of eliciting immediate, concrete responses. This may have been due to the immediacy of the topic to most of the informants. Many of the informants were around (or approaching) what is considered to be the culturally appropriate 'marriageable age' (tekireiki) for men. As mentioned, a few were already married at the time of our first meeting, others had concrete plans to do so in the immediate future, and the remainder (even if they did not currently have a girlfriend) saw themselves married in the short- to medium-term future. Perhaps reflecting the pervasive social and cultural hold of marriage as an institution, not one informant mentioned an intention to never marry (though one or two might have questioned their own ability – in terms of masculine appeal – to attract marriage partners). Moreover, there seemed to be an implicit assumption on their part of my concurrence with their views regarding marriage. Given that I seemed – in my behaviour, speech, attitudes to life, familiarity with reference points they identified with – basically like them, there was an unspoken assumption that I must be ‘normal’, and hence must consider marriage to be atarimae (natural) for a man (and woman).

The Meaning of Marriage

An appropriate entry to the voices of the informants would be the responses they provided me with when I asked them about the meaning of marriage in their lives, irrespective of their actual marital status. At twenty, Miura Toru, the Northern Energy employee, whose transition difficulties into shakujin life were discussed in Chapter Six, had barely entered adulthood. Yet he had some clear ideas about what marriage meant to him. Ideally, he told me, he would like to get married young, “before twenty-five” (Miura, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 10). Marriage to him represented “not being alone” (20). Expanding on this notion of the need to be a part

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16 The exact translation of the term itself would be, as Walter Edwards notes, “appropriate age”. However, he continues, it “specifically refers to the appropriate age for marriage – the range of years when one ought to get married, and past which it becomes increasingly difficult to find a partner” (Edwards 1985: 63). This range, for men, at the time Edwards published his discussion in the late 1980s, was twenty-six to thirty. For women it was twenty-two to twenty-five; hence the reference, which had currency during these years, to the comparison between women and Christmas cakes. The line of reasoning was that like Christmas cakes, sales of which reach their peak in the days leading up to Christmas Day (the 25th) before sharply dropping, women were at their most ‘saleable’ in the marriage market up to the age of twenty-five, rapidly becoming ‘on-the-shelf leftovers’ thereafter! (Brinton 1992: 79, 80). While the tekireiki for men has roughly remained the same over the decade or so since Walter’s work, the age for women has risen slightly, hovering around twenty-six (Goodman 2002b: 134).

17 See McDowell (2000: 412, 413) for a discussion of the certainty with which her informants among working-class youth in Britain also saw themselves as husbands and fathers a few years down the track.
of a coupled pairing in order to become ichininmae, he argued that: “it’s natural to want someone, someone to talk to (hanashi-aite)” (21). When I then asked him why he saw getting married as a necessary condition for companionship, given that it was possible to be with someone without necessarily getting married, he reflected on this for some time, before coming up with the following response:

    Somehow, it just seems the natural thing (atarmae). Maybe that’s because, possibly, I’ve grown up seeing everyone else [get married as a matter of course]. Possibly, you want to do the same things as everyone else, don’t you? I’m not sure.

    (Miura Round 2 Interview Transcript: 11)

At the time of our conversation, this informant did not have a girlfriend and hence did not have a specific person in mind when making these observations. Yet, for precisely this reason, the strength of the discourse which sees getting married as jōshiki (common sense) (Lunsing 2001), is reflected in his words.

This notion of marriage as an antidote to the loneliness of being single was echoed in the words of a number of other informants. Takahashi Yoshio, a twenty-three-year-old Northern Print technical shop-floor employee wanted to get married before he turned thirty. To him, getting married represented a solution to the loneliness of “living alone” (Takahashi Round 2 Interview Transcript: 7). In his view, the loneliness of being single was associated with “even such things as food not tasting good (gohan ... mo oishiku nai)” (7) when living on your own. Ogasawara Takurō, the Northern Energy employee whose reflections on work and its significance in his life were discussed at some length in the previous chapter, also mentioned wanting to be married by the time he turned thirty. His main reason for wanting to get married was because he “desired peace of mind (yasuragi)” (Ogasawara, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 14). This “peace of mind”, according to him, was something that was not possible in the workplace because at work he was “always on edge, tense and unable to relax” (14). Satō Hiroshi was another Northern Energy employee who wanted to see himself married by thirty; ideally, between twenty-seven and thirty (at the time he was twenty-three). Marriage, in his view, was “part of the course nature takes (shizen no nagare)” (Satō, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 8) Giving birth to children through marriage was “one of the main reasons for living (jinsei no ikigai)” (8), something that he had never questioned. Indeed, as he put it, the “major role for marriage was to raise children to be responsible adults (ichininmae)” (8). Kobayashi Kazushi, another Northern Energy employee in his mid-twenties, also linked marriage to something that was akin to a natural part of the life cycle; to him it was “something that one does” (Kobayashi Round 2 Interview Transcript: 10).
Another association with marriage that cropped up in discussions was marriage as a conduit to adulthood – a means of channeling the ‘wildness’ and unpredictable nature of youth. Thus, for Saiki Yasuo, a twenty-three-year-old technician in Northern Print who wanted to see himself married within his twenties, marriage signified “settling down (ochitsuku)” (Saiki, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 8). He described his present lifestyle as one where he found himself “wandering aimlessly” (8). This consisted of “playing hard”(1), specifically “drinking, picking up girls” (2). In his view, this was a condition that only marriage could rectify. He reflected on this notion of ‘settling down’:

I suppose if you talk about settling down … I suppose, the first thing would be supporting a family properly, ... strange as it may sound ... living a normal life (futsu ni seikatsu shite), having children, raising them properly, that's how I interpret 'settling down'.

(Saiki, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 9)

Significantly, with the exception of Takahashi Yoshio of Northern Print and Kobayashi Kazushi of Northern Energy, not only were all of the informants discussed above unmarried, but also, at the time of the interview, not involved in steady relationships. Yet, despite this, they all seemed to have very specific ideas about marriage.

However, one unmarried informant did express a fairly ‘open’, even questioning attitude to this notion of marriage being a necessary marker of ichininmae adult status. Unlike most of the other informants who put thirty as the age by which they saw themselves married, Ishida Naoki, the twenty-one-year-old Northern Energy employee whose perception of his own shortcomings with regards to ‘ideals’ of masculinity was touched upon in the previous chapter, thought he would still be single ten years down the track. As he put it, “I’ll probably still be living a carefree (kimama) single life” (Ishida, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 5). He thought that the late thirties would be an appropriate age to get married, but also stressed that if by then he “had not met the right person, remaining single wouldn’t really be a problem” (9). At the time of our interview he did not have a girlfriend, and had been single for around six or seven years (10). The reason for marriage, as far as he was concerned, was “wanting to be with someone for the rest of your life … that’s the major premise” (13). However he had no real problems with continuing a relationship without a formal marriage; as he put it, “marriage, well, I think it’s just one type of structure (hitotsu no katachi)” (13).
Marriage and Workplace Status

With regards to marriage and its connection to work, the initial reaction of many of the informants was to deny any connection. Saiki Yasuo's was a fairly typical response. On the one hand, he denied any connection between being married and the way one is regarded in the context of the workplace – his exact words were “there’s no connection (kankei nai)” (10) – but at the same time, almost inadvertently, bringing out this connection.

The company looks at things like the way you work, your work [performance], so there’s no connection with being married or not married. As a result of getting married there might be ‘pluses’ on your work, or ‘minuses’.

(Saiki, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 10)

The ‘pluses’ of getting married, according to this informant, included “a change in attitude in some people” (Saiki, Round 2 Interview Transcript:10) as there was now the need to “work hard for the sake of the family” (10). On the other hand the ‘minuses’ from getting married would be situations where family responsibilities, such as child-rearing, result in your “mind and body getting tired”(11), thereby impacting negatively on your work. This, he stressed in response to my question about himself, would never happen to him. As he explained, no matter how involved he got with his children, he “was confident it would not interfere with work” (11).

Unlike informants such as Saiki Yasuo who denied any such connection, Ogasawara Takurō of Northern Energy recognized the connection between a person’s marital status and the way he was regarded at work. As he explained, “I think that within the context of a Japanese organization, after a certain age [being married] makes the biggest difference as to whether or not you’re able to gain society’s trust” (Ogasawara, Round 2 Interview: 15). Indeed, he was quite honest about his own prejudices in this matter, stating that although “in my head I know that it shouldn’t be a consideration in evaluating people, yet, to tell you the truth, if I see someone unmarried at forty or forty-five, I end up thinking ‘I wonder if there isn’t something wrong with him?’” (16). This sentiment was also echoed by Satō Hiroshi who noted that regardless of what the company’s official line might be in the matter, “I myself do take it [i.e. marital status] into account a little. I suppose, I’m concerned with what others think” (Satō, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 9).

This connection between work and marriage, and more generally the relationship between marriage and societal validation, was made particularly visible in the conversations with recently married informants as they reflected upon the ways in
which colleagues had responded to their change in marital status. Fujita Ōji was a twenty-seven-year-old Northern Print employee who worked in sales and marketing. At the time of our discussion, he had been married for four years. Moreover, prior to his marriage – somewhat unusually in the context of Japan – he and his partner had cohabited together for a number of years; they had been involved with each other for eight years before deciding to get married (Fujita, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 8). Fujita-san admitted that their decision to get married after so many years of already living together had an element of wanting to make the relationship ‘official’, particularly as he was from Kyūshū, a part of Japan that, he mentioned, is regarded as being quite traditional as far as attitudes towards gender are concerned. As he put it:

For example ... even if you’re living together, when you’re not married, well, [people are] taken by surprise ... if you say things along the lines of “[we’re] living together”, [they] get taken aback. But if you’re married and say “we’re married”, that’s where it [the curiosity] ends. So ... if you’re not married, I think there’s an element of people getting needlessly concerned. There’s that difference [between being unmarried and married].

... Hence, it starts getting increasingly annoying, being asked all kinds of inquisitive questions even if you say you live together. So even if the two of you think that’s best for you, others see that as being weird.

(Fujita, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 10)

As he admitted, however, this was not the only consideration at stake. There was also an element of “it was the right time ... as we’d already been together for five or six years” (Fujita, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 9). In one sense, marriage, to him, was “just a piece of paper, and signing on it wasn’t going to change my life” (10). However, as he discovered, marriage turned out to be of far greater significance than I had thought”(10). This “great significance” (or literally, ‘heavy[ness]’, omotai), hinged on the “responsibility” he now had towards immediate family, relatives and friends, as the husband in the husband-wife pairing (fūfu). He did not, however, feel that there was any strong connection between (his, or in general) marital status and being ‘trusted’ at work. Despite the existence of a dominant societal image of the ‘responsible’ married man, in reality, “it doesn’t always follow one hundred percent, that just because you get married and become a parent you develop a sense of responsibility” (Fujita, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 13).

Kajima Daisuke was another married Northern Print employee. However, unlike Fujita-san who worked in sales and marketing, Kajima-san worked in the actual printing press; He represented an interesting combination of several diverse masculinities within himself. On the one hand, he seemed to be the prefect embodiment of the ideal of hegemonic masculinity – not only was he respectfully
married (and on the track to fatherhood), he was also, although only twenty-eight years old, already a kachō (section manager). Yet, on the other hand he also had a darker history of getting involved in fights and even into trouble with the police, and years of hard drinking, leading to a weakened liver and being ordered by the doctor to stop drinking (Kajima, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 14). At the time of our interview he had been married for over a year. Prior to getting married he and his partner had dated for around one year, but the decision to get married was made only six months into their relationship. One of the considerations behind his decision to get married after a (relatively) short period of time, was the sudden death of his father, and the “desire to comfort” (Kajima, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 16) his mother, something compounded by people around him urging him to get married with comments like “hurry up and give your mother some peace of mind” (16). Although marriage, according to Kajima-san, had not resulted in any kind of significant change within himself, he felt that it would eventually lead to him “to some extent, seeking greater stability” (17). Kajima-san did acknowledge the relationship between a man’s marital status and his standing in the workplace. While he himself did not think a person being married or single was relevant to his work, he was aware that others in the workplace might regard things differently. As he put it:

... I think management takes the view that your performance (sekinin nôryoku) and your sense of responsibility (sekinin-kan) gets stronger when you get married. I was told that myself, when I got married – something along the lines that I’d become a proper adult (ichininmae).

(Kajima, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 20)

Murayama Satoshi, the thirty-year-old Northern Energy head office employee working in general administration whose reflections on the importance of work in his life were discussed in the previous chapter, had been married for just over a year. He had also recently – about a month before our discussion – become the father of a baby girl. His comments on what getting married had meant to him reflected many of the wider assumptions underpinning marriage. He had married at twenty-nine, relatively late compared with the other married informants (or in terms of the ‘ideal’ age of marriage presented by the unmarried ones). His reason for getting married, the “first thing that comes to mind” (Murayama, Interview Transcript: 47) as he put it, was:

18 This combination of attributes traditionally associated with blue-collar/working class masculinity (hard drinking, fighting) rather than with the hegemonic salaryman masculinity made him not unlike the hero of the manga series Sarutiman Kintarō discussed in an earlier chapter. One could even argue that (like the character Kintarō), precisely by integrating such a history of ‘wild’ and ‘dangerous’ masculinity into his present respectable life, he was in fact strengthening and reinforcing hegemonic masculinity, in a way that other informants with a less ‘wild’ past could not.
... because it was something that was inevitable. You know, [becoming] a ‘unit’ (yunitto) .... So since there was someone I really liked I got married, it was just a matter of course.

(Murayama, Interview Transcript: 47)

In response to my question about why he felt the need to formalize, to make ‘official’ his relationship with his wife-to-be, instead of just cohabiting together, he made the following observations:

If you ask me why, well ... as I mentioned to you earlier, I think I have a strong need to be validated by society.
... So, admittedly although we live in a world where things like having sex without being married don’t constitute an illegal act (ihō kōi) or anything, but ... you know at some level I think that if you are able to marry and don’t, it’s almost like an anti-social act (han-shakaiteki kōi).

(Murayama, Interview Transcript: 49)

His marriage represented an example of a classic ‘salaryman’ marriage where a work colleague or superior becomes an intermediary (see Rohlten 1974: 235–242; Edwards 1989: 75, 76). He and his wife (who had been a bank-teller prior to marriage) had been introduced through the auspices of a workplace superior (jōshi) – this person had apparently been a former colleague of the father of Murayama-san’s wife. Thus, his marriage, in his view was “somewhere in-between” (Murayama, Interview Transcript: 50) the traditional arranged o-miai marriage and contemporary ren’ai (‘love’) marriage.19 He had not really anticipated getting married through such formal channels; however, in what came across as a stereotypically salaryman response he mentioned “a lack of free time [to meet prospective partners]” (50) as the reason for allowing his marriage to be ‘semi-arranged’ in such a manner.

Like Kajima Daisuke, the married Northern Print employee discussed above, Murayama-san also perceived a change in the way people interacted with him as a consequence of his new married ichininmae status. The comment he made in relation to the issue captured beautifully both his own feelings and the importance of married heterosexual respectability to salaryman masculinity: “Yes I got the feeling they [i.e. people’s attitudes] changed. Could a mere ring on my finger make such a change? – that’s what I felt!” (Murayama, Interview Transcript: 53). He then went on to illustrate with an example the extent to which the appearance of married sobriety is integral to salaryman masculinity:

This is something I heard, not an experience I had myself, but I’ve heard that [men] working in banks are told to wear their wedding bands at work after they

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19 For a description (and comparison) of these two forms of marriage see Edwards (1989: 53–71).
get married. It's like it's one way of creating an impression to gain trust, [by visually stating] "I'm married, I've got a family to support". I myself can really relate to that. 20

(Murayama, Interview Transcript: 53)

For Murayama-san himself, the dividends of marriage extended beyond strengthened respect and esteem from colleagues and superiors at work. He related in no uncertain terms that getting married had taken a load off my shoulders (kata no nimotsu ga orita)" (Murayama, Interview Transcript: 47), since he was able to hand over to his wife the responsibility of looking after his diet, his clothing, the management of the household. As he laughingly commented to me: "I've been liberated from an irregular diet (zusanna shokuseikatsu)" (48). Moreover, he saw himself as having become more culturally 'refined' thanks to marriage; his wife had exposed him to "a world I didn't know ... like ballet ... art, also theatre, the artistic side I didn't have has been able to come out" (48). Significantly, he mentioned that the negative consequence of marriage was similar to what had been sacrificed as a result of becoming a shakaijin, namely, "a loss of free time" (48) to pursue his own interests, or to meet friends.

Matsumoto Tadashi, the twenty-eight-year-old Northern Energy accounts employee who was the liaison person for my research in that organization, echoed some of Murayama Satoshi's sentiments regarding the link between marriage, respectability, and esteem at work. At the time of the interviews, Matsumoto-san was still single and living in the staff dormitory operated by Northern Energy for single male employees. However, he was due to get married less than a month after we had our second interview, and planned to leave the dormitory and move into subsidized housing provided by the company for married employees (shataku). He provided the example of the single male employees' dormitory to illustrate the link between marriage and work culture. Although technically any unmarried male employee, regardless of age could live there, the reality was that as most residents got married and left the dormitory by the time they were thirty, a single employee continuing to live there beyond his twenties would feel particularly conscious of his still unmarried status. This would make it uncomfortable for him to continue living at the dormitory - an invisible and unarticulated pressure, not dissimilar to the kind of subtle pressures felt by many female clerical employees (the 'OLs') after a certain age (see Ogasawara 1998: 58–60). As Matsumoto san explained:

20 Both of us then joked that it may be possible to conceive of situations where an unmarried male employee might wear a wedding band-style ring to work, just to gain 'trust'; what this seems to
In the end it's up to the individual [to leave the dormitory if still unmarried after thirty], but I suppose there is [that kind of] a restriction (seiyaku). Well, within the company ... well it's not just restricted to our company, but in Japan if you're still unmarried after a certain age, there's probably that kind of hidden pressure ...

Also, I feel there's the aspect of being 'socially trusted' (shakaitekina shinyō) - in Japan it makes some difference depending on whether you have a family [to support] or not.

(Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 18)

**Being a Father and Daikokubashira**

As pointed out above, rather than heterosexuality per se it is a specific discourse of heterosexuality that is privileged within the framework of salaryman masculinity. At its core lies the notion of the husband and father as a provider for a dependent family - the *daikokubashira* of the household. As outlined in Chapter Three, various socio-economic changes in the first decades following the end of World War Two helped reinforce the ideological grip of this discourse. These included such socio-economic and cultural shifts as rapid urbanization as a consequence of rural-urban migration; the growth of suburbs leading to long commuting hours and the distancing of the home from the workplace; the emergence of a white-collar middle-class; and a trend towards smaller nuclear families, which ironically focused the role of women on motherhood and household management and the role of men on fulfilling the productive, breadwinner *daikokubashira* role (see Uno 1993). This has shifted considerably over the past decade, not least due to recent government campaigns and initiatives to encourage mothers to remain in the workforce by providing support for childcare provision, and through the encouragement of fathers to take on a more active role in child-rearing (see Roberts 2002; also Ishii-Kuntz 2003).\(^{21}\)

\(^{21}\) There has been an ongoing debate surrounding fatherhood and the place of the father within the household over much of the postwar period, and there is a substantial body of literature in Japanese that reflects some of this richness (Nakamura and Nakamura 1997 provides a list of works dealing with fatherhood published in Japanese; see also, Mainichi Shinbun-sha Shakai-bu 1985; Hoshi 1995, Ikujiren 1995; Tajiri 1995; Murase 1995; Kodama 2001; in English see Ishii-Kuntz 1993; Jolivet 1997: 61–76; Ōta 1999; Roberts 2002; Ishii-Kuntz 2003). On the one hand it was *precisely because of the gendered nature of family and work roles that men were able to dedicate such long hours to the company, particularly over the crucial decades of the 1960s and 1970s, when the first postwar Baby Boom generation came of age and entered the workforce. At the same time, this very commitment to work was seen as being responsible for an absence of the father from the household and non-involvement with the children, leading to the characterization of Japan as a 'fatherless society' (chichi-oya naki shakai). Questions and concerns about this 'absent father syndrome' emerged from a variety of sections within society. These ranged from conservative politicians, social commentators, and interest groups who linked this absence of the father from the household with a general feminization of society as well as with social 'problems' like juvenile delinquency and a (perceived) moral apathy (see, for instance, Hayashi 1996; Kohama 2001), through to parenting groups (like Ikujiren), men's groups, (some) feminists, labour unions and progressive (often left-wing) social commentators and politicians. This latter group of voices advocated a greater degree of participation by men in child-rearing and involvement in the household, but (generally) situated their criticism within overall reappraisal of patriarchy and the gendered ideology of industrial-capitalism. While
while there might be a greater degree of public validation of the need to move to new
gender expectations, the reality (particularly in the context of a tight job market) is
that the notion of masculinity being defined by being a daikokubashira is still firmly
entrenched.

Perhaps the strength of this man as daikokubashira discourse can best be gauged by a
comment made by Kajima Daisuke, the twenty-eight-year-old Northern Print kachō
(section manager), whose views on marriage were discussed in the preceding section.
At the time of our discussion Kajima-san had been married for over one year, and he
and his wife were considering starting a family. Talking about what marriage and
family life meant to him, he made the following observation:

When you’re single, if you lose your job or something, well, you only need to
worry about your own survival. But when you have children, well then the whole
family has to survive together, don’t they? Since you can’t let your family starve
by the wayside (kazoku rotō ni mayowasu wake nī ika nai), ... you can no longer
think along lines like “this job isn’t interesting so I’ll quit”.

(Kajima, Round 2 Interview Transcript. 17)

As I discuss below, this type of sentiment was echoed by several of the other married
informants, particularly those who had had to deal with the responsibilities of
fatherhood. Shin’ya Naohiko of Northern Energy, who had recently become the
father of a baby girl, made the comment that fatherhood had made it “that much
harder to quit the company” (Shin’ya, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 6).

