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Tsou, Lynna Maggie

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The Relation of Childhood Memories and Husband Support to Parenting Self-Efficacy in Japanese Mothers

By

Lynna Maggie Tsou

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In

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University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:
Professor Susan D. Holloway, Chair
Professor Kaiping Peng
Professor Elliot Turiel

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Abstract

The Relation of Childhood Memories and Husband Support to Parenting Self-Efficacy in Japanese Mothers

by

Lynna Maggie Tsou

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Susan D. Holloway, Chair

By what means do mothers' developmental histories potentially influence their sense of maternal self-efficacy? This qualitative dissertation examines the perspectives and experiences of sixteen Japanese mothers concerning relationships with her children, her husband and her parents. Analyses in this study are based on interview transcripts and field notes. This study proposed that mothers who recalled having warm and positive relationships with one or both parents were more likely to feel confident in their parenting choices and thus experience higher maternal self-efficacy. On the other hand, mothers who recalled having a rejecting or negative relationship with one or both parents were proposed to be more likely to feel ineffective and thus threatened in their parenting approaches resulting in lower maternal self-efficacy. It is further proposed that the negative effects of having experienced rejecting parental relationships can be buffered or offset in mothers who perceive supportive, positive relationships with their husbands.

Chapter 1

The factors that contribute to parents' sense of self-confidence in themselves have received a considerable amount of attention in the research literature. Parenting self-efficacy is defined as parents' perceptions of their ability to carry out the varied tasks associated with parenting (Bandura, 1989). Self-efficacy has emerged as a salient direct predictor of positive parenting practices. The theoretical assumption, borne out by empirical evidence, is that feelings of competency directly affect how parents interact with and discipline their children. The construct of parenting self-efficacy has also been identified as an important mediator between stress and parenting quality (Cochran & Niego, 1995).

This study of sixteen mothers living in Osaka, Japan attempts to add to what is known about this factor that consistently predicts high quality parenting. One of the central theses of this study is that maternal self-efficacy beliefs arise, in part, from perceived childhood experiences. Mothers' recollections of their early relationships with their own parents, and the feelings and expectations that they derived from those early relationships, are thought to influence their sense of competency as parents, and therefore the quality of their parenting. I examine the extent to which childhood memories are related to mothers' parenting self-efficacy. I also attempt to answer the question: do perceived critical parental messages about the self have some bearing on subsequent levels of efficacy when these children become parents?

The second thesis of this study is that mothers' satisfaction with husbands' support may mediate the influence of these childhood memories on maternal self-efficacy. Specifically, I propose that a nurturing marriage can buffer the negative effects of a difficult parental relationship experienced by mothers when they were young.

Why Japan?

The achievement gap between Japanese and American students has been demonstrated for the past two decades in several cross-national studies. These studies have shown that American elementary and high school students lag behind their Japanese peers academically (Stevenson & Lee, 1993; Beaton, et al., 1996; Mullis, Martin, Gonzalez, & Chrostowski, 2003). In the search for the reasons behind this achievement gap, some scholars have surmised that Japanese parenting practices could be the explanation behind the high academic performance of those students. Specifically, Japanese mothers have been shown to be highly involved in their children's education, especially relative to mothers in the United States (Stevenson & Stigler, 1992).

While studies suggest that Japanese mothers are particularly responsive and sensitive caregivers who place a high priority on their roles as mothers, Bornstein and his colleagues (1998) found that Japanese mothers perceived themselves as less efficacious than mothers in six other industrialized countries in the realm of discipline and interacting with their children. Few systematic investigations have focused on why Japanese mothers express little confidence in their parenting abilities yet seem able to support their children's academic work and development in general. To address this contradiction, this study was undertaken to uncover the varied circumstances of Japanese women and to examine variations in parenting beliefs.