Matsumoto Tadashi: Visions of an ‘Ideal’ Husband and Father

Unlike Kajima-san, who had been married for over a year, Matsumoto Tadashi, the
Northern Energy accounts employee who was the liaison person for my research in

these debates about men and fatherhood have been going on over most of the postwar era, they have
become particularly prominent since the 1990s, when concerns about the future socio-economic
ramifications of Japan’s steady decline in birthrates since the mid-1970s started to ring alarm bells
among politicians and public policy-making bodies (such as the Ministry of Health and Welfare and
the Ministry of Labour). This formed the backdrop to the series of equal opportunity and ‘family-
friendly’ laws and policy initiatives (such as the ‘Angel Plan’ [1994], the Childcare/Familycare Leave
Law [1992, [1999], Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society [1999], and a strengthened Equal
Employment Opportunity Law [1999]) aimed at allowing women to remain in the workforce and get
married and have children, partly through trying to encourage men to take a more active role in
childcare and involvement in the household. One such example of this official ‘sanctioning’ of active
fatherhood through public campaigns was the Ministry of Health and Welfare’s 1999 poster
promotion featuring Sam, the partner of the (at the time) popular female musician, Namuro Amie,
holding the couple’s baby son, with the accompanying caption telling the public that “Men who do
not participate in child-rearing are not called fathers” (ikujō o shinai otoko o chichi-oya to wa
yobanai) (see Roberts 2002, for a comprehensive discussion of the ‘Sam Campaign’ as well as the
other ‘family-friendly’ public policy initiatives of the past decade). One spin-off of this kind of
official sanctioning has been a far greater visibility in public spaces, such as popular culture, of men
actively taking part in child-rearing. This, in turn, has led to the growing strength of a public
discourse (as evidenced in the pronouncements of some of my informants) which projects fatherhood
as somehow ‘cool’ and glamorous. However, as the voices of my informants also bring out, the reality
that organization, was still single at the time of our interview. However, as
mentioned above, he was about to get married to his girlfriend of six years. Hence,
his future as a husband and father was a topic that was particularly pertinent to him at
the time of our discussion. He and his fiancee had been seeing each other for six
years, a fairly long period of time for a couple to be involved in a relationship
without getting married. However, the reason they had not previously been able to
‘settle down’ and get married, was not so much due to any desire to flout socio-
cultural conventions, but rather due to the personal circumstances of Matsumoto-san
and his girlfriend. Both of them had entered the workforce about four years
previously, and they felt it best that they work for a few years to get established
(Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 13, 14). As he explained, “I thought that
it wouldn’t be until I was around twenty-eight that I’d be sufficiently ichininmae to
get married” (14). Once they decided that it was time to get married, though, the
girlfriend had resigned from her job in anticipation of her new role as a salaryman’s
sennyo shufu. As he explained:

... well, you know, to speak honestly, probably, since my income’s stable we can
maintain our lifestyle without [her] needing to work. Yes, I guess that’s probably
one consideration. Also, to tell you the truth, when everyone else around you is
like that [i.e. the wife stays at home], well, you end up going along with the flow,
don’t you? Everyone lives in the shatoku (company subsidized housing).
Particularly with our company there are shatoku in all the different locations [of
the prefecture]. So as it’s a situation of people from the same company all living
in the same place, there’s probably an element of being conscious of the opinions
of everyone around you (mawari no me o ki ni shiteiru). There’s probably quite a
bit of that [being worried about what other people think]. But once the children
are born, straight after birth would be difficult, but once they’re a bit more
independent, I don’t mind if she wants to work, I don’t plan to place any
restrictions.

(Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 15)

Matsumoto-san’s vision of himself as husband and father was one that seemed to be
on track to replicate all the major markers of salaryman masculinity over his life-
path. At the same time, while living up to all the older hegemonic ideals (male as
primary provider, dedication to work, etc.) he also came across as wanting to
incorporate some of the more recent ideals of masculinity – for instance, being more
‘sensitive’ and ‘understanding’ as a husband, and interested in the upbringing of the
children. Thus, his consciousness of the need to conform to the gender expectations
of a salaryman family were tempered by a desire to appear to be liberal or broad-
minded. He wanted to wait at least two years before he and his wife had children, in
order to enjoy life as a couple, something that he felt would become difficult once the

of fathers’ actual participation in household responsibilities, including active child-rearing duties,
does not seemed to have shifted much.
children were born. As he put it: “I have quite a strong wish to travel to different places as a couple, before the children are born” (Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 17). He then elaborated on this in response to my question as to why this could not be done even after they had children:

Well, you know when you first have children I think there are all kinds of restrictions, like not being able to do things like travel overseas with them. So in that sense, although of course I want children in the future and feel that I want to raise them [i.e. be involved in raising them], while I’m single … sorry, not single…not single, but while there aren’t any kids … before the children are born, I’d like to be able to enjoy that state [of just being husband and wife].

(Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 17)

Elsewhere, he – like many of the other informants – expressed a desire to be involved with his children (Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 8, 9). Yet, in the end, his views on his future life as husband and father were still firmly within the parameters of the hegemonic ideals of salaryman masculinity. For instance, when talking about his wife working after marriage, what was significant was the tone that was adopted – a sense of ‘allowing’ his wife to work as a gesture to changing gender norms:

To tell you the truth, we could probably get along fine on [just] my income, but, well, I think that if I make her stay at home all the time, she might get lonely or something. So, rather than that, I plan to get her to do some sort of part-time work (arubaito), and she herself says she’d like to do that, so I don’t think it’ll be like she’ll be at home all the time.

(Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 15)

He planned to ‘allow’ his wife to work until childbirth, after which she would probably devote herself to being a full-time housewife and mother, as “looking at our company, well, there aren’t many double income couples (tomo-bataraki). So even in that sense… [it would be better for her not to work]” (Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 15).

Similarly, his views on his future involvement with his children, and the way he imagined his future family life also reflected the influence of the hegemonic discourse of salaryman masculinity. His imagining of this future family seemed almost a caricature of the standard two-children salaryman nuclear family – ideally he hoped that he and his wife would have one girl and one boy (Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 9). Elaborating on this vision of his ‘ideal’ family, he stated that he wanted to:

... build a normal (futsū) family – I know saying [the word] ‘normal’ might be a bit you know [old-fashioned] (futsū to in ikai wa are desu ne) – also, do things like go somewhere together as a family, go on trips and things when there’s time.

(Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 8)
While he did approve of fathers being involved with the children, when it came to the specifics of this involvement he was vague. He wanted to be a father who "respected the children's opinions (kodomo no ishi wa sonchô suru)" (Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 8), and "as far as possible give them freedom and let them live as they want to" (9), but beyond that he was vague about the nitty-gritty details of what active involvement in the children's lives would actually involve. Indeed, there seemed to be a pre-empting of the inevitability, due to work commitments, of his non-involvement in child-rearing future down his life-path. Talking about his imagining of himself and his family ten years down the track, he said that although he would like to live together as a family,

... in the case of our company [i.e. Northern Energy], to an extent around the time the children are in junior high school, usually there's quite a bit of coming and going [i.e. transfers] (ittari kitari) to the regions and to the head office. So I can see myself as a tanshin-funin (living away from the family), in terms of my circumstances [ten years down the track].

(Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 9)

Twenty years or so down the track, by the time he was in his fifties, he saw his life as one where

[The children] will be around high-school age, won't they? Although I might be able to spend some time with the family, almost certainly, I'll have gone to a regional area (chihô) as a tanshin-funin working away from the children and all. Well, I suppose I'll be able to return home on weekends, but still, the amount of time we'll be able to spend together would have decreased ... I can picture my situation as being close to one that's dominated completely by work.

(Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 10)

As he somewhat apologetically commented: "the share occupied by work within my thinking is quite large. I've started to realize this recently. I guess talking about these things, I realize how little all else matters!" (Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 11). In this sense, Matsumoto-san came close to embodying – warts and all – the stereotype of salaryman masculinity.

Single Informants and Imaginings of Daikokubashira

This notion of the husband/father being the mainstay and provider of the family was not limited to just the married informants, or informants like Matsumoto-san who were at the point of transition to husband/father status. In common with many of the younger informants, Minami Toshio, a nineteen-year-old Northern Energy employee working in sales, was not averse to the idea of his future wife working after marriage; as he put it, it was "probably best to keep working, as long as she [his future wife]
wants to” (Minami, Interview Transcript: 8). However, when I asked him about his feelings were he to stay at home and be a ‘house husband’, with his wife being the primary-income earner, his response was an explicit, “I’d hate that ... if I’m not working while she is, somehow it’s distasteful, it’s like being defeated (maketeiru mitai)” (8).

Saiki Yasuo, the twenty-three-year-old Northern Print employee who said he saw marriage as a means to “ochitsuku (settling down)” (Saiki, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 9), presented the following picture of himself, and the type of family he saw himself being the head of. He saw himself as getting married while in his twenties, to the sort of woman he could “feel comfortable with (anshin dekiru)” and someone who was “a responsible person” (9). In other words, his preference was for someone who would be a good household manager. He said that after marriage, he would “prefer [the wife], given present circumstances, to be a full-time (sengyō) [housewife], but, should things get tough she might have to work” (5). He wanted either one or two children (4). If he and his wife ended up having two children, his preference was one girl and one boy. Should they only have one child, however, the preference was for a boy (4). Yet despite these fairly clear ideas about what he expected of his future family, he seemed vague (indeed vaguer than most of the other informants) about how he saw himself as a father – his response to my question about what kind of father he wanted to be (dō iu otōsan ni naitai) (9), was a non-committal repeating of the question to himself. When I then re-phrased the question to make it a bit more specific, by asking him if he would like to be involved in child-rearing if he had children, his response was a slightly embarrassed (laughing) “I wouldn’t be able to” (9).

Ogasawara Takurō of Northern Energy also wanted to have two children, ideally boys, as he himself had grown up as the older of two male siblings. As mentioned in the previous chapter, when discussing his views on work and its connections to masculinity, Ogasawara-san had quite specific views of his future as husband and father. This may partly have been due to his ability to articulate his thoughts and feelings very clearly. It may also have had something to do with his own family circumstances when growing up. His father had died when Ogasawara-san was still in junior-high-school and his mother had brought up his younger brother and himself, while working full-time in insurance sales. He clearly had great respect for his mother, who, he said, after the father’s death, despite pressure and bullying from his (the father’s) relatives had remained determined and had brought up her two sons.
In terms of personality, he felt that he resembled his mother (Ogasawara, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 16).

His father, however, seemed to be a different matter. From his description, his father (who had also been a salaryman) came across as a weak, indecisive alcohol-dependent man, unable to stick to a job. This criticism of his father came up, generally without any prompting from me, several times during our interview. Accordingly, Ogasawara-san appeared to define himself in opposition to the kind of man his father had been. For instance, he made it a point to stress that unlike his father he did not drink alcohol at all (12). He also mentioned that “the type of man I dislike is someone who doesn’t work ... someone who doesn’t look after his family properly (ie o taisetsu ni shinai) ... doesn’t give a damn about going out drinking every day and having affairs” (12, 13).

Thus, his very clear ideas about his future rising through the hierarchy of Northern Energy, as alluded to in the previous chapter, seemed to be constructed against his recollection of his father, from whom he had “had really nothing worth learning about work” (Ogasawara, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 2). Similarly, his views about how he saw himself down his life-path as a husband and father seemed to be constructed in reaction to his own father and, despite his admiration for her, his mother too. While he respected his mother’s strength of personality and her determination to be independent (of her in-laws) and work full-time to raise her children, he felt that there had also been a negative impact on himself and his brother, when they were growing up:

Although we don’t really talk about it openly, for both my brother and myself we really didn’t have a mother at home – for me right through grades 1, 2, and 3 of junior high, and 1, 2, and 3 of high school, so six years, and for my brother an additional three years, grades 1, 2, and 3 of primary school, 1, 2, and 3 of junior high, and 1, 2, and 3 of high School, so nine years. (Ogasawara, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 11)

Consequently, according to him, “as a reaction (handō) to [his] mother having to work so hard” (11), he did not want his own wife to work, even prior to childbirth. In terms of his future family, he mentioned that he did not want a situation such as one where he himself might have a successful career and his wife might be “a brilliant person” (17), but the children were neglected and ending up becoming “wild delinquents (muta-kuta furyō)” (17). Rather, the kind of family he wanted to work towards, one that was his “most important dream (ichi-ban no yume) [was] ... an

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22 The reason he gave for this was that his daughter might grow up to date someone wild like himself (Satō, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 4) – in other words, an anxiety about regulating the sexuality of female children, something that does not seem to be a concern with raising boys.
‘average family’ (*heibonna katei*), one where “I’d be trusted completely by my wife, and loved completely by my children, so much so that sometimes I’d have to ask myself if this can be real!” (17). He sketched for me in some detail what, in his imagining, constituted such an “average family”:

The wife who remains as a wife (*okusan wa okusan de*) and provides support to her husband, you know, when you come home there’s a warm meal ready for you, and the bath’s warm too, and the children say “Welcome home dad”, and “You know such-and-such happened today”, and you’d go “Oh, is that so? Is that right?”, that kind of thing...

(Okasawara, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 17, 18)

When I then commented that this was not unlike the idealized representation of ‘typical’ family life (*kazoku no tenkei*), depicted in advertisements and television commercials, he agreed with me, but added the following comments:

I suppose you’re right. It is an ‘archetype’ (*tenkei*). But even if we call it a *tenkei*, I think [the reality is] that it’s hard to find such families nowadays! You know, [in the situation today], parents are unaware that the daughter’s off selling herself [for sex], the father’s out drinking and doesn’t come home. The wife, for her part, says whatever she likes, telling those around her things like “I don’t give a damn about my husband” ... I detest that type of thing. I’ve grown up seeing these aspects that I hate ... But [by contrast] the family of one of my superiors at work (*jōshi*) is really, unique in being ‘ordinary’ (*heibon*). You hear things like the father being welcomed home with “Father, you’ve had a long day” (*otōsan otsukare* or “Welcome back” (*okaerinasai*) in response to “I’m back” (*tada ima*). I’ve been to their house several times, and seeing them, that’s the kind of ideal I have.

(Okasawara, Round 2 Interview Transcript 18)

Ishida Naoki, a twenty-one-year-old Northern Energy employee working in the accounts office, brought out some of these issues, when talking about the way the status and esteem of the father within the household has apparently been weakening:

Well, you know, if we talk about the past ... the father was a person to revere, someone you were told to respect as he supported [the family] ... that’s the kind of thinking there was from Meiji through Shōwa, not treating the father sloppily. But if you look [at the situation] now, for some reason, [the father is] looked upon lightly by the wife and kids.

(Ishida, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 23)

This “ridiculing” (*baka ni sareru*) (23) of the father could, according to him, be seen in such things as manga representations, and even in everyday situations in families he was acquainted with:

You know, when the father comes back, say, comes back from *tanshin funin* [living away from the family due to work], the wife and kids have all gone out,
and when they come back greet the father with a casual, “Oh, so you’re back” kind of thing  

[laughs] …

(Ishida, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 23, 24)

Such a view is an example of the contradictions in informants’ positions I referred to earlier. This was the same informant who, as noted in the previous section, expressed some fairly “open-minded”, indeed non-standard, views regarding marriage. Similarly, his views regarding his idea of being a husband and father did not seem to sit too comfortably with the views outlined above. In response to my question about his wife working after marriage he mentioned that he had no problem with that, even after childbirth. Indeed, he was possibly the only informant to actually come out and say that “if needed I’d stay at home (hitsuyō to areba watashi ga katei ni hairimasu)” (Ishida, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 14). He did, however, qualify this by saying that given the reality in Japan of women’s income being lower than men’s, it was unlikely that he would be able to “completely hand over having to earn an income to the wife, and look after the house myself” (14). He was also quite keen to play an active role in future child-rearing; he was quite clear in stressing that he did not want a family like a typical salaryman family, where the father had little or no interaction with the children (15). Miura Tōru, the young Northern Energy employee who had only recently become a shakaijin, also felt that there was no need for his (future) wife to stop working even after childbirth. He mentioned practices like fathers being entitled to childcare leave, giving the example of Germany, and pointing out that although there had been a few cases of men taking childcare leave in Japan, the practice had “still not become entrenched” (Miura, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 13). As mentioned in the previous section, Miura-san wanted to get married young. One reason behind this was that he could then become a father early; as he put it: “I feel that it’s good to be a young ‘papa’. When you’re young you feel like playing [with your child]” (6). A view such as this seemed reflective of the new ‘glamourization’ of fatherhood, along the lines of the ‘Sam Campaign’ referred to earlier.

Daikokubashira Realities

With the exception of Kajima Daisuke (and Matsumoto Tadashi, whose marriage was imminent), the responses discussed thus far in this section are all from informants who were still single at the time of the interview. Thus, as was the case with the discussion of marriage in the previous section, their responses represented an ‘ideal’ or ‘archetype’ they held of the married, daikokubashira father/provider. The responses of the married informants on the other hand, reveal a more complex
and nuanced picture. These were individuals who had to negotiate the reality of being a husband and (in some cases) father on a day-to-day basis. Kajima Daisuke, although not a father, had obviously given some thought to the ways in which he saw fatherhood and the daikokubashira role shaping his future life-path. He stressed that he did not want to be like a ‘typical’ salaryman father, did not “want to become domesticated ... tied down by kids and a wife” (Kajima, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 18). He equated this ‘domesticated’ salaryman model with a parallel reading of the married provider model, one in which, “marriage = the end of life (jinsei no owari)” (18), something he saw reflected in the lives of his friends and in popular culture:

“Giving up on life” (jinsei no akirame) — you often hear it on TV and things, and also when friends get married they say things like “Well it’s all over”. But surely a big part of that is because the family’s not free? For all of them [i.e. his friends], you get married, and after the children are born the wife doesn’t work, so on just your own income, after taking into account [money needed for supporting] the wife and kids, there’s nothing left over for enjoyment ... I guess it’s just continuous endurance, endurance, endurance, endurance (gaman, gaman, gaman, gaman no renzoku), but even then, they seem to get some basic level of enjoyment out of it!

(Kajima, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 19)

Kajima-san stressed his difference from this pattern. He always, for instance, made it a point to organize his social life around himself and his wife as a couple (Kajima, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 19). Moreover, not only did he mention not wanting to be “tied down [by wife and family]”, he also made it clear that he had no desire to “tie [his wife] down” (20). His wife was working full-time, and although he thought he would “get her to quit at childbirth” (Kajima, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 5), once the child was old enough he wanted her to “put the child in childcare and [return to] work” (Round 2 Interview Transcript: 7). He did not, he stressed, “want her cloistered away at home” (7). Indeed, at various points in the interviews, he alluded to the importance of having a double income in order to maintain a comfortable lifestyle. This was something he attributed to the influence of his own parents, both of whom had worked full-time as public servants, and whose double income had helped sustain consumption and leisure activities:

You know, probably, I think that my wanting my wife to work has almost certainly been influenced by my own family. Since our household was always a double income family (tomobataraki) ... there was always enough money. So my mother, being my mother (kachan wa kachan de) would go off and buy herself things she wanted, and my father for his part, since he was fond of gambling, would always be off to the races or mahjong or pachinko! I used to think “they couldn’t do this if both of them weren’t working”!

(Kajima, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 21)
The point that needs to be stressed is, that despite what may appear to be relatively 'progressive' views, Kajima-san was no 'poster boy' for gender equality. As his observations at the start of this section about having to support a family, and his comment above about "getting [my emphasis] my wife to quit at childbirth" (Round 1 Interview Transcript: 5) reflect, 'conventional' ideas of gender were just as much a part of his engagements with discourses of fatherhood and masculinity. This was best reflected in his response to my question about what sort of role he saw himself taking in future child-rearing. Talking about how he would raise sons, he said that he "would not want to raise them to be too 'straight-laced’" (Kajima, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 9). Indeed, in keeping with his own and his younger brother's experiences as adolescents of getting involved in fights and even getting into trouble with the police, he mentioned that he would not be averse to his son also being a bit delinquent and running a bit wild (9). He explained the rationale behind this line of thinking in the following terms:

I think that if you become too over-protective and just try and get them to be 'goody-goodies' (majime-majime), you can be sure that when they become adults and get jobs, they won’t have any guts (konjō) and will become total failures. So I think it’s good to do things that get you into a bit of strife

(Kajima, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 9, 10)

However, when it came to daughters, his response was quite different. When I asked him what his thoughts were on raising a daughter, he was less sure, stumbling a bit as he tried to think of a response, before settling on: “I suppose a normal kind of upbringing ... along the usual lines (sore nari ... goku jutsū de yoi)” (Round 2 Interview Transcript: 9). A bit further on, he mentioned that as “I didn’t have any female siblings I wouldn’t know what to do, so I guess, if it’s a girl, I’ll leave [the upbringing] completely to my wife”(10).

While Kajima-san’s ruminations about fatherhood may have been hypothetical, Murayama Satoshi of Northern Energy, as mentioned in the previous section, was the father of a one-month-old baby girl. In many senses, the immediacy of the event meant that the reality of being a father had not really sunk in – as he put it: “To tell you the truth the realization (jikkkan) is still weak ... it’s like having a toy, or a pet” (Murayama, Interview Transcript: 40). He had, however, fairly clear ideas about what kind of father he wanted to be and how he saw himself in relation to his wife and children through the remainder of his life-path – for instance, when talking about the likelihood of being transferred, he stressed that “no matter how small a place it is, I’d like us all to live there as one family” (Murayama, Interview Transcript: 42), rather than leading a separate life as a tanshin funin.
As discussed in the previous section, he placed considerable importance on the institution of marriage; he had, for instance, expressed some disapproval of individuals entering into (hetero) sexual relationships without seeing marriage as being the final outcome. When discussing these issues, he stressed that this would apply to the way his daughter would be brought up. Talking about the supposedly ‘free-and-easy’ attitudes towards sex, he added: “Even with my daughter, in a ‘free’ (furii) environment like this, if she becomes involved in such a relationship [i.e. disregarding marriage], I won’t hesitate to tell her that it’s a mistake” (Murayama, Interview Transcript: 49). His own marriage, as outlined in the previous section, was the result of a more senior work colleague stepping in and introducing Murayama-san to his future wife. Prior to marriage, his wife had worked as a teller in a bank, but she had quit this job at the time of marriage. When I asked him if she planned on re-entering the workforce once their child/children had entered school, he mentioned that while he had no objection, his wife had expressed a desire not to work and to “look after the household (katei o mamoritai)” (51). When I presented him with a scenario where he was not working and was dependent on his wife’s income (in other words, the antithesis of the daikokubashira), he was quite explicit in stating that “that would be unacceptable (dame)” (51), using the analogy of a “male animal not going out to hunt” (osu ga kari ni ikanai), something which he would “not be comfortable with” (51). Perhaps the importance he placed on living up to the expectations of salaryman masculinity came out best in his response to my question at the end of the interview about the most and least appealing aspects of being a man. He felt that the best thing about being born as a male was, “having a family, and being able to support (literally, ‘being able to feed’ – gohan o tabesaserete) that family” (Murayama, Interview Transcript: 70). Conversely the worst thing was “being unable to quit your job even if you want to” (71) due to the same responsibility of supporting a family.