The Marital Relationship and Mothers' Parenting Self-Efficacy

An investigation of mother-child relationships cannot ignore each member's active role in the family, and the design of this study is based on a number of assumptions about families and how they develop over time. In two-parent families, it is impossible to understand how one parent approaches child-rearing without knowing something about what the other parent's approach. In addition, the quality of the parents' marriage sets a crucial tone about the quality of life in the family. Family therapists often base their methods of thinking about the family as a "system". The family systems model states that to make sense of the well-being or distress of individual family members one must understand something about the characteristics of the system as a whole (Minuchin and Fishman, 1981; Cowan, 1997). Thus, to gain perspective of the parent-child relationship, one must look at the relationship between the mother and father; to obtain a more complex understanding of the marital relationship, one must explore the relationship between the each parent and the child. Jay Belsky, a proponent of the systems perspective, proposed that there are three principal levels or sources of parental influence on the global construct of parenting behavior: (1) the personal and psychological resources of the parent, (2) characteristics of the child, and (3) the broader context in which the parent-child relationship develops (Belsky, 1984). Based on this family systems model of family relationships, I pay attention to not only how the quality of the mother's relationship with her parents may help us understand the subsequent relationships she establishes with her husband and children, but also to how the mother's relationship with her husband may shape her bond with her children.

Parenting self-efficacy has been identified as one determinant of positive parenting practices, but the literature on predictors of parenting self-efficacy is scarce. One study of 652 mothers in Canada by Bryanton, Gagnon, Hatem, & Johnston (2008) concluded that one factor that was correlated with greater parenting efficacy at their baby's one-month was an "excellent partner relationship". The effect of marital quality on parenting quality, on the other hand, has become an increasingly prominent topic of study. The literature generally supports the family systems hypothesis that marital and parent-child relationships are interdependent (Grych, 2002), and that the quality of the marriage links to the quality of parents' relationships with their children and their young children's development (Cox, Paley, & Harter, 2001; Cummings & Davies, 1994). For example, research on a set of preschool children and families concluded that couples with more satisfying marriages work together more effectively with their children in the preschool period, and their children tend to have an easier time adapting to the academic and social demands of elementary school (Cowan and Cowan, 2002). Another study by Goldberg and Easterbrooks (1984) indicated that marital harmony was related to optimal toddler outcomes and sensitive parenting. Specifically, their analyses of marital quality and child-parent attachment showed that secure child-mother and child-father attachments were most likely to occur in families in which both husbands and wives were highly satisfied with their marriages.

On the other hand, marital discord and divorce affect children's psychological health in ways such as children exhibiting antisocial behavior, child internalizing and externalizing behaviors, and difficulty with peer relationships (Cowan, Cowan, Schulz, & Heming, 1994; Grych & Fincham, 2001). Goldberg and Easterbrooks (1984) also concluded "insecure child-parent attachments were most likely to occur when marital adjustment was poor." The mechanism by which marital conflict can influence children's behavior and development is not yet clear, but a popular hypothesis is that marital conflict can "spill over" into parent-child relationships with resulting negative effects on the child (Cummings & Davies, 1994). For these

reasons, in order to further understand the possible influences on a woman's sense of herself as a mother, I felt it was crucial to pay attention to each mother's descriptions of her role as a wife and her relationship with her husband.

Qualitative Approach

This study utilized a longitudinal, qualitative approach that allowed researchers and their subjects to talk in greater depth. Qualitative research is scarce on the association between childhood memories and husband support on parenting self-efficacy. Thus, in order to get a true sense of the beliefs and cultural practices of Japanese families, it was important to collect personal accounts from native Japanese women living in Japan. Getting to know these women over a period of time allowed the interviewers to get a more accurate depiction of their experiences. Building trust and familiarity between the researchers and the participants lessened the likelihood that the mothers felt compelled to make self-deprecating comments considered polite by Japanese standards. This study was confined to a suburb of Osaka in 2000 – 2003 and it is not my intention to draw generalizations about Japanese mothers or to demonstrate differences between Japanese and American mothers. The small sample size and the substantial variability in families and homes within each country makes such systematic comparison impossible, and no thesis or book can encompass the full range of Japanese women's lives. This thesis focuses primarily on sixteen Osakan women who balance domestic and nondomestic responsibilities and opportunities. It also attempts to shed light on the forces that influence Japanese women's feelings of confidence in themselves as mothers. The data of the present paper are intended to identify potentially interesting areas for future research on the lives of women in Japan and to stimulate American thinking about two aspects of motherhood in Japan: early childhood memories that can influence the development of ideas about being a mother and how the marital relationship can support or undermine maternal self-efficacy. The tensions between the society and the individual, between wives and husbands, and between parents and children are not unique to Japan. How these tensions are resolved, and traditional values incorporated, modified, and/or discarded is relevant, however, both to our understanding of Japan and to our understanding of parenting issues in general.