Shin’ya Naohiko, the twenty-three-year-old Northern Energy systems engineer whose passion was ice-hockey, had also recently become a father. In fact, as discussed above, both his marriage and his becoming a father had taken place almost inadvertently. Over the period of our acquaintance (just over one year) he had gone from a carefree young single without too many adult responsibilities and commitments, to the father of a newly born baby girl. When we first met he was living by himself in the single men’s dormitory run by Northern Energy. At our second meeting (the first round-interview) he had just started going out with a new girlfriend, but mentioned that neither had any intentions of getting married, particularly as his girlfriend had just returned to full-time study (Shin’ya, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 28, 29). However, shortly after that first interview (after which
I had met the girlfriend) they had found out that she was pregnant, and decided to get
married. All of this was unknown to me, so it came as quite a surprise to see him in
this new incarnation of husband and father at our second interview.

His feelings about fatherhood and living up to the daikokubashira ideal were more
complex than Murayama-san's, perhaps due to the suddenness with which he had
had marriage and fatherhood thrust upon him. Like Murayama-san, his new status as
father had not quite sunk in. The realization that he was a father was more the result
of being told by those around him, rather than any sense of 'fatherly feeling' coming
to the surface on its own accord. This was despite having attended ante-natal classes
(Shin'ya, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 4). He reflected on the complex interplay of
emotions and reactions he was going through:

Well, there's some sort of realization (jikan). Or rather, a real feeling of being a
father came about through it being reinforced by people around me. Just chatting
in the corridors at work and being congratulated by everyone I talk to, being told
that time and again, I gradually started to feel a sense that I've become a father,
being born within me. But the child still doesn't move, so somehow it still feels
too early to feel any sense of social responsibility (shakaitekina sekinin).
(Shin'ya, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 5)

Shin'ya-san expected this sense of responsibility as a father to strengthen as the child
grew older and the responses demanded of him as a father became concrete – for
instance, "getting hurt or injuring other children at kindergarten and primary school"
(Round 2 Interview Transcript: 5). At the moment though, fatherhood seemed to
carry associations of disruption and chaos. He mentioned having to try and juggle his
work commitments, his ice-hockey coaching duties, as well as the household
cleaning, cooking and washing and bathing the baby,23 as his wife was still too weak
to see to such things. Comparing his present situation with the time prior to marriage
and the birth of the baby, he reflected that:

I guess my thinking's changed. Well I suppose the fact that I've ended up being
married at twenty-three, when I really thought I'd marry after thirty...

... I guess, in other words, before my child was born, my thinking about
[marriage and being a father] was quite naïve and simplistic. I guess now,
looking at myself married at this age I've started to get a sense (jikan) of the
gravity of the matter. I'm not saying that it's causing me to suffer though
(Shin'ya, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 13)

He was also aware of the restrictions now placed on his ability to fulfil many of the
dreams he had recounted to me in the first interview. In that first interview, he had

23 He still found this quite nerve-racking, despite all the practice he did at the pre-birth classes
(Shin'ya, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 4, 5).
elaborated on two possible courses he saw his life-path taking in the future. One vision of himself – the way things actually turned out in reality – was a future where he would be married with possibly one child, and still working at Northern Energy. The other path he presented me with was the more ‘adventurous’ vision. In this alternative imagining of his future, he was no longer in Northern Energy, but was doing things like studying to become an interior architect, or designing the lighting for famous buildings (Shin’ya, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 35–38). Now, less than a year down the track, he realized that with a child to look after “it is that much harder to quit the company” (Round 2 Interview Transcript: 6). He elaborated on how his new status as husband and father had shifted relationships within the workplace:

I suppose, as a result of having a child to raise, I’ve started to place more importance on interpersonal relationships at work. On the other hand, I feel that the distance with which others used to regard me has shrunk as a result of me becoming a father. Now, because I’ve had a child, from the time I announced the birth of the child, it’s like “You’re a father, too aren’t you. Just like us, a father!”... While I was single I had a circle of unmarried friends [at work]. But I’ve moved out from [that category] and have been admitted into [the circle of] more senior colleagues who are fathers, have children. Also, I’ve found work being passed on to me more, I guess... I get the feeling that my trustworthiness at work has increased and things are moving in a favourable direction, that I’m trusted more...

(Shin’ya, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 16)

If anything, he felt that given the rapid changes he had undergone over the past year, his former single friends/colleagues probably regarded him with some coolness now (Shin’ya, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 16).

For Shin’ya-san, despite all the tumultuous changes his new status had wrought in his life, his future as a husband and father was a matter he appeared to have given considerable thought to. When I asked him if he and his partner had considered options other than getting married when they realized she was pregnant, his response was:

When we were told about the pregnancy, the immediate response was to talk about getting married ... Well, we had to face the reality that we were dealing with a new life. This meant that we had to think about the future of this life, that we had to raise the child, and what we would have to do. And also, this was our child so not for a moment did we think of an abortion ... And, thinking about the future of the child, if that child didn’t grow up in an environment with both a mother and a father, we felt that that would be a disadvantage... we wanted the best environment, one where both a mother and a father were on hand, as they should be.

(Shin’ya, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 14)

24 Shin’ya-san’s observation aptly reflects Jeff Hearn’s comment that “fatherhood can bring both
He then went on to reflect upon what kind of things he would teach his newborn
daughter, what type of person he felt he would like to see her grow into. At the core
of these expectations was what he called “a sense of gratitude (kansha suru kimochi)”
(Round 2: 14). Expanding upon this he explained that he wanted her to realize that
this “gratitude” was “towards the parents, towards people [in general]” (14). Also,

within the family, I’d like her to grow up to become a kind, gentle child (yasashii
kodomo) – you know, when I say ‘kind and gentle’ (yasashii), I don’t just mean
she needs to be gentle just with the mother and the father, but also to the
grandfather and grandmother above them [the parents], and of course if she has
siblings she’ll need to look after them and so forth. I guess I want to raise her to
be a child who places importance on her family.

(Shin’ya, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 14)

As pointed out, Shin’ya-san had just become the father of a baby girl, so his
comments above were in relation to (his views on) bringing up girls. When I asked
him about his thoughts on bringing up a son his response was that he would be, he
responded:

... a lot stricter. In other words, I think while teaching him, I think I might end up
being a little violent, you know hitting him a bit, hitting him while teaching him,
and stuff. I guess it’s to teach him through pain (itami o oboesasete), so that he
learns that he shouldn’t inflict pain on others.

(Shin’ya, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 15)

Moreover, he felt that with a son there would be an element of comparison with
himself. Part of this comparison with himself would entail drawing upon his own
experiences of hardship and perseverance from his younger ice-hockey years.

... for a father the greatest pleasure is a son having the same interests, and being
able to teach the son that [hobby/interest] as part of the upbringing ... I suppose,
yes, if I have a son I’ll probably end up forcing him [to learn ice-hockey].

(Shin’ya, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 15)

What comes across in the accounts of both Kajima-san and Shin’ya-san is a clear
distinction between expectations about raising sons (teaching them to be tough, be
able to ‘survive’ in life) and raising daughters (teaching them to be ‘nice’ and
‘caring’). Moreover, their comments are by no means particularly biased or out of the
ordinary. Indeed, if anything, they would appear to be fairly representative of
attitudes towards parenting in the wider community. Itô Kimio, for instance, draws
attention to a survey carried by the newspaper Mainichi Shinbun in the late 1980s in
relation to community attitudes towards parenting. In response to a question about
what kind of person they wished to raised their child to be (kodomo o donna hito ni
sodatetai ka), the most popular attributes for daughters that the respondents approved

(power and powerlessness to men)” (1994: 54; italics in original).
were such things as “a gentle person” (*sunaona hito*) (72% of male respondents and 71% of female respondents), and “a considerate person” (*omoi-yari no aru hito*) (77% female, 75% male). For sons, on the other hand people wanted to see qualities such as “not being dependent on others and able to act independently” (*hito ni taerazu, jibun de yaru hito*) (44% with both male and female respondents), and “someone who is able carry out his responsibilities” (*jibun no sekinin o hatasu hito*) (52% of females, and 50% of males) (Ito 1998: 27; see also Amano and Kimura 2003). Kajima-san and Shin’ya-san’s reflections seem to articulate these views quite vividly.

The final informant whose voice regarding fatherhood and being a *daikokubashira* I want to bring out in this section is that of Kimura Kenji, the Northern Print sales employee who was my liaison contact for that organization. He was, as noted in previous chapters, a very articulate, bright, confident young man who was well aware of his capability and the contribution he was making to Northern Print’s sales figures. This work performance allowed him, as discussed before, a certain leeway in displaying quite atypical – indeed consciously resistant – ideas and conduct in relation to the expectations of salaryman masculinity. 25 He was also someone who struck me as being supremely confident of, and comfortable in, his own heterosexual masculinity. This may have explained why his ideas and opinions regarding hegemonic expectations of gender sometimes came across as a curious mixture of questioning and gender-blindness. For example, early on in our first interview when I asked him about his early recollections of gender differences between himself and his younger sister in the ways in which they were socialized he flatly denied (indeed, dismissed) any such notion. Moreover, his response to this query was in a tone that suggested it was too trivial a matter to warrant his consideration (Kimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 4). He also denied any recollection of ever being told to behave or not behave in a certain way because he was a boy (6); once again the tone adopted was one of impatience or non-comprehension at being asked such a question. Yet, in other areas he displayed quite atypical (compared with many of the other informants) and ‘progressive’ views. For instance, he felt that because “upper management was not broad minded enough” (19), gender equality in the workplace was being held back.

This combination of conventionality and wanting to ‘thumb his nose’ at the very same conventional expectations was also evident in his ideas about marriage and fatherhood. Like both Shin’ya Naohiko and Murayama Satoshi, Kimura-san had also,
just prior to our first interview, become a father. Moreover, his decision to get married had also been a consequence of his girlfriend’s unintended pregnancy. However, unlike Shin’ya-san and Murayama-san, he did not appear to place much weight on marriage and fatherhood, as far as the impact on himself was concerned. His retort to my question about why he got married was a straight “because [my girlfriend] got pregnant (kodomo ga dekita kara)” (Kimura, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 9). When I asked him what marriage signified to him, he laughed, and admitted that he “had never given it any thought” (9). There was absolutely no desire, according to him, to be recognized by society as ‘respectable’ or as ichininmae. Indeed, as he took some pains to stress, he did not think becoming a husband and father had changed him at all. As he put it:

No it won’t change, my life won’t change because only I make my own decisions about my life. It’s just a one-off event, my getting married and having a child and a family, it is just one event in life. So I think there’s no way I’d want to say that I’ve become more conservative or anything [as a result of getting married and becoming a father].

(Kimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 21)

In contrast to both Shin’ya-san and Murayama-san, who felt that marriage and fatherhood had strengthened their links to corporate masculinity, Kimura-san did not think anything had necessarily changed. As he stated:

I wouldn’t really be concerned about my family ... you know, if I get the sack from this company for some reason and I’ve got to keep feeding them, I’ve got total confidence in my own ability to earn a living.

(Kimura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 21).

He did, however, acknowledge that his status as husband and father had changed the way he was treated by those around him in the workplace, although this was not something that made much sense to him:

There’s often [the perception that] if you get married, since things must be tough financially you’ll be responsible (shikkari suru), or that [you’ll become responsible] because you’ve got a wife in the background, but because these things don’t relate to me at all ... ... I don’t pay any attention to them.
... But I think in this company, I get the feeling that people worry about such things.
... I’m sometimes told things like “You’ve got married quite young, haven’t you?”, or “You’ve already got a child”, or “You must have your act together”. I just listen to them, but think [to myself] when I hear [such things] that this is weird!

(Kimura, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 10)

25 As observed previously, the fact that the corporate culture at Northern Print was (compared with a large organization like Northern Energy) relatively less bureaucratized may have also allowed Kimura-san to get away with some of his unconventionality.
Also in contrast to Shin’ya-san and Murayama-san (or even Kajima-san of Northern Print who was yet to become a father), who talked in some detail about how they envisaged their future life-paths as fathers, Kimura-san hardly made any reference to fatherhood during our interviews. His response to my question about whether he had given any thought to what kind of family life he desired or what kind of father he wanted to be, was a straight-out “No [I haven’t]” (Round 2 Interview Transcript: 10). When I persisted and asked him to think about it, he came up with: “As long as I get on with them [the children] (naka-yokereba ii)” (10). The only other times he made a reference to his newborn child was in response to my question in the second interview about what brought him the greatest happiness (the response to which was “my child who’s just been born” (Round 2: 17)), and earlier when he was complaining about not being able to take any time off when the child was born, despite being entitled to three days’ leave (13).

Looking at these various voices regarding marriage and fatherhood, we get a sense of the complex interplay and shifts between various discourses surrounding these gender institutions, structures and practices. On the one hand, there is the continuing importance placed on ‘proving’ masculinity through work – being the breadwinner, the outside provider, upon whom the whole family is dependent for sustenance. At the same time, there also appear to be shifts from past practices. For instance, unlike many of the salarymen fathers in Ishii-Kuntz’s earlier (1993) study who tied a public expression of disinterest or non-involvement in child-rearing to their sense of masculinity, most of my informants (both married and single) articulated a discourse of active involvement by fathers as being a priority for themselves. This seemed to convey a sense of fatherhood somehow being ‘cool’, as reflected in the statement by Miura Tōru that “being a young papa is good … [because] you want to play [with your child]” (Miura, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 6). However, the reality for most of the informants – including ones like Shin’ya-san upon whom fatherhood had been thrust suddenly, but who seemed to be particularly interested in being involved with his children’s upbringing – seems to be still limited to the level of public statements supporting active involvement, without a real shift in the expectations of masculinity being tied to being a husband and primary breadwinner.

Playing With Heterosexuality?

Twenty-five-year-old Arai Jun fitted the profile of a young salaryman perfectly. He came from a standard, middle-class, salaryman family. His father was a white-collar bank employee who had worked for the same organization over his entire career, and
his mother was a full-time housewife (although she had worked part-time in the past) (Arai, Interview Transcript: 1). Until the previous year when his grandmother had started living with the family, he and his younger sister had grown up in a standard parents-and-two-children nuclear family (1). Arai-san himself had followed a fairly typical path towards salaryman masculinity – going to university, and upon graduation one year prior to our discussion, entering a public sector organization, where he was involved in white-collar work that also involved dealing with the public. He was involved in a steady, committed relationship with a partner whom he was quite obviously very attached to. However, because the partner worked in another city, they were usually only able to meet up on weekends (28). However, what set Arai Jun apart from my other informants, was the fact that his partner happened to be male.

As mentioned in the opening paragraph of the section introducing the informants’ voices, mutual heterosexuality was an unstated assumption of the interaction between myself and the informants. However, I was interested in exploring what happened when an individual in his negotiations with salaryman masculinity could not, or did not wish to, conform to expectations of heterosexuality. How does he negotiate with expectations such as marriage being a necessary precondition for becoming ichininmae? How does he see his future life-path as a salaryman in the context of his inability or refusal to conform to the expectations of heterosexuality? Although, as outlined in my discussion of the research methodology in Chapter Two, the opportunity to raise such issues with my informants did not arise, through my involvement in a gender/sexuality study group I was introduced to Arai-san, who was happy to be interviewed. His account reinforced the complexity and richness of the strategies adopted by gay salarymen, discussed by Lunsing (2001) and in the Queer Japan (2000) special feature on gay salarymen.

In many respects, Arai-san was representative of the shift that has become more pronounced over the past decade or two in the way non-heterosexual identity is framed, in that rather than being just the enactment of a sexual act that happens to be between members of the same sex, sexual orientation and its (self- and public-) acknowledgment is seen as being integral to identity and constant over the entire life-course (see, for example, McLelland 2001). Thus, he regarded ‘coming out’ and recognition of himself as ‘gay’ as being a cornerstone of his masculinity. Unlike many older gay men (including individuals he personally knew), he had no intention of getting married to a woman for the sake of social convention (Arai, Interview Transcript : 24, 25). In his student days, he had been fairly active in a local gay support group, and had even marched in a local Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade. He
had begun the process of ‘coming out’ to himself from around the time he was in junior high school (5), and first ‘came out’ publicly to a female classmate in high school (8). In recent years, he had started coming out to a variety of selected individuals, including his mother and younger sister, and a couple of other friends and colleagues, including a male colleague with whom he had undergone the new employee induction training (kenshū) when he first entered the workforce. Significantly, the reaction of this colleague to the revelation had been a sort of “Oh, is that right?” (9) ‘unfazed’ reaction.

However, his revelation to this colleague was an exception. In general, Arai-san – not unlike many of the respondents to the Queer Japan survey discussed earlier – made some effort to keep his (implicitly heterosexual) work identity and his (gay) private identity separate. Unlike most of my other informants, who probably would not have considered situations where they would need to withhold information about their non-work/social lives from work colleagues (unless it was on personal/idiosyncratic grounds), Arai-san was acutely conscious of the necessity for this almost total separation between his two lives. At one level, he wished for a workplace environment where he could be open about his sexuality. For instance, in response to my query about what he regarded as an ‘ideal’ workplace situation he came up with “quite simply … [one] where I’m accepted as gay” (Arai, Interview Transcript: 23). However, he then stressed that “in the end, this was an ‘ideal’”, and that just as he did not worry about his colleagues’ private lives, there was no need for people at work to be concerned with his own life (23). In short, he was conscious of the reality of the workplace culture within which he had to interact with his colleagues:

Yes, it would be nice to be accepted [laughs], or rather, to be understood (rikai shite hoshi) … But probably the thing is … [name of workplace] is a bit special. Because it’s unlike a standard company where you have all these sections, with workplaces of around 500 staff, because it’s a workplace with just five or six people, if I told them I’d have to keep working together with them, so I suppose [the fact that I can’t tell them] can’t be helped (shikata ga nai).

(Arai, Interview Transcript: 23)

Like many of the other informants, work, to Arai-san was a significant part of his identity. He presented me with his image of the ‘typical’ salaryman as a “peko-peko shita hito” (literally, someone who is constantly bowing and scraping to others) (Arai, Interview Transcript: 13), someone who “works earnestly, whose hobby is work” (13). He said that he felt himself approaching this caricature when he was dealing with customers and the public at work (15) – something rather at odds with the earlier image presented of the gay activist who had marched in the Lesbian and Gay Parade. Indeed, there appeared to some contestation as he tried to reconcile his
two ‘identities’. At some level, there appeared to be a desire for validation or recognition of his right to salaryman masculinity precisely because of his sexuality. This came through on a number of occasions in the course of our discussion. For instance, at one point, when talking about the balance between his work and non-work identities, he reflected upon the following:

You know, as I see it, I never ever think that being gay will somehow impact negatively on my work. I may have [a male] lover, but I’m working, and working with ‘straight’ people, so at work I treat it as just work, and realize that I have to interact with them [my heterosexual colleagues]. If you only interact with gay people, just because you happen to be gay, you end up getting [a] lopsided [perspective] (katayotchau), so there’s a need for a balance. So you’ve got to interact with people as human beings, or else if you keep wondering is this person gay or not gay, it’ll end up being too stressful.

(Arai, Interview Transcript: 15, 16)

And, returning elsewhere in our discussion to a similar theme:

At this stage, as far as work is concerned, I don’t think me being gay or me being not gay has any bearing [on work]; I think of myself as normal. You know, everyone has or doesn’t have partners (kobito). So I just think of myself as pretty much the same. Not really much as a gay [person] …

(Arai, Interview Transcript: 23)

At yet another point in our discussion when I asked him to reflect upon the significance of work in his life, he articulated his thoughts as follows:

That’s a tough one … I guess the first thing that comes to mind is that in the past, in the past work was [ranked] second (ni-banme). And, number one (ichi-banme) was my lover. And with that, on the whole I used to think that was fine, but at present they [work and boyfriend] are about the same. In other words, it’s like they’re equally balanced on a scale (onaji tenbin ni kakeru) – work’s work, and my lover’s my lover.

(Arai, Interview Transcript: 14)

In the context of engaging with these various facets of his identity, how did he negotiate with the implicit assumptions of heterosexuality in the workplace? As mentioned above, despite the importance of marriage as a determinant of ichininmae status, he had no intention of entering into a heterosexual marriage for the sake of social conformity. At twenty-five, he was still too young for questions about his marital status or future marriage plans to be an issue of concern. However, he was aware that a few years down the track this would start becoming an issue he would have to deal with. As he admitted: “I have absolutely no intention of getting married, but when you’re working, there’s always the concern that some day there’ll be comments [about being single] in the workplace” (Arai, Interview Transcript: 12). Elsewhere, when talking about how he saw himself ten years down the track, he
noted that if he stayed with the same employer, he would probably be in a managerial position. However, “since I won’t be married ten years down the track, I know that there’ll be comments and stuff from people around me” (18). Although he was not entirely sure how he planned to deal with the situation, he stressed that he was “thinking of ways to deal with it, so as not to be defeated [by such comments] (makenai yō ni)” (18). One of the strategies he mentioned as a possibility was “ignoring [comments about marriage]” (17). Either way, as he continued:

In actual fact, given there are lots of gay people who remain single and work, if those people can do it so can I ... You can’t keep worrying about the future, as [everything] in front of you then becomes insecure. You’ve got to stay focused on the present ...

(Arai, Interview Transcript: 17)

Although marriage itself had not yet figured prominently in his interactions with work colleagues and managers, the question of his presumed heterosexuality was something he had to deal with on a day-to-day basis. His responses to such questions – for instance, questions about his girlfriend – was a mixture of irritation and defiance at what he saw as an intrusion on his privacy, and the kind of ‘playful’ strategy discussed earlier, which Lunsing refers to as “gomakasu ... avoiding answering a question, ideally in such a sophisticated manner, that the questioner does not notice that one is evading the subject” (2001: 221). This mixture of irritation and strategic ‘bluffing’ comes out in the following reflection:

I get asked things like whether I have a girlfriend or not. Since it’s too tedious, I just replace ‘boyfriend’ with ‘girlfriend’ (kareshi o kanojo ni oki kae te). ... I just feel there’s no need to ask me about that each time! I want to think of my private time [life] separately [from work], so I feel [irritated] at having to speak about such things. But, when they ask such things [if I have a girlfriend] it’ll be strange if I say I don’t. So I say that [i.e. make my boyfriend into my ‘girlfriend’].

(Arai, Interview Transcript: 16)

This combination of different emotions and strategies in negotiating with expectations of heterosexuality was also evident when Arai-san was talking about his responses when the topic of homosexuality came up in discussions among work colleagues. His workplace was close to the entertainment district of the city. Consequently, it was unusual for individuals associated with this sector –

26 The term for ‘girlfriend’ (i.e. a female partner one is in a sexual and emotional relationship with), kanojo, literally means ‘she’, as in ‘she is Japanese’ (kanojo wa nihonjin desu), or ‘she went to school’ (kanojo ga gakkō ni itta), and so on. So these sentences could either connote ‘She (a specific female person) is Japanese/went to school’ or ‘My girlfriend is Japanese/went to school’. The term kareshi is more closely linked to ‘boyfriend’ (male partner in a sexual and emotional relationship). However, kareshi is often shortened to just kare, which is also the male pronoun for ‘he’. In general, as pointed out earlier, it is a lot easier in Japanese (compared with English) to be vague about gender pronouns, something that fits in perfectly with strategies of gomakasu that Arai-san, as well as Lunsing’s informants and the Queer Japan survey respondents, deploy where and when necessary.
employees of the restaurants, bars, nightclubs, massage parlours, and other services that constitute what is often referred to as the *mizu shōbai*, ‘water trade’ (see Allison 1994) – to come into his workplace on business during office hours. This included individuals who displayed characteristics that were ‘visibly gay’, people he felt he had at some time “seen around [the gay ‘scene’]” (Arai, Interview Transcript: 16). He described his way of dealing with the comments made by colleagues about such ‘obvious’ individuals:

> If I’m asked, if I’m told something like, “That person’s ‘that way’, he’s *okama* (derogatory/slang term for a homosexual male), did you know that?”, I’ll turn around and say “Oh, is that so?” This may sound strange, but, observing that kind of situation is fascinating [for me] – it’s interesting because it’s not gay people having the conversation.

(Arai, Interview Transcript: 16)

There seems almost a sense of the tables being turned here, the gaze being reversed with the ‘other’ now doing the observing. However, how would he feel if the comments made were particularly derogatory, homophobic ones? His reaction, he stated, would be one of “getting angry (*hara* [ga] *tachimasu*)” (Arai, Interview Transcript: 17), but there was nothing he could really do about it apart from console himself by “thinking that that’s how low this person is” (17). The sense of frustration at not being able to openly counter or challenge such views lest he himself inadvertently ‘reveal’ himself, is reminiscent of a scene in the film *Okoge* discussed earlier in the chapter, where the character playing the gay salaryman swallows his anger and forces himself to laugh along with the others at homophobic jokes being made by a colleague.

However, it needs to be stressed that Arai-san should not be seen as some kind of cowering ‘victim’, constantly in fear of being exposed. In a different situation, he was just as likely to reveal himself to colleagues, but strategically. For instance, when talking about the ways he negotiated with expectations of his heterosexuality, he mentioned that although he tried to skirt around the issue, if someone were to ask him the question, “are you gay?” directly (Arai, Interview Transcript: 16), he would admit it to that person. The reasoning he provided was that the fact that the person had actually asked of her/his own volition was an indication that that individual had some inkling, and hence would be better able to deal with Arai-san, than someone who had absolutely no idea (16). Elsewhere in the discussion he reiterated this point, stating that if asked directly he would be honest (23). Moreover, how he planned to deal with the potential reactions from colleagues to his admission, comes out in the following reflection on the issue:
Yes, I would like them to accept it [the knowledge] positively, or, in other words, would like them to understand. That’s if such a situation arises ... Having said that, although I’d be happy if they could relate to me, and although no one I’ve told up to now hasn’t understood, there’s every possibility that I may encounter such persons [who don’t accept it] in the future ... I’m not saying that they absolutely have to understand, or something. In the end, I’ll only tell people if they ask, and it’s not so much just wanting them to understand me that’ll make me tell them — if telling them causes pain, that’s my loss. And also, if the reactions are something like “So what’s the big deal”, or “Is that so?”, or [even] “that’s disgusting”, there’s nothing I can really do, it’s the way each person comes to terms with it ...

(Arai, Interview Transcript: 23)

Conclusion

I believe Arai-san’s voice is an appropriate way of bringing this chapter to a close. The focus of this chapter has been to draw attention to the ways in which certain specific (and often invisible) assumptions about sexuality continue to be integral to salaryman masculinity. In a nutshell, the hegemonic assumption is that the salaryman is ‘productive’ not just in relation to economic ‘production’, but also in relation to sexual ‘re-production’ — that he will get married, and with his wife start a family for whose sustenance he is responsible, in other words, the daikokubashira of the family. On the one hand, there is no denying the diffuse power of the hegemonic gender/sexuality ideology in the informants’ everyday lives. However, as these voices also reveal, the actual engagements between the ‘ideal’ and the day-to-day reality for many of the informants are far more complex and nuanced, often simultaneously incorporating elements of conscious (and internalized) compliance and conscious (and not-so-conscious) non-compliance and disengagement. Perhaps my reason for expanding upon Arai-san’s account at such length is precisely that he was consciously aware of and able to articulate the strategies and negotiations at work in his engagements with the expectations of salaryman masculinity (particularly, in his instance, the expectation of performing heterosexuality). Although many of the other informants also responded to and negotiated with the expectations of salaryman masculinity in varying ways, many of them were not conscious of doing this in the way that Arai-san was. In the next chapter, I will return to the nexus between sexuality and corporate masculinity, but in a context where sexuality gets sublimated into homosocial spaces of work and friendship.
CHAPTER NINE

WORKING WITH HOMOSOCIALITY

The previous chapter explored the connection between salaryman masculinity and a publicly privileged discourse of regulated (hetero) sexuality pivoted on the male employee as husband, father and sustainer of the family unit. Yet, while this discourse has undeniably played (and continues to play) a role in the way in which salaryman masculinity has been shaped, coexisting with it are less visible currents also exerting influence on the engagements between individual male employees and the expectations of salaryman masculinity. These sub-currents and undercurrents of corporate culture sometimes work to reinforce and strengthen the discourse of hegemonic salaryman masculinity, and at other times may actually act as a counterforce destabilizing and disrupting it. Among these less apparent strands of corporate culture are such things as the realm of friendship – particularly same-sex friendship – and its intersections with other expectations of salaryman masculinity.

On the one hand, the very discourse of salaryman masculinity and its role as a cornerstone of Japanese industrial success through the High Economic Growth decades was situated within a matrix of discourses privileging homosocial same-sex ‘bonding’ within the company and with (male) clients, often at the expense of cross-sex relationships such as the husband-wife relationship.¹ One such example of a form of same-sex relationship endorsed and privileged within the organization would be the senpai-kōhai (‘senior’ and ‘junior’) hierarchy-based relationship. Similarly, group based interaction such as company-centred occasions like bōnenkai (end of year – literally, ‘forget the year’ – parties) or shinpenkai (new year parties), or work-related golf sessions with colleagues or clients, would also fall within the orbit of publicly sanctioned – indeed, sanctified – forms of same-sex interaction. On the other hand, same-sex relationships may also possess the potential to disrupt established rules and assumptions of salaryman masculinity. For instance, the incident discussed in Chapter Six, where one of my informants – Miura Tôru of Northern Energy – was publicly reprimanded by his manager for his inability to distinguish between his pre-shakaijin notions of friendship and acceptable rules of conduct in the workplace is a good example of the slippery nature of negotiating same-sex relationships. Thus, as with sexuality there is a constant tension. This tension is between the channelling of same-sex relationships into configurations accepted (and indeed, sanctioned) by official corporate ideology and the dominant discourse in the workplace, and the

¹ The term ‘homosocial’, as I expand on below, has been deployed in varied ways, ranging from purely social superficial interaction within same-sex groups and/or between individuals, to relations
potential for 'un-regulated' friendships to challenge and undermine these. This chapter explores how some of these issues intersect with my informants' engagements with salaryman masculinity. The first part of the chapter sets out the theoretical and conceptual framework within which these day-to-day intersections and engagements occur. The second half of the chapter will then draw upon the 'voices' of individual informants to explore the ways in which friendship and homosociality are implicated into their engagements with salaryman masculinity.

Male Friendship, Homosociality, and Corporate Culture

Related to the interest in 'men' and 'masculinity' as a topic for research and scrutiny, has been an interest in exploring the area of men's friendships and interactions with other men, an area which until quite recently had been taken for granted or dismissed as an area not deserving serious interrogation. Just as works dealing with men did not address the issue of masculinity, similarly interaction between males had rarely been analysed through the lens of gender and sexuality. For instance, although on one level male friendship and interaction is a highly visible strand in Learning to Labour, Paul Willis' renowned study of working-class youth in Britain, this interaction is discussed and commented upon without reference to a gender/sexuality framework (Willis 1977). Much of this newer body of work making male-male interaction a specific area of inquiry drew upon pioneering historical work done in the 1970s and 1980s by scholars working within the still rudimentary area of lesbian and gay studies. Many of these researchers – individuals such as Jonathan Katz, Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and others – went through historical sources such as private letters, diaries, and archival material in order to bring to light some of the subtleties and finer details at work in same-sex friendships in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. What some of their painstaking research made visible were the strands of implicit homoerotic possibilities (rather than necessarily actual sexual relations) at work in many of these male and female same-sex relationships (see Katz 1976; Faderman 1981; Rotundo 1989; Duberman 1991; Vicinus 1991; Hansen 1992).

infused with erotic tension (see for instance, Sedgwick 1985; Crowley 1987; Bird 1996; Roper 1996; Buchbinder 1998; McBee 1999, for some of these various readings of the term and its associations).

2 A similar point could be made about Lout's and Legends: Tim Walker's otherwise excellent study of young men from an inner-city high school in Australia during the liminal period covering the final year of high school to entry into the adult world (Walker 1983). This is not to say that (same sex) friendships had not been studied at all. Anthropologists in particular, had long made friendship an area of inquiry (e.g. Eisenstadt 1956; Cohen 1961; Gilmore 1975, Foster 1976). However, significant as these studies may have been, they generally skirted around the ways in which discourses of gender and sexuality intersected with the institution of friendship and its practices. Some of this earlier work did, however, go on to inform subsequent work on masculinity; examples would be such works as Gilmore's cross-cultural study of masculinity, Manhood in the Making (1990) building upon his earlier work, or Michael Herzfeld's study of masculinity and gender in rural Greece (1983; see also Vale de Almeida 1996).
The work of such scholars coming from the angle of uncovering a 'hidden' history of same-sex sexuality, has, over the past two decades, intersected with a growing body of work examining male-male interaction, not specifically connected to lesbian and gay studies. These works range across historical studies of male friendship and interaction, ethnographic studies, both within and outside the Anglo-American sociocultural framework, literary studies, and more empirical sociological analyses (see for example, Bell 1981; Herdt 1981; Crowley 1987; Sherrod 1987; Papataxarchis 1991; Franklin 1992; Messner 1992; Nardi 1992a, 1992b; Spangler 1992; Williams 1992; Bank 1995; Bird 1996; Vale de Almeida 1996: 85–112; McBee 1999; Fee 2000). What many of these works drew attention to was the fluidity over time and space in the dynamics of same-sex interactions that fell within the category labelled 'friendship'. The dominant discourses surrounding friendship, and male-male (or for that matter, female-female) intimacy in nineteenth-century America (or for that matter twentieth-century Java or Andalusia [Williams 1992]) were quite different from the assumptions governing male friendship in North America a century or so down the track (Nardi 1992b: 1–6).

Such research, drawing attention to and problematizing the realm of friendship, was further reinforced and given greater theoretical rigour with the emergence from the late 1980s/early 1990s of the body of work which came to be known as queer studies and/or queer theory. In particular, one of the earliest works that came to be

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3 In addition to academic works such as these, male-male friendship also emerged as an issue to be teased out in works of fiction, or in autobiographical/self-reflective texts (see, for instance, Miller 1983; McFarren 1996; Vergennes 1999; Dessaux 2001). These are distinct from the wide sweep of literary and visual texts such as Hollywood 'Buddy' films or early-twentieth-century fiction of the 'Boy's Own Adventure'-genre in which male-male friendships are also an integral element. Works in the former genre specifically interrogate and problematize assumptions about male friendships in ways that the latter body of work does not (for a discussion of male friendships in this genre of literary and filmic texts, see Hammond and Jablok 1987; Spangler 1992; Kanitkar 1994; Phillips 1997; Croty 2001: 133–167; Aldrich 2003: esp. 106–145).

4 As Nardi observes discussing this historical shift in attitudes governing male same-sex interaction: “Physically affectionate relationships between men and even the sharing of beds were not uncommon between young men [in nineteenth-century America] ... a sexual connection was not made with physical touch or sleeping together ... when homosexuality was thought about, it was almost always in terms of a particular sexual act, not an identity or personal characteristic.” (Nardi 1992a: 5). However, such attitudes started shifting from the late nineteenth century with the medicalization of same-sex sexual relations and the emergence of the ‘homosexual’ as a distinct identity. Moreover, ‘excessive’ emotional attachment between members of the same sex also came to be associated with same-sex sexual relations, and also started to be regarded as ‘unnatural’ (or at best, ‘unhealthy’). Conversely the late nineteenth, early twentieth century coincided with a shift from a discourse discouraging public physical and emotional opposite-sex intimacy to one where ‘romantic love’ (encompassing sexual, physical and emotional intimacy) between men and women came to be regarded as the hegemonic ‘ideal’. Thus, as Nardi goes on to point out, as distinctions between ‘homosexuality’ and ‘heterosexuality’ crystallized, “the stigma attached to same-sex touch and intimacy grew ...” (Nardi 1992b: 5). Contemporary (American) society, according to him, holds a set of social meanings and prohibitions about homosexuality to such a degree that ordinary touch, and certainly the act of ‘sleeping together’, are often interpreted in homosexual [my emphasis] terms when they occur between two men.

5 A detailed genealogy and discussion of the emergence of queer theory and its theoretical underpinnings (including its points of departure from gay and lesbian studies) is beyond the parameters of the present research. There are however, several excellent works which set out some of
associated with queer studies, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* had – and continues to have – an impact on studies of male-male interaction and friendship, well outside of the author’s original focus of literary studies. In this seminal work examining selected pre-twentieth-century Anglo-American literary texts through the lens of what she calls ‘homosocial desire’, Sedgwick draws attention to the intersections and disjunctures between patriarchy, homophobia, male-male homosocial interaction, and desire, as underpinning the emergence of modern industrial-capitalist society (and specifically, contemporary – i.e. late-twentieth-century – Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity). Sedgwick explains her choice of a term (homosocial *desire*) which initially comes across as an oxymoron:

‘Homosocial’ is a word occasionally used in history and the social sciences … it is applied to such activities as ‘male bonding,’ which may, in our society, be characterized by intense homophobia, fear and hatred of homosexuality. To draw the ‘homosocial’ back into the orbit of ‘desire,’ of the potentially erotic, then, is to hypothesize the potential unbrokenness of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual — a continuum whose visibility, for men, in our society, is radically disrupted.

(Sedgwick 1985 1, 2)

This homophobia disrupting the continuum between the homosocial and the homosexual has been integral to the economic and political structures of contemporary society, and hence to the sustenance of patriarchy (Sedgwick 1985: 2–5). This, however, she contends, had not always been the case. Historically – for instance in the case of classical Athenian society – patriarchy structurally did not require homophobia as its basis, and hence accommodated unproblematically the homosocial-homosexual continuum, which in subsequent centuries would come to be disrupted.

For our purposes, Sedgwick’s notion of ‘homosocial desire’ – of bringing the possibility of desire into the homosocial – is of interest not so much in the context of the literary texts she examines to support her argument. Rather, of greater pertinence to us, is the deployment (not necessarily as intended by Sedgwick) of the concept (or its equivalent) in relation to male-male interaction in a variety of settings. Of

the major debates and issues of contention in the trajectory leading up to, and subsequent to, the emergence of queer theory in the early to mid-1990s. See, for instance, Warner (1993), Jagose (1996), Seldman (1996), Buchbinder (1998), Spargo (1999).

6 See Chapter One, ‘Gender Asymmetry and Erotic Triangles’, of *Between Men* for a discussion of the theoretical constructs (for instance, Girard’s schema of triangular desire, Gayle Rubin and Luce Irigaray’s deployment of Levi-Strauss’s ‘male traffic in women’) bound to her conceptualization of homosocial desire in the context of the literary texts examined (Sedgwick 1986: 21–27); see also Buchbinder (1998: 64–67, 111–116, 120, 124–125, 143), for his application of Girard’s and
particular relevance is the application of variations of the concept of ‘homo-social desire’ in recent years by writers seeking to deconstruct masculinity in one of the prime bastions of traditional male homosociality and heterosexual patriarchal privilege – the corporate organization.

Despite the pervasiveness and hegemony of a discourse of public heterosexuality, organizational masculinity is, as Jeff Hearn observes, also structured around “men’s preference for men, men’s company and men’s spaces” (Hearn 2002: 46; see also, Morgan 1981; Hearn 1992: 205–207; Roper 1996). Moreover, sublimated desire between men is a built-in aspect of these relationships. This aspect of organizational masculinity has, until quite recently, generally been overlooked in studies, or glossed over through the use of such labels as ‘male bonding’. Indeed, as Michael Roper, in a fascinating study of the dynamics of interaction among the faculty of a management college in Australia points out, even writers who do use terms such as ‘homosexual reproduction’ (Kanter 1977) or ‘male homosociability’ (Morgan 1981; Witz and Savage 1992), do not adequately address the issue of sexuality and hidden desire between men, when deploying these terms (Roper 1996: 212). As he argues, in relation to the interaction among the male research officers and managerial staff at the college he calls ‘Southeby’:

[t]he example of Southeby suggests that relations in male-dominated organizations often fall between the categories of the social and the sexual ... Finding the right words ... is ... important. Yet male bonding has often been described in terms of clumsy dichotomies such as social versus sexual or homosexual versus heterosexual. To describe it as ‘homo-social’ emphasizes its function in maintaining male monopoles but disregards the erotic energy that motivates it. Nor is ‘homosexual reproduction’ accurate: male bonding gains its particular ambience precisely because it does not involve explicit acts of sexual intimacy.

(Roper 1996: 223)

Roper uses Sedgwick’s notion of ‘homo-social desire’ to draw attention to “the fluidity of boundaries between friendship and desire in men’s networks” (Roper 1996: 213). In his view, ‘homo-social desire’ is an apt term to apply in the context as it “is a term which captures rather than erases the ambiguities between the ‘social’ and the ‘sexual’ in men’s networks ... identifying a distinctive category of intimacy in formally heterosexual settings which presents as non-sexual but which nevertheless involves potentially erotic desires” (213). What needs to be noted is that these ‘circuits of homosocial desire’ do not (indeed, cannot) allow for the conscious articulation of that ‘desire’. A public acknowledgment of the existence of these

Sedgwick’s theoretical constructs to a variety of film and literary texts including Fanny Hill, and the 1990s Australian film, Strictly Ballroom.
circuits of desire would be contrary to the dominant discourse of corporate masculinity – one defined, as we saw in the previous chapter, by publicly unambiguous heterosexuality. However, as Roper points out, these un-acknowledged underlying sub-currents of same-sex ‘energy’ also inform the operation of corporate masculinity. It is this sense of an ambiguous, difficult to clearly articulate and define, same-sex dynamic that underlies the discussion in the remainder of this chapter. As we shall see, the dynamics of homosocial interaction in Anglophone organizations discussed by writers like Roper (1994, 1996) and Hearn (1992, 2002) may be as relevant in the context of Japanese organizational culture. The following section discusses some of the characteristics of same-sex interaction within the context of Japanese organizations. This will provide a framework to situate the discussion in the second half of the chapter, where I explore some of the ways in which my informants articulated their feelings about friendships and same-sex interaction within the context of the organizations they were working in.

Friendship and Salaryman Masculinity

As noted above, the ‘success’ of salaryman masculinity has rested on the twin pillars of heterosexual cross-sex marriage, and homosocial same-sex interaction. This same-sex interaction, expressed through various channels in a variety of settings, has traditionally been regarded as crucial to success at work. As Anne Allison notes:

A worker’s attachment to work is meant to be cemented, (over) determined, and symbolized – making it not only lifelong but contiguous with other parts of a man’s life. A sararimann may find that his neighbors, golf mates, Saturday baseball team players, drinking buddies, matchmaker for marriage, wedding guests, coconspirators in sexual escapades, and counsellors for marital problems are basically drawn from the same group of coworkers.