Organization

In the following chapter, I review the theoretical bases of self-efficacy and how research in self-efficacy has been applied to the domain of parenting. I discuss the literature on attachment and working models and how these can shape maternal self-efficacy and examine the literature on perceived childhood memories and marital relationships. Finally, I elaborate on key points of cross-cultural research in Japan.

In Chapter 3, I describe the methodology about the current study by providing a detailed account of the procedures, measures, and assessment systems that were developed. I also provide more details about the sixteen mothers who participated in our study. Chapter 4 describes my findings and illustrates how perceived childhood memories and quality of marriage can have an impact on maternal self-efficacy.

Chapter 5 concludes by discussing the relevance of examining the roots of parenting self-efficacy and how the quality of the marriage can play a crucial role in offsetting the effects of negative childhood memories. I also highlight how the results of this study can be viewed universally in addition to strengths and weaknesses of the methods. Finally, I present suggestions for future research on this topic.

Chapter 2

The evolution of families in Japan: An historical context

Prior to World War II, many Japanese families lived an agrarian life in which traditionally the eldest son and his wife were responsible for the well-being of all family members, including extended family. Families were economically tied to the neighborhood, and interpersonal relationships were considered one of the most valuable forms of capital. The role of the wife of this eldest son was to produce heirs, manage the economics of the household, care for the elderly generation, and develop and maintain positive relations with neighbors and other members of the community. As the "junior wife", she maintained the status of being the lowest household member until her mother-in-law "retired" or passed away (Tanaka, 1995).

Following the devastating effects of World War II, Japan concentrated on rebuilding its country and its economy. In the late 1950s and early sixties, increased industrial production and rapid economic growth created the role of the "salaryman" (*sararii-man*). In contrast to the more communal lifestyle of traditional agrarian life in the centuries before World War II, the worlds of men and women became more separate as the husband spent most of his day in the work world while the women became full-time housewives (*sengyo shufu*) responsible for managing the household and finding the resources to provide the best education for their children (Imamura, 1996). As more families entered the middle class, boys were encouraged to attend college and obtain jobs in a corporation while girls were raised with the hopes that they would marry them and become a housewife. The literature on contemporary urban Japanese society describes the middle class Japanese husband as being devoted primarily to working and socializing with workmates or school friends (Imamura, 1987; 1996). His business and social dealings are carried on outside the home which separates him from his family.

The route to financial security was thought to be through education, and thus, the role of the *education mother* (*kyoiku mama*) became salient as mothers were increasingly expected to focus on supporting their children's schooling. With the advent of the *sarariiman*, women no longer had the family business to tend and fewer community neighborhood relationships to cultivate. With increasing expectations that children would go on to higher education, as well as the difficulties of the stringent examination system, a great deal of the mother's time and energy could be concentrated on the education of their children. The term *kyoiku mama* was coined to describe mothers who place the utmost importance on the education of their children by constantly helping them with homework and often placing them in *juku* (private cram schools) after regular school hours so they will have the best chance of passing school examinations. Throughout the urban and suburban areas of Japan, it has become the norm for mothers to devote whatever free time they have to helping her children with homework, seeking tutors and the best cram schools, researching schools and communities for the school systems that would be the best fit for their children's needs, and providing moral and physical support as their children prepare for school entrance exams. Brinton (1993) points out that much of the economic growth of Japan that has taken place post-WWII should be credited to these full-time mothers focused on maintaining the household and providing their children with every educational advantage. To be sure, there are those who believe that the emergence of the *kyoiku mama* coincided with greater democratization of education opportunities for those who could afford it and the expansion of a Japanese economy that offered the brightest futures to those who entered the best universities (Imamura, 1987).

In the 1970s, the image of the successful woman expanded to include more varied activities as it became more accepted for women to pursue other activities to enhance their lives: adult education, part-time work, hobby groups, personal improvement, and community and child-related service activities (Imamura, 1996). The development of supermarkets, convenience stores, and fast-food chains provided part-time or temporary employment opportunities for women during school hours. Through such activities, women became involved outside their homes and neighborhoods and had opportunities to develop personal interests and networks while maintaining their primary roles as wives and mothers.