(Allison 1994: 201)

As indicated by Allison’s description above, the context for the articulations of same-sex interaction and intimacy may be both ‘officially’ company sponsored settings such as bōnenkai end-of-year gatherings or company sponsored trips and outings (nen ryokō), as well as settings not ‘officially’ sponsored, but nevertheless possessing some connection to the workplace (for instance, a group of co-workers organizing an informal drinks session at an izakaya) (see, for example, Linhart 1998). The significance of this aspect of corporate culture has been discussed and commented upon quite extensively in various scholarly and non-scholarly works. These include works by authors such as Abegglen (1958), Plath (1964, 1980), Cole (1971), Vogel
(1971), Dore (1973), and Rohlen (1974), which are regarded as ‘classics’ in relation to the study of Japanese organizations, and aspects of organizational culture, such as work-centred social interaction. Rohlen, for instance, dwells in some detail on various aspects of same-sex interaction among white-collar bank employees at ‘Uedagin’, the bank where he conducted his ethnographic research. These range from interaction at office parties, through discussion of the senpai-kôhai (senior-junior) relationship, to a description of the living arrangements and patterns of interaction among employees living in the single male employees’ dormitory (Rohlen 1974). Robert Cole’s study of an auto-parts company also discusses similar issues such as ‘friendship’ associations, characteristics of after-hours leisure behaviour, and workplace oyabun-kobun (mentor-protégé, or literally ‘parent-role/child-role’) relationships among blue-collar workers. Subsequent studies dealing with aspects of organizations and organizational culture continued to address issues related to same-sex interaction, whether for males or females (for example, Rohlen 1975; Atsumi 1979, 1980; Kondo 1990; Allison 1994; Hazama 1996; Linhart 1998; Roberson 1998; Sakai 2000).

‘Circuits of Homosocial Desire’ and the Oyabun/Kobun, Senpai/Kôhai Dyad

Many of the above-mentioned works drew attention to characteristics such as the senpai-kôhai and/or oyabun-kobun relationships within organizations, which were particularly important in underpinning same-sex interaction. Rohlen in particular, both in his ethnographic study of the bank (1974), and a subsequent discussion of work-group dynamics in companies (1975) addresses this aspect of same-sex interaction in white-collar organizations at some length. In talking about the intersections between the (in reality often impersonal) superior-subordinate pairing and the senpai-kôhai dyad he points out that:

... the senpai-kôhai (senior-junior) relationship ... is also hierarchical but centred on interpersonal involvement. While senpai often means any person senior in age, it is common in a company or other specific organizational context to use the word to refer to ... one or a few older people who are especially close and supportive. Ideally, one’s superior in the office hierarchy is close and supportive but for a variety of reasons, the ideal is generally hard to realize. It is, therefore, necessary to distinguish the official roles of superior and subordinate from the interpersonal senpai-kôhai relationship even though both are hierarchical and both can, and ideally should, overlap.

(Rohlen 1975: 196)
The key element of the senpai-kōhai dyad, Rohlen stresses, is the fact that while it is hierarchical, this very hierarchy allows for intimacy:

A senpai is understood to be a person who proceeds or leads with the implication that those who follow are his companions in the same pursuit, career, or institution. Kōhai, literally ‘companion that is behind’, expresses the other half of the relationship. The complete image created by the characters is one of ‘friends,’ one ahead and the other behind passing along the same path of endeavor. . . . the term is used most often to refer to one or a few specific older individuals of the same sex who are particularly close and protective . . . . Among the reasons for the division along sex lines is the implied comradeship between senior and junior, a form of comradeship that does not easily cross the boundaries of sex.

(Rohlen 1975: 196, 197)

The emotion underpinning this relationship is one of friendship, intimacy, and emotional closeness, reinforced by the power asymmetry between the partners – the senpai ‘looks after’ the kōhai, in return for gratitude and loyalty. Moreover, although senpai-kōhai dynamics do influence relationships between older male employees, it is, according to Rohlen, at its most intense among young, unmarried employees. As he observes, “the great majority of senpai-kōhai ties among young men derive from working together, living in dorms together, or playing on a sports team together” (Rohlen 1975: 196, n.9). In talking about the features of the senpai-kōhai relationship, Rohlen draws an analogy with the parent/child and/or older brother/younger brother familial dynamic of interdependency and obligation (see also, Bestor 1989: 220). What is absent from his discussion (indeed from most discussions of Japanese organizations and organizational culture) is any reference to undercurrents of intimacy/pleasure/desire in the sense of the circuits of homosocial desire discussed above, that may inform the senpai-kōhai dyad.

Rather, discussions of underlying currents of sexuality in same-sex interactions in organizations tend to be found in works not specifically concerned with organizational culture such as Doi Takeo’s study of the social psychology of the Japanese (1973), or anthropologist Nakane Chie’s analysis of Japanese social structure (1973). While both have been extensively critiqued for their reductionism, sweeping generalizations, lack of methodological rigour, and implications of Japanese socio-cultural ‘uniqueness’ (see, for example, Kawamura 1989; Mouer and Sugimoto 1986; Sugimoto and Mouer 1989b; Allison 1994: 84, 85), they are among the few texts to draw attention to aspects of same-sex interaction which take into account underlying currents of homosocial desire. Nakane, for instance, draws parallels between the oyabun-kobun patron-client relationship within organizations, and emotionally intense homosocial (and, on occasion, homosexual) relationships
between samurai retainers and their patron/lord in the centuries leading up to, and
during the Edo Period. She observes that

More than anything else, the qualification of the leader in Japanese society
depends upon his ability to understand and attract his men... if a man is unable
to capture his followers emotionally and glue them to him in vertical
relationships he cannot become a leader.8

(Nakane 1973: 73, 74)

To reinforce her point she makes reference to the well-known legend of the Forty-
Seven Rōnin willing to sacrifice their lives through their devotion to their leader,
Ôiishi Kuranosuke. As she explains,

The Forty-Seven Rōnin reveal in extreme form the ideal personal relationship ...
. The story bears some resemblance to a love affair. In Japan there is no love
story comparable in popularity to the Forty-Seven Rōnin. Men so involved in
such a relationship have little room left for a wife or sweetheart. In traditional
morals the ideal man should not be involved in an affair with a woman. I think
that if he were involved to such an extent in this kind of man-to-man relation
there would seem to be no necessity for a love affair with a woman. His emotions
would be completely expended in his devotion to his master. I suspect this was
the real nature of samurai mentality, and to a certain extent the same may be true
of the modern Japanese man.

(Nakane 1973: 74; see also Buruma 1984: 153–157)

While the sweeping nature of Nakane’s assertions and her overly simplistic
conflation of feudal relationships and those in contemporary organizations need to be
regarded with some caution, she does have a point in terms of acknowledging a
complexity, unacknowledged by many other writers, inherent in same-sex interaction
in organizations. Although we can make no direct connection between the
relationships found in the story of the Forty-Seven Rōnin and contemporary
corporate culture, we do need to recognize the continued popularity of the story and
its theatrical and cinematic adaptations.

7 For an engaging and comprehensive discussion of same-sex interaction in feudal Japan see Gregory
(1999); other sources that cover the topic include, Hiratsuka (1983), Watanabe and Iwata (1989),
8 While Nakane stresses the Japanese cultural context (and by extension, perhaps, its ‘uniqueness’),
the same could be applied to homosocial desire in organizations anywhere. Indeed, Nakane’s words
would resonate perfectly with Michael Roper’s discussion of some of his informants’ relationships
with older same-sex mentors who exert a powerful attraction over these informants (Roper 1994: 87–
100). Talking about one particular informant, Grainger, and his relationship with his mentor/friend,
Moss, Roper comments that “The attempt to reconcile conflicting demands between family life
and bachelorness, heterosexual and homosocial love, forms an underlying thread in Grainger’s
narrative… fantasies of an ‘escape’ with Moss retain their tantalizing hold. He had established a
career which was independent from the admired older man, but in his dreams, as Grainger himself
noted, ‘I keep coming back to him’… At a psychic level the older man is thus polymorphous… he
is both a lover and a father” (Roper 1994: 91).
The psychologist Doi Takeo, through his deployment of the concept of amae — the desire to be indulged, cared for looked after by another — as underpinning interpersonal relationships, also flags ideas not dissimilar to notions of homosocial desire.9 Doi links amae to what he refers to as “homosexual feelings”, which are “not homosexuality in the narrow sense … but in the broader sense … where the emotional links between members of the same sex take preference over those with the opposite sex. They correspond roughly … with what is normally termed ‘friendship’” (Doi 1973: 113). However, Doi continues, “where friendship usually lays emphasis on the good will existing between friends, in this case [i.e. homosexual feelings arising from amae] the emphasis is on the fact that the emotional links that form the basis of friendship take precedence over love between the sexes” (113).

What Doi takes pains to stress — and here there are resonances with the notions of homosocial desire discussed in the previous section, Doi’s emphasis on the Japanese-ness of amae notwithstanding — is the non-sexual nature of these sexual feelings, at whose heart lies the dynamic of amae (113–121).10

9 A detailed description of the concept of amae and its operations is not really necessary for the purposes of the present discussion. It should be noted, however, that Doi links the concept with the dyad, the verbs amayakasu/amaeuru (which in turn are linked to other pairings like girl/friend [which be translates as “social obligation and human feeling” (Doi 1973: 33)]) and soto/uchi [outside/inside]. To amayakasu someone, as Nancy Rosenberger in her discussion of the concepts explains, “is to allow another the indulgence of free expression, and to give active love; literally to allow another to be sweet or dependent”; amaeuru, on the other hand, “is to be sweet, that is to accept the indulgence offered by another and to receive love passively” (Rosenberger 1994: 94). Doi, as Rosenberger points out, focuses on the amaeuru side more in his discussion, “and claims this as a universal need for passive love … he emphasizes the aspect of solidarity, of ideally feeling at one with another, epitomized in the mother-child relationship which is sought after between boss and underling or even between two company presidents” (94). Rosenberger also points out the fact that this “dyadic relationship of giving and receiving indulgence or dependence is born in and reproduces relations of hierarchy [which can] ... represent solidarity … but ... can also represent authority” (94). Once again there are parallels with Roper’s discussion of the homosocial attraction between one of his informants and an older mentor, referred to in the previous footnote. As Roper observes, talking about the older man Moss’s hold over his younger protégé: “Moss’s charisma rests on his ability to give younger men a ‘good time’ but also on his ability to maintain control, to be a ‘real bastard’. Typically in the older man both qualities are combined ... the temper which could make you ‘shit scared of him’, goes with ritual seduction” (Roper 1994: 91).

10 To illustrate his proposition, Doi goes into a discussion of Natsume Sōseki’s acclaimed novel from the early twentieth century, Kokoro. In his (Doi’s) view “... no literary work portrays so accurately the nature of homosexual emotions in Japanese society[ as Kokoro does].” (Doi 1973: 114). Indeed, the two sets of relationships in the novel — between the narrator and his mentor, sensei, and between sensei in his youth and his friend ‘K’ — both mediated through the same woman (sensei’s wife), may be analyzed using Sedgwick’s triangle of homosocial desire (Natsume, trans. McClellan 1969). Moreover, Doi is not the only author to have commented on the homosocial/sexual tensions at work in Kokoro; in his Introduction to an anthology of translated works on male same-sex love in Japan, Paul Schalow comments that Natsume Sōseki was “one writer who dealt sensitively with the question of how male intimacy was to be reconfigured for modern Japanese men” (Schalow 1996: 16) in the transition from pre-Meiji discourses surrounding male same-sex love, to the Euro-American-influenced medical and legal discourses accompanying the Meiji project of modernity (see, Chapter Three of this thesis; also Pfaffelder 1999). In the context of these shifts in the discursive constructions of male-male intimacy, Kokoro, according to Schalow, “can be read, at one level, as a moving farewell to the Edo Period traditions of intimacy and love between males” (Schalow 1996: 16). However, these earlier configurations and articulations of male-male intimacy did not entirely disappear. Examples such as the romantic friendships and homoeroticism among students at elite higher schools in the first decades of the twentieth century, discussed by Roden (1980), or the private correspondence between naturalist and biologist Minakata Kumagusu and writer Iwata Jun’ichi through which they try and articulate these new twentieth-century configurations (Minakata and Iwata, trans. Sibley 1996), or the close bonds forged between soldiers on the battlefield (sennin) (see
‘Circuits of Homosocial Desire’ and Tsukiai

The homosocial interaction that is the focus of Doi and Nakane’s discussions, as well as the senpai-kōhai type relationships discussed by Rohen or Cole, are essentially vertically based, hierarchical interactions. Despite the fact that such hierarchically based interactions tend to be more visible in discussions about same-sex interaction in Japanese organizations, they intersect with other forms of interaction. Equally pertinent as far as same-sex interactions are concerned are those that do not necessarily conform to rigid, unchanging hierarchies. These may be horizontal relationships between ‘equals’ (in the sense that there are no significant differences in age, status, or power). Alternatively, they may even be relationships where a disparity in status and power in one context may be less relevant in another context—for instance, in the context of a drinking session where alcohol may (and often does) allow for rigid hierarchies and delineations to become fluid and blurred (see for example, Rohen 1974: 97–100; Allison 1994; Turner 1995: 74–91; Ben-Ari 2002, for a discussion of the ways in which alcohol works towards the blurring of ‘daytime’ distinctions). Moreover, as signalled in Roberson’s (1995a, 1998) ethnographic study of blue-collar workers, or studies by Fowler (1996) and Gill (2001, also 2003) of day-labourers, patterns of friendship and same-sex interaction among men in these occupational areas may be quite different from white-collar salarymen.

Even with men who could be categorized within the rubric of the salaryman, the patterns of male-male interaction may be quite varied. Atsumi Reiko, drawing upon research conducted with white-collar male employees, found that her informants made a distinction between interaction that was connected to tsukiai (social interaction connected to work or community-related networks, based on obligation or a sense of social responsibility [Atsumi 1980: 64–70]), and “relationships entered into spontaneously for their own sake (friendship)” (65; see also Atsumi 1979, 1989). According to her, many writers have conflated the two, but in actual fact they are quite separate. With reference to her informants, she delineates the difference between the two kinds of relationships:

Some Japanese company employees associate with their colleagues and other work-related people quite often after work, but the relationship is not very intimate because it is tsukiai. They eat and drink and/or play mahjong together

Robertson 1998: 102, 103, 228; Pfugfelder 1999: 328, 329, or even the erotic play among adolescents in the youth group (shōnenidan) studied by Johnson (1975) in the 1960s, would support the proposition that rather than being stamped out these articulations continued to operate beneath the surface. For a discussion on female-female intimacy over these transition decades, see Robertson (2000).
after work. The frequency of association with tsukiai associates may be high, but it is not related to the degree of intimacy or confidence.\footnote{As an example of the weight of tsukiai in the lives of salarymen, during (arguably) the high-point years of salaryman masculinity in the mid-1980s, close to forty percent (38.2 percent, to be exact) of salarymen questioned in one survey carried out in 1983, said that they went out after work through tsukiai obligations two to three times per week. With regards to the activities and spaces of tsukiai, the most popular was eating and drinking (inshoku) at over eighty percent (Sararinman Shintō 1985: 237, 238).}

(Atsumi 1989: 135)

The reality, though, is that in the context of salaryman masculinity, same-sex interaction based around tsukiai cannot be avoided. Moreover, as brought out in Anne Allison’s fascinating study of the mizu shōbai,\footnote{Literally, the ‘water trade’, but more loosely, the bars, restaurants, nightclubs, massage parlours, hostess clubs, and other forms of ‘entertainment’, that constitute the night time hospitality sector (see Allison 1994: 33, 34).} tsukiai relationships mediated through a female bar hostess are crucial to the collective construction of salaryman masculinity (Allison 1994). Commenting on these dynamics of the tsukiai channelled through and by, the female bar hostess, Allison observes that:

In this male ritual about work but also play, the female is important but she can also be insulted, ignored, walked away from. As is repeatedly enacted ... the mizu shōbai woman is continually ‘put in her place’ by the men for whom she’s lighting cigarettes, pouring drinks, and instigating conversation... . That in performing in this subservient manner, the woman is also putting the men in a particular position – a position in which they can commune with each other in a way that confirms, enhances, or sometimes creates work relations – is either ignored or denied.

(Allison 1994: 165)

What Allison does not articulate – but what seems to be implied through the discussion – are the underlying flows of homosocial desire circulating between the men, mediated through the body of the female hostess, not unlike the triangular relations of desire Sedgwick talks about (Sedgwick 1986).

However, while such tsukiai-centred homosocial dynamics may be an important element within salaryman masculinity, the intensity of same-sex relationships may be greater outside of the context of the workplace. Atsumi notes that rather than possessing close friendships with colleagues at work, many of her informants “already have such close relationships with a limited number of persons” (1981) 70. “Such friends”, she continues,

are usually chosen from among people of one’s own sex. They are often one’s former schoolmates who shared some personal experiences, such as studying the same subject together, being roommates, or participating in the same extracurricular activities... . A person may talk freely about his personal affairs with some of his close friends, and he may sometimes prefer one or two of these
close friends to his wife when he needs advice and assistance. These closest ones are one’s shin-yū (intimate friends) with whom one feels completely open and relaxed.\(^\text{13}\)

(Atsumi 1980: 70)

Elsewhere (1989: 144) she notes that “best friends (shin’yū) are perceived as being even closer to oneself than family members …” The homosociality of these ties comes across from Atsumi’s accounts. Commenting on the supposed differences between men’s friendships in North America and Britain versus Japan, she observes that whereas in the case of the former, friendships – particularly after marriage – are shared by a couple, in Japan they continue to be same-sex interactions (142). Moreover, she observes that:

... studies suggest that friendship with a high degree of intimacy and confidence is not very common between middle-class American men ... the opposite was true with Japanese company employees interviewed by the author. In one study only one-third of sixty-five middle-class American men said that they had a male friend to whom they could reveal everything ... . Middle-class American men appear to seek intimacy more from women than from men ... . The Japanese men interviewed by the author provide a contrast. Moreover, in Japanese literature best friends portrayed are almost always of the same sex.

(Atsumi 1989: 143)

One of the informants she discusses embodies perfectly this sense of homosocial intimacy. This informant, whom she calls Mr. Sonoda, belongs to a tightly knit circle of close male friends dating back to a gardening club which all had belonged to in high school. Describing Mr. Sonoda’s relationship with the group, Atsumi explains that:

He associates with five of them quite often, seeing them almost every week-end at one of the members’ homes. The group is so tightly knit that no one has ever left the group and no new face has ever been added to the group. These people have been Mr. Sonoda’s most important and closest friends since his high school days. He admits that they know him better than his wife does. He cannot think of anything that he cannot discuss with them or anything that he will not do for them. Mr. Sonoda’s wife knows them all by sight; but she has never visited any of his friends’ homes with her husband or alone ... . The ‘boys’ arrange an overnight trip once a year, and they do not bring their families ... . Nothing takes precedence over Mr. Sonoda’s association with these friends except work itself. According to Mr. Sonoda, there will be little change in the composition of the group or in the quality of the relationship in the future.

(Atsumi 1980: 72)

\(^{13}\) Bestor (1989), in his ethnographic study of a Tokyo neighbourhood, makes a similar observation. He points out that rather than the formal ties linking neighbours, friendships tend to be based on considerations such as common school ties or informal ties among members of local organizations based on common interests (214–223).
What comes across from both Atsumi’s discussion of Mr. Sonoda, as well as from the preceding discussion of tsukiai-centred interaction, is the fact that same-sex homosocial relationships are an ongoing current within men’s lives. In the context of salaryman masculinity, it is a current that intersects and interacts with the other expectations that the individual male employee has to contend with.

Informants’ Engagements with Homosocial Circuits

This would be an appropriate point to bring in the voices of some of my informants, in order to get a sense of the dynamics discussed above being played out on a day-to-day basis. Matsumoto Tadashi’s imagining of the ‘ideal’ male-male relationship at work would be an appropriate starting point. This informant, who has appeared on several occasions in earlier chapters, worked in the accounts section of Northern Energy, and was my liaison person in that organization. As mentioned before, in many respects, in terms of appearance, lifestyle, behaviour, and attitudes, he embodied the salaryman masculinity ‘ideal’. Yet, as will be discussed below, there was far more complexity to his negotiations with salaryman masculinity than conveyed by initial appearances. His view of the ‘ideal’ (male) same-sex relationship in the workplace was someone “you could hang around with (literally, ‘play with’, asobetari) outside of work too” (Matsumoto, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 21). This one sentence seems to capture the sense of amae, closeness, and homosocial bonding discussed in the previous section.

‘Good’ Senpai, ‘Bad’ Senpai

This sense of ‘amae’ – of being looked after, guided – inherent in the senpai/kōhai relationship comes out in some of the accounts. Shin’ya Naohiko, the former ice-hockey athlete and Northern Energy systems engineer, mentioned that his happiest memory over the years he had worked at Northern Energy was of the occasion two years previously when he had gone to the beach on a day off with five of his senpai, all of whom had since been transferred to other branches (Shin’ya, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 29). Satō Hiroshi also worked in Northern Energy, in the Planning Section, the same section as Ogasawara Takumi. Ogasawara-san was a couple of years older than Satō-san, and hence his senpai. When Satō-san had first entered the workforce, he had been more anxious about his relationship with his colleagues (ningen kankei) than about the details of the work he would have to do. Fortunately for him, Ogasawara-san had stepped in and (as expected of the ‘ideal’
senpai) had ‘shown him the ropes’, thereby easing Satō-san’s transition into organizational culture:

When I was placed here [in this section] in April, the person who was here at the time of my placement after I’d completed my training (kenshi) was Ogasawara-san. He really took pains to teach me a whole lot of things. For instance ... not so much about the details of the work [itself], but I got lots of advice about things like, this is what the company’s really about, or things about interpersonal relationships (ningen kankei) and the organization of the company (kaisha no shikumi) ... That really came in useful. If I think about it now, it was the ideal (risōtekina) senpai-kōhai relationship ... ... since I’ve joined this company, Ogasawara-san’s really been like a ‘lubricating oil’ (junkatsuyu) ... I’ve effortlessly taken on board so many things from him, not just about the job itself, but about all sorts of things connected to the company.

(Satō, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 21)

Satō-san mentioned that he expected himself to do the same when, in due course, he too becomes the senpai in the senpai-kōhai pairing. Significantly, Satō-san had been told by Ogasawara-san that he himself had been ‘looked after’ in a similar way by a senpai, when he had first started working at Northern Energy, something Ogasawara-san had (independently) mentioned to me too. This would be an example of homosocial reproduction as one of the arteries sustaining organizational culture along the lines suggested by Hearn (2002) and Roper (1996), above.

The relationship with a senpai does not necessarily always conform to the nurturing/caring type model. There is a flip side to homosociality, particularly given the hierarchies of power in the senpai-kōhai relationship, where there is the potential for bullying, intimidation, and abuse. This emerged in a rather startling way towards the end of my first interview with Matsumoto Tadashi, the Northern Energy accountant, who was the liaison person in that organization. Matsumoto san, as mentioned above, had struck me as approaching the hegemonic ideal of salaryman masculinity, more than most of the other informants. Yet, even with him, as the following incident suggests, the situation was not necessarily a clear-cut case of an unproblematic merging with the ‘ideal’ of salaryman masculinity. We had been talking about the best and the worst aspects of being a shakaijin when he started telling me about having to negotiate an uneasy relationship with a senior (senpai) when he first entered the organization, and the stress this had caused him:

Yeah, it was around the time when I’d just joined [the company]. I’d only just started work, at the time I was in the sales office, and things didn’t go too smoothly with the people around me. I didn’t mind about how much work I had to do, even if it took time, all you had to do was do it. But with interpersonal relationships (ningen kankei), well, ... although I had every intention of
interacting properly, things didn’t go too well, and that resulted in a lot of pressure, stress.

... Because at work things weren’t going well with a senior (senpai), I was faced with some pretty horrible situations. For example, ... well it was probably as a result of drunken aggression (yopparatta ikioi), but the door of my room in the dormitory was punched in (buchi yaburete)... 

... That [incident] was outside work hours. But even at work, it would have been okay if I’d been told things to my face, but instead he’d say things behind my back ... . As this was around the time I’d just entered, in that sense it did cause me some stress.

(Matsumoto, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 18)

This incident had occurred some years prior to our discussion. However, it was clear from his tone that the incident had stayed with Matsumoto-san, and had an impact on him.

Power and Intimidation and Corporate Homosociality

Incidents such as these point to an uglier (often less talked-about) aspect of organizational masculinity – the assertion of power, whether over women (as manifested through sexual harassment, for instance) or over other men subordinate in status or age. As discussed in the previous chapter, there is a not insubstantial body of work that has examined the assertion of power over women in the framework of sexuality (see for instance, the various chapters in Hearn et al. 1988; Adkins 1992; Witz, Halford, and Savage 1996). However, when it comes to male-male interaction, while there has been a recognition of the desire aspect of homosociality in organizations (for example, Roper 1996), discussion of the sublimation of this desire into violence or other forms of power assertion has generally been restricted to studies centred on all-male institutions such as fraternities (Sanday 1990), boarding schools (Rodin 1980), or the military (Addelston and Stirrat 1996), rather than corporate organizations.14 Miura Tōru, the young Northern Energy new entrant, whose confusion about the ‘proper’ way of negotiating workplace friendships was discussed at some length in Chapter Six, also brought out some of these tensions in

14 Collinson’s descriptions of some of the (often sexually) humiliating initiation rituals targeting new apprentices on the shopfloor is an exception (Collinson 1992: 110–122). Other studies which address similar dynamics of same-sex violence/intimidation/harassment in the context of organizational culture include Vaught and Smith (1980) and Lee (2000: 147–152). Ackroyd and Thompson (1999: passim) and Wilson (2003: 193–195, 201–203) discuss some of the literature in the area. In the case of Japan, there has been some public discourse about ijime (bullying) in the workplace in recent years (although not nearly as extensive as the discussion on ijime in schools). An article in the popular weekly magazine SPA! (11 November 1998: 37–42), for instance, carried an exposé-style feature (complete with case studies) on violence in corporate organizations (shukan bōryoku) and letters to ‘problem pages’ in salaryman magazines such as Big Tomorrow, as well as postings on salaryman websites discussed in Chapter Four often contain complaints from salarymen who have been the target of bullying by senpai, colleagues, or managers.
the power relationships between senpai and kōhai. Talking about his own situation he mentioned doing things like vacating a seat or fetching things for his senpai. However, compared to the way things apparently used to be in the past, he felt that he (and his peers) had it much easier. He talked about stories he had heard from older colleagues about their experiences when new to the organization:

... you know, if you listen to those in their thirties and forties, it used to be much worse in the past, much more difficult ... For instance even at times like during welcome parties [for new entrants] (kangeikai) and so on, you had to 'scull' (ikki) alcohol, you don't have that now, but apparently there was that kind of stuff ... ... also you'd be made to strip naked or perform tricks, they had those kind of things in the past.

(Miura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 23)

There was a sense of relief in his voice when he mentioned these rituals as being a thing of the past. At the time of this first interview, he had been unable to drink alcohol – hence the anxiety about being forced to consume large amounts of alcohol would have been greater in his case. However, by our second interview, the following year, he had become able to tolerate alcohol; something which, as I discuss below, was seen as important in aiding his socialization within the workplace.

Shimizu Ayaki, a Northern Print computer support officer, offered some reflections on ways of avoiding the kind of same-sex friction that often results from the assertion of power (or conflicts of power):

[If you ask me about] relationships between men ... I suppose if you get on well you don't really need to worry about such things, but ... well, you know how men and women can get on fine ... how would you put it, if you talk things get resolved smoothly, don't they? But, for men, if you clash it becomes really hard to work [together], doesn't it?

[In response to interjection from me wondering if this was due to a sense of competition] Yes, yes, I guess that's what it is. It'd be good if [men working together] could make compromises and consult with one another, step back where they can, try and get on together even as males.

(Shimizu, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 15)

Of Friends and Colleagues

Shimizu-san was quite unhappy with his work situation, and talked about some of his grievances – the atmosphere and work practices, low pay, long working hours, etc. He mentioned an occasion where he had actually drafted a letter of resignation. This was not empty posturing for the sake of the interview; he did not participate in the second round of interviews because by then he had ended up resigning and leaving the company. Part of his unhappiness seemed to stem from a perceived lack of
friendship and camaraderie in the workplace. His response when I asked him if he had friends at work reflected this disenchantment:

Friends…don’t know if I could call them friends…no, I don’t suppose I’ve got any friends at the head office here now…

…

They’re colleagues (dōryō), I suppose. Everyone, including all my senpai, I don’t think I could call them friends. You know how even with your peers (dōki), there are some you become close friends with, and others you don’t become friends with? Well, there’s one, who’s quit the company but I’m still friends with him, and I have friends in ‘S-city’.

(Shimizu, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 11)

Shimizu-san’s criterion for differentiating between a ‘colleague’ and ‘friend’ was the ability to spend time together on days off, to say anything at all to each other and not have to worry about the other person’s feelings and sensitivities. This came out in his description of the things he and the friend who had resigned used to do together.

That friend is also really into cars. So when he was still working here at head office, we’d go [on drives] together, go out for a meal, go out drinking. You know, sometimes we’d leave for ‘S-city’ straight after finishing work, return around 4 am in the morning, and come straight into work!

(Shimizu, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 13)

He felt that it would be good if he still had such a friend at work. This, he thought, would help him continue working at the present job (keeping in mind his desire to leave) (Shimizu, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 11, 12). As it turned out, he did end up leaving the organization.

This kind of desire for a ‘true friend’ rather than tsukiai-based superficial camaraderie, was also articulated by Shin’ya Naohiko of Northern Energy. As may be recalled from discussions in earlier chapters, Shin’ya-san’s journey along the life-trajectory from single, unattached employee living in the company dormitory to husband and father (with all the accompanying responsibilities) had been compressed into the space of just one year. At the time of our first interview he was still living in the company dormitory. Despite a perception of dormitory life as being one of homosocial bonding (along the lines of a boarding school), the reality was a situation where the residents were barely aware of each others’ existence. Shin’ya-san mentioned that although this had apparently not always been the case, the situation since he had started living there was one of “wondering who might be living next door, what section he might be working in” (Shin’ya, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 26). Even when ‘official’ functions such as the ‘Dormitory Festival’ (ryō matsuri)
were organized, the turnout was disappointing.\textsuperscript{15} Even in the workplace itself, Shin'ya-san, at the time of our first interview, was ambivalent about his interactions with his colleagues. The senpai he had been close to, mentioned earlier in this section, had since been transferred elsewhere, and there seemed to be a barrier, in terms of closeness, between him and his peers. This may partly have been a consequence of his personality, which was far more introspective than others his age. The sense of separation may also have been due to the differences in educational qualification – as someone who had only completed high school, Shin'ya-san felt himself to be at a disadvantage compared with his peers, most of whom were university graduates (Shin'ya, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 11). Whatever the reasons, this ambivalence came out in our discussions about friendship at work. He was quite explicit in telling me that he had no close friends at work.\textsuperscript{16} Occasionally, he did go out drinking with peers, particularly those who came to the Head Office (where Shin'ya-san worked) from one of the regional centres. This, however, was mainly out of a sense of duty or isukai (along the lines suggested by Atsumi's discussion) and, as he stressed, was “not what friends are about to me. It's different from my definition of what a friend is”(35). He then went on to expand on his definition of a friend:

Well, probably, I guess, a sort of vague definition would include a family element (kazokutekina bubun)...more family-like on both sides, not just a relationship between the two individuals, but also, to an extent, meeting the other’s [i.e. the friend’s] parents, getting [the friend] to meet your own parents, that sort of thing is what’s real [friendship]. As for the emotional or psychological aspects of friendship (tomodachi toshite no seishin-ron) that’s a completely different matter, though.

... [in response to my question about what he meant by the ‘emotional/psychological aspects’] The ‘emotional and psychological dimension’, you know, is like, well, a partner (aite) who encourages (genki tsukete kurera, literally ‘empowers you’). For instance, [with friendship] there are always times when you joke around and tease each other. But, well, I think that it is really about, when the other person’s really suffering, how genuinely you can feel [their pain] – getting on the same wave-length, in both mind and body (shinshin) ...

(Shin'ya, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 35)

\textsuperscript{15} This lack of a cohesive sense of community at Shin’ya-san’s dormitory was brought home to me one night when he invited me to stay over in his room, after I had missed the last train during a night out drinking with him (and some of the other head office informants). Over the couple of hours I spent with him at the dormitory I did not encounter a single other resident that night or in the morning. This (lack of interaction), however, as Shin’ya-san mentioned, had not always been the situation. Moreover, talking to informants who were residents in some of Northern Energy’s other dormitories (for instance, in other cities), I got the impression that there was greater interaction between residents at these other locations. See Rohen (1974: 212–225) and Lo (1990: 51–71) for detailed discussions of company dormitory life; also Unami (1994) for a fascinating discussion of the surveillance element of company dormitory design.
In many senses, Shin'ya-san’s view of ‘true’ friendship brings out some of the nuances of those currents of homosocial desire reflected upon in the first half of this chapter. Moreover, his comment on the duty-bound tsukiai-type relationships would support Atsumi’s assertions, discussed above, about the separation between tsukiai-based interactions, and ‘true’ friendship (Atsumi 1980).17

Alcohol, Tsukiai and Homosocial Community

However, this is not to say that tsukiai-based interactions are inconsequential. As the earlier discussion of Allison’s study would indicate, work-related male-male interaction (even when mediated through women) is important in shaping the contours of corporate masculinity (Allison 1994). This importance of tsukiai – the sense of inclusion, of having fun together – is reflected in the following comment by Nakamura Tetsuya, a technical-line worker at Northern Print who had been with the organization for eight years. As we saw in Chapter Seven, the times when he felt himself to be a ‘typical salaryman’ were occasions when he was unable to refuse extra work piled on by more senior colleagues, and times when he was pouring drinks for seniors (Nakamura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 7). Yet, when I asked him what his most pleasant memory was in the eight years he had been in Northern Print, his response was: “Surely, without having to think about it, times when I’m having fun drinking with everyone (minna de waiwai nondeiru toki) would be number one!”18 A similar sentiment was expressed by Minami Toshio of the accounts section of Northern Energy, who also said that the best thing since joining the company for him had been the tsukiai and opportunities to interact with lots of different people. As he jokingly told me, he ‘hung out’ for opportunities to participate in such drinking occasions, and would go along “even if I’ve got no money” (Minami, Interview Transcript: 13). Significantly, as both Nakamura-san’s and Minami-san’s comments would suggest, the role played by alcohol in shaping and reinforcing this same-sex interaction (as well as a sense of masculinity) is not unimportant. The idiomatic expression, ‘nomunikeishon’, sometimes used by salarymen (and others) captures this function of alcohol consumption beautifully – the term is a compound derived from the Japanese verb ‘to drink’ (nomu), and the

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16 This may also have been a factor in him – more so than most other informants – opening himself up to me to such an extent.
17 Of interest is the fact that, as discussed at some length in the previous chapter, by the time of our second interview, fatherhood had bestowed a new prestige upon Shin’ya-san. This, as noted, had worked towards reducing the distance he perceived between himself and the married men in his workplace.

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English term, ‘communication’ (see Spielvogel 2003: 219, n. 9). As noted earlier in this chapter, this aspect of alcohol consumption has been commented upon by various authors (Rohlen 1974; Allison 1994; Linhart 1998; Roberson 1998; Ben-Ari 1989, 2000, 2002, etc.); Ben-Ari, for instance, in his discussion of the dynamics of a bōnenkai (‘End of Year’ party), draws attention to the “similarity between drinking occasions … and other social practices [like] … tsukiai … outings and contests, tours and excursions, or communal bathing. All of these … should be seen … as techniques which are often created purposely for interpersonal communication which is ‘warm’, ‘emphatic’, and which allows the exploration of problematic issues” (Ben-Ari 2002: 143).

The significance of alcohol as an instrument in this ‘crafting’ process, is brought out in Miura Tōru’s (almost boastful) account during our second interview, of his ‘progress’ from being unable to tolerate alcohol to being able to drink alcohol, and indulge in types of behaviour (including normally taboo same-sex physical intimacy) permissible when alcohol is present (see Allison 1994: 45, 46). Talking about the shifts in his behaviour when he was drinking he mentioned that prior to drinking he was very conscious of his behaviour as a respectable kaisha no ningen (company employee). However, this was

… before drinking. I try and bear that [the need to behave ‘respectably’] in mind. Once you start drinking [though], you lose all sense of things (wakaranaku naru) don’t you? … I do. [I lose] control … I don’t normally drink, so once I do, I end up drinking like a dam that’s burst (damu ga kekkai shita yō ni)!

(Miura, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 20)

When in this condition, he did not become abusive or violent; rather, he described himself as “the type that attaches himself [to people] (kuttsuite kuru)’, someone who “seeks bodily contact (karada no sesshouku)” (Miura, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 20). Although others would (jokingly) tell him off when in such a state, calling him an “ahō (idiot)” (20), everyone took into account his low alcohol tolerance and he

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18 Conversely, when I asked him what had been the best thing outside of work since he had become a shokatjin, his (half-joking) response was: “There weren’t too many happy things … lots of unhappy things, though” (Nakamura, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 11).

19 As Allison observes, the consumption of alcohol is integral to the assessment of a salaryman’s masculinity (in much the same way that sporting prowess is often considered a determinant of masculinity). She points out that in the context of nightlife venues such as hostess clubs “the Japanese male who does not drink … is considered odd, unsociable, somewhat unmasculine, and almost un-Japanese” (Allison 1994: 45). The lubricating effect of alcohol, according to her, allows for both barriers between individual men and barriers within the individual to be broken down. She also reinforces the frequently made observation about Japan (particularly in relation to males) that behaviour normally considered inexcusable is often tolerated when the person indulging is drunk. Examples include “throwing up, urinating in public, dancing on train platforms, falling asleep stretched out on the seat of a train, making passes at or otherwise insulting someone normally shown respect, speaking openly about things that usually go unsaid” (45).
would end up being “forgiven (jurusareru)” (21). The general feeling seemed to be of an indulgent senpai-kôhai type behaviour, where he would be treated (in an almost feminized manner) as a weaker mischievous non-adult, being called such things as “kono gaki” (the equivalent of something like ‘little brat’) (21).

Homosocial Community versus Heterosexual Expectations?

However, there was also another side to company-based tsukiai, one where it was seen as an intrusion on private time that could otherwise be spent with friends, or girlfriends, or family. In terms of an aversion to tsukiai-related interaction, Yoshida Shun’ichi, a twenty-year-old linesman with Northern Energy, summed up the feelings of many of the younger informants. He described his feelings when out drinking with older colleagues and forced to give the appearance of participating in conversations in which he had no interest:

[In response to my question] The conversation of older people? You know, when I go out drinking after work in my private time and I’m forced to listen to talk about work, at times like that, if I have to listen to work-related talk, perhaps I’m selfish, but I really detest it. If they talk to me about complicated things I can’t follow them, so since I can’t participate in their conversation, the older people just talk among themselves. Well, recently, sometimes, I might get asked what I think, but you know, it’s like no one can be bothered with including me much (kanatte moraenai).

(Yoshida, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 21)

Other informants also echoed this kind of sentiment. For example, Kobayashi Kazushi, also of Northern Energy, resented the intrusion on his private time taken up through having to go out drinking after work, something which in the past could happen twice a week. Although this frequency had decreased to about once a month, Kobayashi-san still had to deal with other types of tsukiai relationships – for instance with friends/fellow residents dropping round when he returned to the company dormitory (Kobayashi, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 22, 23).

This trend was something that came up as a topic in my discussions with some of the managers in the personnel section of Northern Energy. The formal discussions (which have been described in more detail in Chapter Six) revolved around Northern Energy’s recruiting priorities and practices. This was followed by an informal tsukiai-type drinks session organized by the group leader, with those who had taken part in the discussions, as well as a few other human resources junior/middle managers joining in. It was during this more relaxed drinks session that the conversation drifted to the shifts in the ways male salarymen constructed their views
of friendship and homosocial interactions related to the workplace.\(^{20}\) One of the most interesting observations was made in relation to one of the members present, an older (than the other members) man who did not say much for most of the evening. According to the others (and not refuted by this individual), this person, who had never married, used to spend much of his time with a work colleague. Apparently people around them would refer to them in terms of being like brothers. Given that the person in question was present, it was difficult for me to probe more, but from the tone of the conversation (and the way in which the individual himself was included) I was stuck that this closeness between the two male employees, was not regarded as anything particularly strange or out of the ordinary. However, significantly, this closeness was constructed in non-sexual terms (with the analogy of brothers being deployed), lending support to Roper’s assertion about homosocial desire — “intimacy in formally heterosexual settings which presents as non-sexual but which nevertheless involves potentially erotic desires” (Roper 1996: 213; my italics).

Whether such closeness was possible with younger employees was questionable.\(^{21}\) There was a general view of the shift from male employees seeing the workplace (rather than the home) as the site for (same-sex) companionship and emotional fulfilment, to a clearer demarcation between public and private, with enjoyment and emotional fulfilment being increasingly situated within the realm of a heterosexual couple. Whereas in the past non-work socializing often incorporated activities such as going camping or to the beach with work colleagues, it was becoming increasingly unusual for younger employees to do so. If they (younger employees) did socialize with each other, it was likely to be in the company of their girlfriends or, in the case of married employees, families (rather than, interestingly, just wives). This then resulted in quite a lengthy discussion about the influences popular culture representations of the 1950s/1960s-style ‘Happy American Family’ (television shows such as Bewitched and Father Knows Best) have had on the ways in which Japanese increasingly started to construct views and ideals regarding family (Discussion with Northern Energy Human Resources Staff, 1/12/98, Notes: 2–4).\(^{22}\)

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\(^{20}\) This discussion (like the earlier formal interview about recruitment), held on the evening of December 1st 1998 at an upscale, ‘fusion’ izakaya, was not taped. However, there were no objections to my taking notes; hence my observations about issues talked about that evening are based upon my notes, and not on transcripts of taped interviews (as is the case with the informants’ accounts).

\(^{21}\) Another observation made was that younger males were uncomfortable with another male’s nakedness in a way that their own generation had (apparently) not been. The factors that were seen as being responsible included fewer siblings children had when growing up and the fact that most of these young men would have grown up in houses equipped with private bathrooms/showers, in contrast to earlier generations who would have used the neighbourhood sentô (public bath). This has apparently contributed to a decline in what idiomatically is referred to as ‘skinship’ (a play on the English words, ‘skin’ and ‘kinship’, and referring to the physical closeness experienced, for example, when a parent and child share the same bedding).

\(^{22}\) In contrast to my informants (who were all in their late teens or twenties), with the exception of two individuals in their thirties, most of the members during this discussion would have been in their
These contrasting pulls in relation to trying to reconcile often divergent discourses surrounding friendship, intimacy, interaction with colleagues, love, marriage, family, companionship, and so forth, may have been at their most acute for men now in their forties and fifties. However, they also continue to inform males of my informants’ age bracket. An example of one informant’s attempts to reconcile, or come to terms, with some of these shifts in priorities in his friends’ and colleagues’ lives is the following account provided by Satō Hiroshi, a twenty-three-year-old single Northern Energy employee. Responding to my question about what he did on weekends, he mentioned his fondness for music, and then went on to tell me, with some regret, that the band he used to play the guitar with, had broken up due to other members getting married and going their separate ways (Satō, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 11). This regret – perhaps even resentment – at losing friends due to their transition to an adult, shakaijin masculinity came out quite poignantly in our discussion towards the end of the same interview. By way of wrapping up the interview I had asked him about the best and worst aspects of his life at the moment. This led the conversation to take the following course:

Satō (S): ... the worst thing ... well, my burden of debt increasing after damaging my car [laughs] ... and being jilted’ (furareta) a lot ... And also ... well, you know, the fact that everyone’s ended up getting married.

Romit (R): Your friends?
S: My friends.
R: So, after they got married you haven’t really...
S: Yes, that’s right. You know, it’s quite difficult [for them], isn’t it? With children born, and stuff. So, opportunities to have fun [together] (asobu kikai) have disappeared. Possibly you end up becoming somewhat sensitive (ki [o]tsukau).

late forties or fifties. This meant that they were the generation (coming of age in the 1960s and 1970s) that would have been particularly exposed to the beginnings of the shifts in discourses surrounding gender, marriage, and family. At the same time, (more so than my informants) they would have been able to relate to the earlier understandings regarding these too. Ronald Dore, writing in the early 1970s, captures some of these shifts in his comparative study of employment culture in Japan and the United Kingdom: “Another ... recent coinage is mai-hōmu-shugi or ‘my-home-ism’. This refers to the ‘privatized’ concerns of the man of small ambition – chiefly concerned to get a pretty little house and a pretty little wife and two model children, to have a colour TV and a cooler and to join the ranks of maikoa-zoku, the ‘my car tribe’. The word has ambiguous connotations. The popular weekly magazines do in part encourage the my-home-ist. They feed his fantasies, extol the pleasures of the consumer society, treat it as natural to be in love with one’s wife, and refer to my-home-ism as the trend of the times .... But at the same time they feed the older sensual fantasies of the bar-girl/geisha mistresses and lascivious weekends at hot-spring resorts – enjoyed in the company of one’s workmates rather than of the wife one married from a sense of family duty, and thus a use of leisure which binds one more closely to one’s work and workmates rather than drawing one away from them” (Dore 1973: 212, 213); (see also, my discussion in Chapter Three).
R: On both sides?
S: No, I do. It's like you shouldn't impose (jama shicha ikenai). So now, for the time being, I just go out with other single guys.