New economic opportunities for women developed in the 1980s after Japan's parliament passed the Equal Employment Opportunity Law in response to the signing of the United Nations Declaration on Women (Brinton, 1993). This law mandated gender equality at work (although there were no penalties for companies that failed to live up to this mandate), and as a result, women's access to jobs improved somewhat and more opportunities for women outside of the home were created as the cost of living escalated dramatically and labor became scarce. Roles for women increased, bringing with it varying images created by the media of Japanese women: from successful politician/career woman to flamboyant free-spending, world-travellers. Creighton (1996), however, argues "this law did not reflect an internal shift in Japanese social values as much as a reaction to international and economic pressures." Once the economy in Japan began to decline in 1992, women were the first to be laid off. Although more women work now than more than decade ago, the reality is that they are still the last to be hired to full-time or professional jobs and must often make their living on part-time work (Sugawara, 2005). Today, only 11.6% of Japan's scientific researchers are women, compared to one-third in the U.S. Women on average earn 44% of what men earn, the widest income gap between sexes in the developed world, and the number of women in top management positions is only 2.8 percent of the workforce (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2001).

The history and current state of marriage in Japan

For many centuries in Japan, the institution of marriage was a family matter rather than a personal one. Marriage was seen as a means of joining two families in a mutually advantageous arrangement and to produce children. Families relied on a match-maker or go-between to find suitable partners for their children (Tanaka, 1995). Beginning in the late 1920s, however, a few young Japanese, under the influence of Western customs began electing to choose marriage partners without intervention or input from family members. These marriages, called *jiyu kekkon*, or "free marriages," and later, *ren'ai kekkon*, or "love marriages" were based on romantic attraction and relied on the individuals' own judgment. These *ren'ai* marriages became increasingly popular in the years following the end of World War II, when individualism gained more acceptance. However, much debate surrounded the matter of arranged marriages versus *ren'ai* marriages (Tanaka, 1995). To many, love marriages symbolized rebellion against Japanese tradition and parental authority.

This debate diminished in 1960 when the government reported that, based on rapid economic growth, the postwar recovery effort of Japan was complete, and officials projected higher standards of living and income. As a result of this optimistic outlook, a new era seemed to have arrived. In increasing numbers, young couples began seeking more *ren'ai* marriages as Japanese society placed more emphasis on the emotional rewards of family life. This new direction continued along with the rapid urbanization of Japan and the increasing number of nuclear families in the 1970s. Extended families where multi-generations lived under the same

roof were still commonly found in rural parts of Japan, but the modern urban "new family", by contrast, looked more like the nuclear families in Western societies: a husband and wife with two children. Young couples married for love and expected to share interests. Many families hoped that husbands would spend more leisure and vacation time with the family (sparking the proliferation of family-family hotels, resorts, vacation packages, and amusement parks like Tokyo Disneyland in the late 1970s and early 1980s), but as the marriage continued, the 'new' families that formed were no different than the old 'salaryman' families in the previous decade. Husbands continued working long hours away from home while the wives were primarily responsible for the home and children again (Imamura, 1996).

In the 1990s, the increasingly higher cost of living forced some women into jobs in the midst of the sluggish domestic economy. Women began marrying later and once married, had fewer children (Kawai & Suzuki, 2001). The birthrate fell to 1.53, a reflection not only of the increased costs of raising children, but also the lack of adequate housing, public spaces, and time working husbands could spend in caring for their children.

In recent years, becoming a wife and mother remains a highly normative practice within Japan, even though many couples are marrying when they are comparatively older (the average age for marriage is 27.7 for women and 30.0 for men). Only 1.7% of women and .8% of men never marry (Kawai & Suzuki, 2001), and only 19.7% of Japanese women ages 30-34 have never been married. The divorce rate remains comparatively low: 1.94 per thousand and 99% of women who give birth are married (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2001). Eighty-eight percent of Japanese wives have children, and 98% of Japanese babies are born within wedlock (Japanese Statistical Yearbook, 2001). Although Japanese women are waiting longer to get married and have children, thereby challenging the traditional model, the normative pattern of the Japanese wife foregoing a career and staying home to raise the family remains.