R: Well, that's probably more fun!
S: Well, I suppose. If you're going to go out anyway, you may as well [go out with the single guys].

(Satō, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 12)

What comes across from this brief exchange between us are the collisions and internmeshings between different discourses, referred to above.

**Fujita Yūji: Homosocial Dreams, Heterosexual Realities**

The intermingling and colliding of these various discursive 'ideals' was best brought out in my discussions with Fujita Yūji, the married Northern Print sales employee whose views on marriage were discussed in the previous chapter. More so than was the case with most of the other informants, 'friendship' and its importance occupied a fair share of our discussion in both interviews. Friends, in Fujita-san's view, were "the most valuable of assets (ichiban no zaisan)" (Fujita, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 19). To him, the existence of a friend was just as important as his wife or children (20). Indeed, to him, 'friendship' was what made masculinity special, the one thing that, more than others, made him glad that he had been born male. This is reflected in the following exchange between us:

Romit (R): ... What might ... the best thing about being a man be? [The thing] that makes you think that this is why I’m glad I was born as a male?

Fujita (F): Let's see ... what definitely comes to mind would be friends (nakama). You know, with girls you don't often hear of things like this kind of friendship (yūjō). It's probably largely what you'd call superficial (uwabe), but, on the other hand, for me, I have friends from my home-town from my high school days and university friends, who, well, would still be called close friends (shin yami), so that's why, in that sense, I really think it's good to be [born] male (otoko de yokatta).

R: I see. So, for women ... women, with each other (onna-dōshi), they don't have such friendships? In your view?
F: You don’t really hear about it around you (mawari de wa kikanai). So, if they don’t see someone for just a short time, they lose touch, and [the relationship] ends with that. For me, there’s a fellow (yatsu) who’s been a close friend (shin’yû) ever since kindergarten. So there’s that aspect to being glad I’m male.

(Fujita, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 25)

A close friend, such as his friend from his kindergarten years, was, in his view, “akin to a brother (kyôdai ni chikai)” (Fujita, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 26) and the relationship was strong enough to endure all kinds of changes – the fact that Fujita-san was now married (and that the friend was about to be married), or even that he had moved away from his home-town to another part of the country, had not weakened the bond. He was now able to meet this friend – and others who he included in his circle of good friends – only once a year or so. However, whenever they meet, they are able to slip straight back into their old closeness:

... this probably sounds strange, but even if there’s been no contact for a year, and if I make contact, we immediately revert back to our original [relationship] (sugu moto ni nodorechau). And with this, even my wife has told me that it’s odd (fushigi).

... [responding to my query about what aspect his wife thought odd] well, with girls, if there’s a break [in contact] over a period of time, apparently it becomes impossible to return to being normal friends ... I don’t know whether it’s because I’m a man, or it’s just special (tokushu) [in my case], but with me and my friends, even if you’ve been busy and haven’t been in touch, and then suddenly call them out of the blue, there isn’t a single complaint about what you’ve been up to all this time, and ... between me and my friends, we can slip straight back to our old [relationship], irrespective of whether you’ve been in touch or haven’t ...

(Fujita, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 21)

Trying to summarize his feelings towards his relationships with his friends, he stated that, “it’s a source of comfort (anshin-kan) knowing that even if we don’t keep contact the relationship won’t crumble” (Fujita, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 21).

Fujita-san seemed to have a strong desire to encompass, or reconcile, or bring together all the different discourses and expectations regarding idealized friendship, marriage, and salaryman masculinity together. Thus, he repeatedly stressed that marriage had not adversely affected the intensity and closeness of his friendships. In fact the way he expressed it, he considered his wife almost like ‘one-of-the-gang’. As he explained to me: “you know, everyone, including my wife, just becomes friends” (Fujita, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 22). This sense of bringing wives (including
his own) into a big, happy, pre-existing circle of friends is reflected in the following words:

So, you know, it’s like this – another friend is getting married soon, and in pretty much the same way, [his wife] will become part of the group, having fun with everyone, going camping and stuff. So in that sense, even as a couple, within the whole group, both become everyone’s friend.

(Fujita, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 23)

He also – in contrast to the views expressed by Yoshida Shun’ichi or Kobayashi Kazushi above – placed importance on fostering friendship and camaraderie through work-related tsukiai. He felt – in many respects, echoing the sentiments of the Northern Energy managers discussed above – that the recent trend among many of his peers of seeking their fulfilment separate from community or work networks was linked to the growing reach of “individualism (koinshugi) through mass media” (Fujita, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 26). Rather, in his view, it was valuable to participate in work-related tsukiai such as bōnenkai or company trips (ian ryokō). As he put it:

I think they’re important. Because normally since you’re so busy when you’re working, you don’t [talk about] anything other than work. So, in that kind of scenario, since you don’t really get the opportunity to talk at a deeper level (fukai tokoro made), it’s difficult for people to become close. That’s why, regardless of whether you drink alcohol, or don’t drink alcohol, I think it’s really important to get away and talk together outside of work.

(Fujita, Round 1 Interview Transcript: 26)

Fujita-san’s attempts to negotiate some kind of balance between the demands of homosocial bonding with friends and colleagues, and heterosexual expectations of hegemonic masculinity, are reflected in his response to my questions about whether he would have any problems showing his emotions (kanjō) in front of a close male friend. This was his response:

Yes, I show it [feelings]. But, to an extent I’d hold back. I suppose these days it doesn’t really happen [showing emotions], because I wouldn’t want to make him [the friend] feel uncomfortable (fukaiikan).

(Fujita, Round 2 Interview Transcript: 22)

On the other hand, the person he would go to if he really needed to talk about something would be his wife. However, his way of rationalizing this to me was his statement – mentioned above – that everyone including his wife became his friend.
My decision to discuss Fujita-san’s views on friendship at the end of the section on my informants’ voices, and at some length, was deliberate. More so than the other informants, he, I believe, encompassed within himself the various strands at work in the often complex and shifting relationship between the two mainstays of hegemonic salaryman masculinity – unambiguous prescriptive heterosexuality and ambiguous assumed homosociality. As signalled in the opening paragraphs of this chapter, there is a constant tension for the individual as to how he negotiates between different expectations. These expectations include the expectations of tsukiai from his colleagues (and, where relevant, clients), often harking back to an older reality of homosocial intimacy, shifts in the discourses surrounding ‘ideals’ in masculinity, marriage, companionship, and friendship which reflect wider socio-cultural changes, as well as the individual’s own construction of notions of ‘friendship’. While all the informants engaged with these issues on a day-to-day basis, Fujita-san was far more conscious of these dynamics than was the case with many of the others. Moreover, what this consciousness enables us to do is to feed in a consideration that has generally been absent from analyses of Japanese corporate culture – that of the undercurrents of homosocial desire which along with the more visible influences, have also shaped the ‘crafting’ of salaryman masculinity.

Conclusion

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, one of the major currents circulating through organizations is that of homosocial relationships and interconnections. Yet, despite the significance of these dynamics of homosocial interaction within organizational culture, it is an area that “has remained largely unexplored” (Roper 1996: 224). This chapter has drawn attention to this aspect of salaryman masculinity. As highlighted, the ‘success’ of salaryman masculinity has to a large extent been as dependent on homosocial bonds as to the public subscription to an ideology of hegemonic heterosexuality (see Frank 1987). In this regard, relationships like the senpai/kōhai and oyabun/kobun dyads have been integral to the homosocial reproduction of salaryman masculinity. Thus, in the context of my informants being ‘crafted’ into salaryman masculinity, this aspect of organizational culture was one that had to be taken into account. As the various accounts revealed, as was the case with engagements with other aspects of salaryman masculinity, the engagements with the expectations of homosociality were characterized by shades of ambiguity and contradiction. The informants often had to simultaneously contend with a variety of competing expectations. These included idealized imaginings of what constituted same-sex friendship, both in general, and specifically at the workplace. At the same
time, as Miura Tôru’s account of being reprimanded for bringing notions of pre-
shakaijin friendship into adult shakaijin spaces, or Matsumoto Tadashi’s
recollections of bullying and intimidation at the hands of a senior colleague suggest,
the reality of negotiating homosocial relationships does not always conform to
idealized imaginings. Moreover, as the accounts of the younger informants
demonstrate, shifting expectations regarding heterosexual relationships outside the
workplace have meant that homosocial demands within the organization are
increasingly being regarded with ambivalence. Yet, at the same time, as the accounts
of informants such as Fujita Yûji and Satô Hiroshi reveal, acknowledged homosocial
relations as well as unacknowledged “circuits” of homosocial desire (Roper 1996:
212, 213) continue to shape the discourse of salaryman masculinity.

My decision to situate this chapter as the final interview chapter was a deliberate one.
This chapter, more than the other chapters, discussed areas within salaryman
masculinity that could be brought out only through interactive, one-on-one
discussions with individuals. The subtle nuances of Matumoto-san’s recollections of
being bullied by a senior, or Fujita-san’s reflections on the importance of friendship,
would have been much harder to tap into had an interactive relationship between the
researcher and the informant not existed. As highlighted when discussing the
research methodology in Chapter Two, the use of semi-structured, intensive
interviews was integral to the multi-pronged, multi-layered research approach
adopted in this thesis. The interview chapters – Chapters Five to Nine – have allowed
for an added, richer layer of material to complement the ‘macro’ view of the
dynamics of salaryman masculinity presented in the first half of the thesis. It has
been through the voices of the informants presented in Chapters Five to Nine, that we
have been able to get a sense of the complexities and nuances that underlie the
‘macro’ dynamics outlined in Chapters Two, Three, and Four. It is this complexity
that allows us to realize that “lives, situations, ... societies are always and
everywhere evolving, adjusting, emerging, becoming” (Plummer 1996: 224).
Arguably, these shifts and nuances and complexities could not have been brought out
as vividly had the thesis adopted just a ‘macro’ perspective.
CONCLUSION

REFLECTIONS ON ‘CRAFTING MASCULINITY’

Having explored some of the contours and complexities of salaryman masculinity over the preceding chapters, it would be useful to re-visit some of the arguments introduced in the Introduction to this thesis. This will help clarify and tie together the various strands and interweavings of the discussion in the preceding chapters. As pointed out in the Introduction, while the salaryman and all that he has represented has been extensively researched and studied from a variety of angles, what has generally been overlooked has been an examination of the *man* in the salaryman. This is despite the figure of the salaryman and the values and lifestyle associated with him having become something of a metonym for all Japanese men over the post-war decades. Indeed, as noted in the Introduction, the salaryman may be seen as the “archetypal citizen … a male, heterosexual, able-bodied, fertile, white-collar worker” (Mackie 2002: 203).

Thus, a primary aim of this thesis has been to explore the discourse of the salaryman as a particular discourse of *masculinity* embedded within particular ideologies of gender, sexuality, class, and indeed, the nation. ‘Masculinity’ as deployed in this thesis has not been in the sense of some kind of essentialized biological essence cutting across all individuals genetically classified as ‘male’. Rather, my understanding of the term in this thesis has been one which sees ‘masculinity’ – what it means to be a ‘male’ person, ‘manhood’ – “as a constantly changing collection of meanings that we construct through our relationships with ourselves, with each other, and with our world” (Kimmel 1994: 120). Thus, it would be more realistic to talk in terms of masculinities – multiple constructions and representations of ‘maleness’. I have argued, moreover, that among these various masculinities, at any particular point in time in a given society one discourse of masculinity has the greatest ideological power and hold over the other forms of masculinity. This is what Connell (1987, 1995, 1996, 2000) and other writers have labelled ‘hegemonic’ masculinity. This hegemonic masculinity may be conceived of as a cultural ‘ideal’ or ‘blueprint’, which exerts a powerful influence on the lives of men and women.

However, as I have also argued, while the hegemonic form of masculinity may well have the greatest ideological power, this power is not absolute. Rather, at stake is a complex process whereby the hegemonic discourse intersects and interacts with other forms of masculinity in varying ways. These processes of engagement may incorporate dynamics of appropriation, subjugation, and marginalization, as well as
resistance, subversion, playful engagement, and modification. As a whole, these dynamics constitute what, drawing upon Demetriou (2001), I referred to in Chapter Two as a “hybrid bloc” (348). Within the context of these dynamics, hegemonic masculinity is constantly shaped by other masculinities, and by surrounding social, cultural, economic, and political institutions, structures, and practices. The non-hegemonic masculinities are in turn shaped through this process. In this sense hegemonic masculinity is an ongoing, constantly shaping and re-shaping gender project (Connell 2002: 81, 82). This is what I referred to as the ‘crafting’ and ‘re-crafting’ of masculinity, which occurs both at the wider societal level, and within individual males over their life-paths. The term ‘crafting’, as Dorinne Kondo has noted, implies that “identity is not a static object, but a creative process (Kondo 1990: 48). Thus, I have argued that identity built around being gendered as ‘masculine’ is a constantly shifting, re-shaping, re-enacting process occurring at the intersections of individual agency and discourses and ideologies circulating within and through society.

It is this notion of the ‘crafting’ of masculinity that I have applied to my discussion of the salaryman in this thesis. As I have highlighted, over the postwar decades accompanying Japan’s transition to a global industrial power, the discourse of masculinity surrounding the salaryman emerged as the hegemonic form of masculinity. This was despite the fact that even at the high-point of Japan’s economic success story in the 1960s and 1970s, only a limited number of men would have fallen under the strictest definitional rubric of the term, salaryman. Rather, as I stressed, it was the ideology (of gender, of sexuality, of class) embodied in the salaryman that was far more extensive in its reach. At the core of this ideology was the equation of masculinity with the public work sphere, and femininity with the private, household sphere. Within this ideological framework, the two sides of the binary were linked together through the institution of publicly acknowledged and sanctioned heterosexual marriage. Thus, it was the notion of the adult man, the socially responsible shakaijin, as producer and reproducer (in other words, the daikokubashira mainstay of the household) that lay at the heart of the ideology embedded in the discourse of salaryman masculinity. To a large extent, this continues to be the case even today, despite the various socio-economic and cultural shifts which became pronounced over the 1980s and 1990s, discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis. However, as mentioned above, hegemonic masculinity is in a constant state of being crafted and re-crafted in response to the wider socio-economic and cultural context. Such forces as the emergence of an affluent late-capitalist society with a greater range of employment and lifestyle choices, shifts in women’s workforce participation, the impact of a decade-long economic slowdown forcing
many organizations to re-think assumptions about corporate culture and management practices, and the influence of increasingly globalized discourses of gender and sexuality (including masculinity), have exerted a shaping influence on the articulations of hegemonic masculinity.

Re-mappings of the Thesis

This thesis has been situated at this juncture, exploring this crafting of masculinity in response to both seemingly entrenched assumptions such as the ideology of male as provider and the pressures and contestations surrounding some of the very same assumptions. What I have highlighted is the simultaneous coexistence and juxtaposition of both dynamics in the day-to-day articulations of salaryman masculinity. The discussion of this crafting process in this thesis has focused on two levels of analysis – the ‘macro’ societal level, and the ‘micro’ level of the individual male on the ground. The former level of analysis constitutes the discussion covered in Chapters Three and Four. In Chapter Three, I examined the historical framework within which the discourse of masculinity associated with the salaryman became the hegemonic form of masculinity in Japan. Specifically, I looked at the ways in which state-sanctioned ideologies of nation, gender, family, work, and citizenship in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, set the framework for the emergence of salaryman masculinity as the hegemonic form of masculinity in the second half of the twentieth century. The chapter also looked at some of the contestations and pressures surrounding salaryman masculinity which have become increasingly pronounced in recent years. These shifts, as I argued, may on the one hand convey an impression of hegemonic salaryman masculinity unravelling and being dismantled. However, as I also pointed out, and as suggested by Hanke (1990) and Demetriou (2001), while the form of salaryman masculinity may well be altering in response to some of these pressures and contestations, it could be argued that the core ideological assumptions at the heart of the discourse of salaryman masculinity, such as the work/masculinity nexus and the expectations of the man as heterosexual reproducer, have not altered significantly.

The ‘macro’ level of analysis also included the discussion in Chapter Four, where I explored the ways in which the discourse of salaryman masculinity circulates through society through channels such as popular culture. Specifically, the chapter examined the dynamics involved in the ways that the ideological expectations of hegemonic masculinity get disseminated and reinforced through seemingly innocuous media such as manga comics and male magazines. This points to the argument highlighted in Chapter Two, that a feature of ideological hegemony is its
very ordinarness. Indeed, as Donaldson points out, "hegemony involves persuasion of the greater part of the population, particularly through the media, and the organization of social institutions in ways that appear 'natural', 'ordinary', 'normal'" (Donaldson 1993: 645). Thus, what Chapter Four highlighted was the very 'everyday' nature of the ways in which the expectations of salaryman masculinity are inculcated into the male consumers of popular culture media such as salaryman *manga* like *Sarariiman Kintarō*, magazines like *Big Tomorrow* targeting salarymen in their twenties and thirties, and 'pop-management'-style self-improvement guides and manuals. At the same time, as the chapter highlighted, spaces of popular culture such as some of the salaryman Internet sites discussed, may also act as sites of contestation and interrogation of these very same hegemonic expectations. It is through some of these challenges and contestations that the articulations of salaryman masculinity continue to be shaped and re-shaped.

The second level of discussion in the thesis – encompassing Chapters Five to Nine – focused on this crafting process at the micro level. The discussion primarily drew upon interviews conducted during an eighteen-month period of fieldwork in Japan, with young male employees of two private-sector organizations who had recently entered the workforce and were negotiating with the expectations of salaryman masculinity on a day-to-day basis. As explained in Chapter Two when discussing the contours and methodology of the research, I deliberately focused on informants who had recently entered the workforce. To varying degrees, all the informants were situated in a sort of liminal, no-man's land between clearly definable life-trajectory episodes, as they negotiated the transition from their pre-*shakaijin* selves to adult, responsible, *shakaijin* status. Thus, these young men were particularly sensitive to, and conscious of, the crafting process as they dealt with the ideals and expectations of salaryman masculinity. Consequently they were able to convey an 'on-the-ground' sense of the complexities and the nuances of this process. The richness and complexity of their voices was brought out in these later chapters.

The first of these chapters – Chapter Five – looked at the ways in which these individuals constructed and imagined the process by which they 'came into masculinity'. In other words, the chapter explored the informants' recollections of the process by which they 'became boys', as the first stage in the process of being crafted into masculinity. As the accounts of the informants revealed, this 'coming into masculinity' and a realization of 'maleness', rather than following some kind of genetically pre-determined schedule common to all male children, varied quite considerably among the informants. Indeed, what did come across was the complexity, ambiguity, and contradiction that seemed to characterize this process.
This complexity and contradiction also came out in Chapter Six, which focused on the informants’ transition into adult, salaryman masculinity in the first weeks and months after entering the workforce. It is over these initial weeks and months after the individual’s entry into the workforce that the efforts to inculcate the expectations that go with the ideals of salaryman masculinity are at their most intense. This is done through the induction and training that new employees are made to undergo. Consequently, this chapter drew upon both direct observations of the new staff training of one of the organizations involved in the research as well as on informants’ accounts of their own experiences of the induction training when they had entered the workforce. The accounts of the informants drawn upon in this chapter brought out the tensions and the disjunctures between the organizations’ efforts at crafting ideal ‘corporate soldiers’ through the induction training process, and the informants’ own readings and appropriations of the process.

The focus of Chapter Seven was on the work/masculinity nexus in the lives of the informants. Given the axiomatic position of ‘work’ in the ideological make-up of hegemonic masculinity, the chapter explored the ways in which the informants constructed their own masculine identities through work. The chapter explored the informants’ imaginings of what constitutes ‘masculine’ (otokorashii) and ‘un-masculine’ (otokorashikunai) occupations, and where they situated the salaryman on that scale. As brought out through their accounts in this chapter, many of the informants did not construct the white-collar work typified by the salaryman as ‘masculine’. Rather, it was occupations associated with physical strength or typically ‘blue-collar’ occupations that were presented as ‘masculine’. Thus, what came across in the accounts of the informants was the ambivalence felt towards the masculinity of white-collar salaryman work, which was what most of the informants were engaged in. As I argued in the chapter, this dissonance between, on the one hand, the seemingly idealized masculinity of the salaryman and, on the other hand, the perceived lack of masculinity, supports the contention that hegemonic masculinity need not necessarily be the culturally exalted model in all contexts. Rather, it is through appropriating specific (idealized) elements of other masculinities, along the lines suggested by Demetriou’s notion of hegemonic masculinity as a “hybrid bloc” (Demetriou 2001: 348), that hegemonic masculinity continues to maintain its position of hegemony. Thus, regarded in this way, the contradiction that emerged in my informants’ accounts of their constructions of salaryman masculinity may be seen as a part of the crafting process.

Chapter Eight explored another underpinning of salaryman masculinity – the centrality of a specific discourse of regulated heterosexuality centring around the
man as husband and father. The various voices of both married and single informants reflecting on these issues brought out the importance of these ‘signifiers’ in defining access to the dividends of hegemonic masculinity. At the same time, the chapter also explored some of the nuances and ‘shades of grey’ at work in the informants’ engagements with these expectations. For instance, married informants and those who had become fathers recently articulated their ideas of themselves as husbands and fathers in the context of shifts in the discourse surrounding marriage and fatherhood to one where the active involvement by fathers in childrearing is being reconfigured as an idealized attribute of masculinity. The chapter also drew attention to the ways in which individuals who are unable, or unwilling, to conform to the expectations of marriage and fatherhood negotiate with the expectations of salaryman masculinity on a day-to-day basis.

The final chapter drawing on individual voices, Chapter Nine, drew attention to an aspect of salaryman masculinity which has often been overlooked. This is the role played by the dynamics of same-sex homosocial relations within organizations. As I argued in the chapter, just as an ideology of publicly proclaimed heterosexuality articulated through marriage and fatherhood has been instrumental in the operation of hegemonic masculinity, so too have same-sex bonds within the organization. These bonds, as outlined, encompass relationships such as mentoring relationships between senior colleagues and junior colleagues (senpai/kōhai), superiors and subordinates (oyabun/kobun), or simply relationships of friendship between work colleagues. As argued, features of Japanese corporate culture revolving around male-male interaction and bonding (ranging from after-work drinks right through to packaged ‘sex tours’ by groups of male employees) have been a significant element of salaryman masculinity. Yet, as the voices of the informants in the chapter revealed, there is an underlying tension between these ‘ideals’ of homosocial bonding and the sometimes conflicting expectations of ‘ideals’ of the discourse of husband and father to which they are also expected to conform.

As stated above, drawing upon the deeply personal and nuanced accounts of these young men, has allowed us to get a sense of the complexity of the dynamics of crafting salaryman masculinity, a complexity that may not have been conveyed to the same extent had the focus of discussion been limited to the macro level. However, at the same time, the macro level of analysis adopted in the earlier chapters allowed us to situate and contextualize these individual complexities and contradictions and negotiations within the wider socio-cultural and economic framework. As I have argued throughout this thesis, it is through the intermeshing of both the macro and the micro levels, and at their points of intersection, that the crafting of masculinity
occurs. It is this crafting that shapes the form of hegemonic masculinity which accounts for both the continued persistence of entrenched ideological assumptions about masculinity that came out through the voices of the informants and the shifts and changes and transformations that also appear to be occurring.

Reflections for the Future

Where this leaves us in terms of the future shapings of hegemonic masculinity is something we need to consider. Quite clearly, some of the earlier assumptions and attributes of salaryman masculinity are becoming increasingly redundant. As I have consistently argued through this thesis, hegemonic masculinity is formed through a constantly shifting process. Connell draws attention to this feature too when he notes that

[n]ew groups may challenge old solutions and construct a new hegemony. The dominance of any group of men may be challenged .... Hegemony ... is a historically mobile relation [and] its ebb and flow is a key element of the picture of masculinity.

(Connell 1995: 77, 78)

Thus, in the context of salaryman masculinity, old guarantees like lifetime employment and promotions linked to seniority may well be a thing of the past (even in large elite organizations like Northern Energy). At the same time, the new shapings of corporate culture are allowing a newer form of idealized masculinity, – exemplified by figures like Carlos Ghosn, and drawing on a Euro-American-influenced multinational global hypermasculinity – to become increasingly visible and influential. This is a ‘style’ of masculinity that, in contrast to the company-centred articulations of ‘traditional’ salaryman masculinity, is marked by “increasing egocentrism, very conditional loyalties (even to the corporation), and a declining sense of responsibility for others” (Connell 2000: 52). In some respects, this newer form of salaryman masculinity may well come across as more ‘liberating’, in the sense of opening spaces for expression of individuality and flexibility. Thus, linking this back to my informants within the framework of this kind of economic rationalist, numbers-driven egocentric emergent hegemonic masculinity, a slightly idiosyncratic, non-conformist, high-performer like Kimura Kenji of Northern Print is more likely to be an exemplar than someone like Matsumoto Tadashi of Northern Energy. The latter’s strong sense of responsibility and conformity, as well as his sober, conservative, ‘respectable’ demeanor and outlook, it may be recalled from our earlier chapters, made him an exemplar of ‘traditional’ salaryman masculinity along
the lines presented in texts such as the JTB guide referred to in the Introduction to this thesis.

Similarly, attitudes towards relationships with wives and girlfriends, as well as attitudes towards fatherhood that came across in the accounts of the informants would suggest that Euro-American-influenced global discourses on notions of romantic love, marriage, family, and parenthood, are influencing ideals of masculinity. These have dovetailed, as discussed in Chapter Eight, with official endeavours on the part of the government to stem the decline in the birth-rate by encouraging men to take on a greater role within the household, particularly in relation to active involvement with child-rearing (see Roberts 2002). Quite clearly within the new shapings of salaryman masculinity the figure of the (apparently) workaholic kigyō senshi (‘corporate warrior’) who finds emotional satisfaction through his work identity and homosocial interactions with colleagues rather than through his partner/family, is becoming increasingly passé. Rather, as popular culture representations like the ‘cool’ versus ‘uncool’ salaryman discussed in Chapter Four, or the figure of the devoted single father and corporate warrior hero of the manga Sarariiman Kintarō suggest, the new ‘ideal’ is quite clearly someone who defines himself by increasingly globalized hegemonic standards.

At one level, these transformations in the hegemonic ideals of masculinity have the potential of ushering in (what I consider to be) positive changes, both within the specific context of organizations, and more generally through society. An example would be the institutionalization and promotion of gender-equality and ‘family-friendly’ policies around issues such as childcare leave, along the lines adopted by corporate organizations in many Western nations. Such changes have the potential for further challenging the gender ideology foregrounding Japanese industrial-capitalism, of masculinity being defined through the public work sphere, and femininity through the private household sphere. However, as authors such as Connell (2000: 39–66, 2003) and Kimmel (2001) have cautioned, we need to bear in mind that the ideological underpinnings of these new discourses of neo-liberal global, multinational masculinities, despite their superficially “increasingly libertarian sexuality” (Connell 2000: 52) may be no less masculinist and heteronormative than older forms of hegemonic masculinity, albeit in different ways. At the end of the day, the exemplars of this new style of salaryman masculinity – whether Carlos Ghosn, Kintarō of Sarariiman Kintarō, or my informant Kimura Kenji – may well locate their emotional identification and fulfillment outside the workplace, but they are not really challenging the assumption of success at work determining a man’s masculine identity and self-worth. If anything, it is a harder,
more aggressive, 'take-no-prisoners' style of masculinity that characterizes their
everyday practices, compared with which the older model of salaryman masculinity,
along the lines depicted in the JTB guide, appear almost 'feminine'. It is this area of
the intersections between the older constructions of hegemonic masculinity, and
these newly emergent globalized hegemonic ideals, both within the workplace, and
in society general, which deserves greater research focus in the future.
APPENDIX
## APPENDIX 1: PROFILE OF INFORMANTS

### Northern Energy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Interview Dates</th>
<th>Age (+)</th>
<th>No. of yrs with firm (+)</th>
<th>Area of work</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Other Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HS1*</td>
<td>Murayama Satoshi</td>
<td>9.5.99</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5 yrs</td>
<td>General Admin.</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Only interviewed once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Father of newborn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS6*</td>
<td>Shin’ya Naohiko</td>
<td>12.12.98</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4 yrs</td>
<td>Systems Support</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Single at first interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18.9.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Became father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA1*</td>
<td>Matsuura Toshio</td>
<td>11.5.99</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1 yr</td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Only Round 2 Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA2*</td>
<td>Matsunoto Toyoji</td>
<td>21.8.98</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5 yrs</td>
<td>Accounts</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Liaison person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18.9.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA3</td>
<td>Tanaka Kiyoshi</td>
<td>25.8.98</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1 yr</td>
<td>Tech. Planning</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Transferred after first interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA4</td>
<td>Nohara Nori</td>
<td>9.9.98</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2 yrs</td>
<td>Repair</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Only Round 1 Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA5*</td>
<td>Imai Shinji</td>
<td>21.8.98</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4 yrs</td>
<td>Customer Relations</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Some trouble with tape quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.5.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.5.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA7</td>
<td>Ogasawara Takuro</td>
<td>24.8.98</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.5 yrs</td>
<td>Design/ Planning</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Round 1 questions repeated in Round 2 due to tape problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25.4.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA8</td>
<td>Matsuzaka Kōhei</td>
<td>30.11.98</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Accounts</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13.5.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA9</td>
<td>Kobayashi Kazushi</td>
<td>25.8.96</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Accounts</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26.4.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA10*</td>
<td>Ishida Naoki</td>
<td>20.8.98</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Accounts</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.5.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA11*</td>
<td>Murai Yukihiro</td>
<td>transferred</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Customer Relations</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Only participated in focus interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Initial liaison but transferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA12</td>
<td>Makimura Keisuke</td>
<td>9.9.98</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1.5 yrs</td>
<td>Design/ Planning</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA13</td>
<td>Sue Hiroshi</td>
<td>25.8.98</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA14</td>
<td>Yoshida Shun’ichi</td>
<td>7.7.98</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6 mths.</td>
<td>Repairs</td>
<td>Tech.</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Only 1st interview transcript due to tape problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14.7.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS2*</td>
<td>Yamasaki Tsuyoshi</td>
<td>29.7.98</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Only focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS5*</td>
<td>Igarashi Hidetoshi</td>
<td>7.8.98</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Did not return questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS6*</td>
<td>Wada Ken</td>
<td>7.8.95</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Sales/ finance</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Did not return questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS7*</td>
<td>Kishida Takuya</td>
<td>7.8.95</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- (*) Indicates those who participated in focus group interview
- (+): At the time of first individual interview
- U: University, HS: High School, TC: Technical College

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### Northern Print

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Interview Date(s)</th>
<th>Age (+)</th>
<th>No. of yrs with firm (+)</th>
<th>Area of work</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Other Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA1*</td>
<td>Kimura Kenji</td>
<td>12.9.98 6.9.99</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>• Introduced person • B. and father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA2*</td>
<td>Saiki Yasuo</td>
<td>6.9.99</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5 yrs</td>
<td>Tech/Shop-floor</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>• Only participated in Round 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA3*</td>
<td>Tanaka Tetsu</td>
<td>Quit before interview</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>• Participated in focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA4*</td>
<td>Fujita Yuji</td>
<td>16.11.98 7.9.99</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2 yrs</td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>• Changed jobs to Northern Pratt from elsewhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA5*</td>
<td>Shimizu Aynki</td>
<td>20.11.98</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.5 yrs</td>
<td>Computer systems</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>• Quit before 2nd interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA6*</td>
<td>Kajima Dansuke</td>
<td>16.11.98 8.9.99</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7 yrs</td>
<td>Technical/Shop-floor</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA7</td>
<td>Takahashi Yoshio</td>
<td>17.11.99 7.9.99</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Technical/Shop-floor</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA8*</td>
<td>Hamada Shigeru</td>
<td>18.11.98 8.9.99</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Less than 1 yr</td>
<td>Shopfloor (but intern)</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>• President’s son • Previously in different firm • Being groomed for eventual takeover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA9*</td>
<td>Katayama Katsuhiko</td>
<td>17.11.98</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4 yrs</td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>• Transferred after 1st interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA10*</td>
<td>Inoue Toshifumi</td>
<td>19.11.98 9.9.99</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.5 yrs</td>
<td>Technical/Shopfloor</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA11</td>
<td>Kurihara Hidetoshi</td>
<td>20.11.98 9.9.99</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5 yrs</td>
<td>Shopfloor but account-related</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA12</td>
<td>Nakanura Tetsuya</td>
<td>19.11.98</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7 yrs</td>
<td>Shopfloor</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- (*) Indicates those who participated in focus group interview
- (+): At the time of first individual interview
- U: University, HS: High School, TC: Technical College

### Other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Interview Date(s)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>No of yrs with firm</th>
<th>Area of work</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OS</td>
<td>Arai Jan</td>
<td>11.7.98</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1 yr</td>
<td>Public Corporation: Customer Service</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>• Not part of regular pool of informants • Self-identified as gay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS/THEMES

Questions/Themes Covered in the Focus Group Interviews

Masculinity-related themes:

- The significance of being ‘male’/‘man’ (otoko de aru koto).

- Notions of ‘manly/masculine’ (otokorashii) in terms of everyday behaviour.

- Notions of ‘un-masculine’ (otokorashikunai)

- Notions of ‘feminine’ (onnarashisa) and ‘un-feminine’ (onnarashikunai).

- Public figures/popular culture ‘idols’ who may be seen representative of ‘masculinity’ and ‘non-masculinity’

- The importance of ‘work’ in a man’s life.

Work-related themes

- The biggest difference between being a student and being a shakaijin.

- Imaginings of a ‘typical salaryman’ (tenkeiteki sarariiman)

- Do the informants see themselves as close to this stereotype? If not, what are the main areas of difference?

- Differences between informants’ and their fathers’ generations.
• Differences between themselves and senior colleagues and mangers at work (in terms of generational differences pertaining to work).

• The ‘ideal’ work/leisure trade-off. How this ‘ideal’ fits in with their reality.

• The importance (or lack of) of ‘friendship’ at work.

• Embodied practices of salaryman masculinity – through dress, behaviour, work practices.

**Individual Interviews:**

**Round One Individual Interview:**

• Information pertaining to the informant’s personal/work history details: age, when he entered the organization, section in which he was located, how long he had been in that particular section.

• What kind of family structure he had been raised within – e.g. nuclear family, extended family?

• Siblings, and his own order within siblings.

• His father’s occupation. How long the father had been in the current occupation?

• Did his mother work? At present? When he was growing up? (if yes, what kind of work, was it full-time or part-time?)
When he was growing up how much interaction did he have with his family, particularly with his father?

(If he has sisters) was there any gender distinctions in the way they were raised? (If yes) when did he first notice such differences?

Questions on ‘Masculinity’

What does being ‘a man’ ‘being male’ (‘otoko’ de aru koto) mean to him?

Does he remember when he first realized he was male (first recollection of ‘masculinity’)?

Can he think of instances – e.g. play at kindergarten as opposed to play a few years later at primary school – when this distinction between ‘male’ and ‘female’ became more pronounced as he went through different levels of schooling?

Was he ever told such things as “boys don’t cry”, or “you have to do XXX since you’re a boy”?

In terms of everyday behaviour, deportment, speech, body language, what does he regard as ‘masculine/manly’ (otokorashii) and ‘un-masculine/manly’ (otokorashikunai)?

How about ‘feminine’ (onnarashii) and ‘un-feminine’ (onnarashikunai)?

Thinking back now, what kind of influences does he think were significant in shaping his views of ‘appropriate’ masculinity/femininity – family influences, what he was taught at school, peer influence, the influence of popular culture?
• When he was a child, was there any particular occupation he was attracted to? What did he first want to become? Did this subsequently change through primary school, junior high, high school and university? Is there any occupation he is particularly attracted to now (akogareteiru shokugyō)?

• What is his assessment of ‘work’ in a man’s life?

• What kind of occupations does he see as ‘manly’/‘masculine’ (otokorashii) and conversely ‘un-manly’/‘un-masculine’ (otokorashikunai)?

Questions about Work

• What is his image of the ‘typical salaryman’ (tenkeitekina sarariiman)? Does he see himself fitting within the parameters (sono waku) of this ‘typical salaryman’?

• Compared with his student days, or when he first became a shakaijin/entered the workforce, does he think he has changed? In what ways?

• Describe (briefly) the company training/induction he went through when he first entered the organization. What does he think he benefitted the most from this training? (this theme to be expanded upon in second round interviews)

• Talk about his average work day (including the type of work he does).

• Talk about his average weekend/holiday.

• What was been the best/most positive thing in his life (ichiban yokatta, ichiban tanoshikatta koto) after entering the company and becoming shakaijin? What is the best thing at the moment?
• The most negative/worst aspect (*ichiban tsurakatta koto*), both after becoming a *shakaijin* and at present.

• The best thing about being male (*otoko toshīte ichiban tanoshi koto*) and the worst thing (*ichiban tsurai koto*).

• What he regards as the ‘ideal’ male-female relationship – in general, and specific to the work environment?

• ‘Ideal’ male-male relationship, both in general, and at work.

• Differences between his own and his father’s generation.

**Round Two Interviews**

• Does the informant feel he has changed in any significant way with regards to work and the company, since our previous meeting? If he has, in what ways?

• How about in non-work areas?

• Does he have any specific work and/or non-work targets/goals for the short to medium term (six months or a year)?

• If he does have these goals, does he think they are achievable?

• (follow up from Round One) What does he see as his ‘dream’ (as opposed to a goal), either now, or in the past? What does he/did he see as his ‘ideal’ job/occupation (*akogareta/tetru shokugyō*)?

• If he has a ‘dream’, does he think he will be able to realize it in the future?
• Where does he see himself ten years or so down the track, in his thirties? In twenty years, when he is in his forties or fifties? After retirement?

• Does this visualized ‘life-path’ resemble his parents’ life-course? If so, what are the similarities (and differences)?

• Discussion about marriage: When does he plan to get married (i.e. if he is still single)? What does ‘marriage’ mean to him? Why does he think it is necessary to get married? What kind of family would he like? What are his views on his wife working after marriage? What about his wife being the main income-earner? What kind of father would he like to be?

• Are these views about marriage/family similar to his parents and their generation?

Company/Work-related Questions:

• Return to Round One question about Company Induction training, and get him to elaborate on it.

• To what extent does he see himself ‘representing’ the organization (kaisha o daihyō shiteitru) even outside of work?

• If he was not working in the present company, does he think his life would have been substantially different? What might he have been doing? What about if he was not a shakaijin? Would he have been a different person?

• (compared with responses last time) What would he say is the best thing about being shakaijin? The least positive aspect? The best and worst aspects of being male?
• Does he have any particular disenchantment/disapproval pertaining to Japanese society as it is today?

• Does he have any comments about contemporary male-female gender relations? What does he think about the position of women (particularly in the context of work) today? The position of men? Does he think compared with the past, these have improved, or got worse?

• Does he think overall interpersonal relations at work (ningen kankei) have improved or worsened since he first entered the organization?
APPENDIX 3: CONSENT FORM

Japanese version signed by informants:

承諾書

私は、下記の条件に基づき、本書に署名した依頼人が平成10年月日に行うインタビューに応じることに同意し、同インタビューをテープに収録することを許可します。

条件：
1. 私はインタビューを随時取り消すことができる。
2. （ ）インタビューにより調査する情報は研究目的のみに使用されるものとする。
   （ ）インタビューにより提供する情報は研究と出稿論文の両目的に使用してもよい。
3. （ ）匿名にしてもらいたい。
   （ ）実名を使ってもよい。

上記条件の2と3については、同意できないものには（ ）内にX印を入れてください。

平成10年月日

ご氏名：

ご住所：

ご署名：

インタビュー依頼者署名

School of Social Sciences and Asian Languages
English translation:
I have read and understood the conditions listed below, and based on that consent to being interviewed by the interviewer named below on (date).

Conditions:
1. I may have the interview erased at my request at any stage
2. ( ) The data from the interview may only be used for research purposes
   ( ) The data from the interview may be used both for research and for an academic thesis.
3. ( ) I wish to have a pseudonym used to refer to myself.
   ( ) My real name may be used.

With reference to 2 and 3 above, please indicate in the brackets, if you do not consent to the conditions.

Date:

Name:

Address:

Signature:

Name and Signature of Interviewer:
APPENDIX 4: GLOSSARY OF JAPANESE TERMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bōnenkai</td>
<td>End-of-year party, often organization/ work-place based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buchō</td>
<td>Head of department in an organization; (department) director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buka</td>
<td>Workplace subordinate/junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daikokubashira</td>
<td>Literally, central support pillar of a house. More generally, the (typically male) mainstay or provider of a household.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dansei</td>
<td>male, man, masculine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ikan-ryokō</td>
<td>Company-sponsored recreational trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ichininmae</td>
<td>Literally one full serving (of food) for one person; more generally (acquiring) the status of fully mature social adult through marriage and/or regular employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Izakaya</td>
<td>Relatively informal, relaxed eating/drinking establishment which acts as both a bar/pub serving alcoholic (and non-alcoholic) drinks, as well as serving a variety of Japanese and non-Japanese finger-foods and snacks. These establishments are popular for after-work drinks and social gatherings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jōmu</td>
<td>Managing director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josei</td>
<td>Female, woman, feminine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jōshi</td>
<td>Workplace superior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jōshiki</td>
<td>Common sense; general (social) knowledge socially sanctioned etiquette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kachō</td>
<td>Section Chief/ Section Manager within an organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaichô</td>
<td>Chairperson of an organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaisha</td>
<td>private firm, company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kakarichô</td>
<td>Sub-section chief within an organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenshyûa</td>
<td>Training; study (generally of a professional/technical nature)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kobun</td>
<td>Literally, child-role (in a parent-role/child-role pairing). More generally refers to the junior/younger partner in mentor/protégé-type relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kôhai</td>
<td>One’s junior in an organization, school, university, sports team, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manga</td>
<td>Comic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OL</td>
<td>Stands for ‘Office Lady’. Term used to denote female clerical employees in organizations, performing general secretarial/support work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onna</td>
<td>Woman, female, girl (especially when used with suffix ~no ko)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otoko</td>
<td>Man, male, boy (especially when used with suffix ~no ko)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otokorashii</td>
<td>Manly, masculine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otokorashisa</td>
<td>Manliness, masculinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oyabun</td>
<td>The ‘parent-role’ in the oyabun/kobun mentor/protégé-pairing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sararîiman</td>
<td>From ‘Salary Man’. In theory, any employee receiving a monthly salary. However generally understood to designate male, full-time white-collar permanent employees of private-sector (sometimes public-sector) organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seken</td>
<td>The ‘world’; society; public opinion; social consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Sengyō Shufu</em></td>
<td>‘Full-time’ housewife; a woman who is primarily a homemaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Senpai</em></td>
<td>One’s senior in an organization, school, university, sports club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Shachō</em></td>
<td>President of a private corporate organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Shakaijin</em></td>
<td>Literally, ‘society/social person’. Generally refers to a fully mature adult with responsibilities. Typically the status is acquired upon entry into full-time work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Shataku</em></td>
<td>Company housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Shinnyū Shain</em></td>
<td>New entrant into a company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tanshin Funin</em></td>
<td>Workers forced to live away from their families for an extended period of time for reasons related to work (such as job transfers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tenkei</em></td>
<td>Model; stereotype; archetype</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Torishimariyaku</em></td>
<td>Member of a Board of Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tsukiai</em></td>
<td>Socializing between individuals, generally work-based</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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