As women make life choices and develop new roles for themselves, Japanese traditions may have evolved, but social institutions employ old standards and still strongly influence Japanese society. Though the equal rights of women were written into the constitution in 1947, reality is far from the written law as cultural expectations of motherhood still demand that Japanese women to stay home to care for her husband, her husband's parents, and her children with little support from their husbands. Only 0.4% of men take paternity leave, while 73% of employed women take maternity leave. Fewer than 30% of women in Japan return to the workforce after having their first child. (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2001). Instead, wives shoulder most of the burden of caring for Japan's readily aging population. The roles of housewife and especially mother are valued by many in Japan, and many women believe that raising children is a more valuable and rewarding occupation than participating in the work force (Lock, 1993).

Self-efficacy theory

The self-efficacy construct, postulated by Bandura (1977, 1989), refers to a judgment about one's ability to successfully perform a particular behavior within a particular domain. Individuals with a high sense of perceived efficacy confidently trust in their own abilities in the face of environmental demands, tend to conceptualize problems more as challenges than as threats or events that are beyond their control, experience less negative emotional arousal when engaged in challenging tasks, and exhibit perseverance when confronted with difficult situations (Jerusalem & Mittag, 1995). Moreover, high self-efficacy is more likely to be associated with individuals who cognitively appraise their actions as being a result of their own skills as opposed

to external factors. In contrast, individuals with low self-efficacy tend to experience significant levels of self-doubt and anxiety when they encounter adversity, assume more responsibility for failure than success, appraise environmental demands as threatening, and avoid challenge (Jerusalem & Mittag, 1995).

The means through which self-efficacy beliefs develop are complex and interrelated. Prerequisite to confidence in one's ability to effectively engage in a specific behavioral pursuit is the belief that appropriate actions exist that carry the potential to lead to the desired behavioral outcome (Wells-Parker, Miller, & Topping, 1990). Thus, self-efficacy beliefs are interwoven with the knowledge of the particular behavior(s) that they relate to. According to Bandura's social learning theory (1989), expectations related to personal efficacy originate from four primary informational sources. One's personal history of success and failures is perhaps the most obvious and powerful influence on self-efficacy. Vicarious experiences can also be a strong influence on the development of self-efficacy beliefs: individuals observing others engage in particular activities can generate estimations of their own capacity for mastery in a given situation. Verbal feedback from others regarding one's potential for accomplishment in a given area is another mode in which self-efficacy beliefs may develop. Finally, self-efficacy beliefs can emerge through emotional arousal. Individuals anticipate failure when they are inundated by aversive physiological stimuli. Conversely, lower levels of arousal are likely to be associated with higher self-efficacy.

How these informational sources can impact the development of personal efficacy is dependent on how it is cognitively appraised by the individual (Bandura, 1989). Numerous contextual factors, such as the social, situational and temporal circumstances under which events occur can influence the emergence of self-efficacy. For example, success is more likely to enhance self-efficacy if performance is believed to result from skills as opposed to factors that are external to the individual. Cognitive appraisals of the degree of challenge or difficulty level associated with a particular task can also affect the relative impact of performance accomplishments on perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 1989). Obviously, success associated with tasks perceived to be simple in nature provides little information regarding competency, whereas mastery of a very difficult task conveys stronger evidence of one's ability. Bandura (1989) also suggested that the rate and pattern of attainments also influence subjective estimations of efficacy.

Significance of parenting self-efficacy and quality of parenting

When applied to the parenting domain, the parenting self-efficacy construct refers to the parent's judgment about the degree to which he or she is able to perform competently and effectively as a parent (Teti & Gelfand, 1991). A parent who feels confident in his or her ability to exercise a positive influence on the behavior and development of one's children would be characterized as possessing high parenting self-efficacy. These parents are more likely to trust in their own abilities and exhibit perseverance in the face of challenges. Previous research has also shown that parents with higher self-efficacy are themselves more satisfied with parenting and have children who exhibit more positive outcomes (Coleman & Karraker, 1998). These findings suggest that parenting self-efficacy plays a role in the socioemotional processes and outcomes of parenting.

Parenting self-efficacy is a construct that has emerged in the parenting research literature as a powerful correlate of parenting behavior (Cutrona & Troutman, 1986; Goodnow & Collins, 1990; Teti & Gelfand, 1991). The assumption is that feelings of competency directly affect how

parents interact with and discipline their children. Developmentalists have argued that parents who feel more efficacious in their parenting role are more likely to display more growth-promoting parenting (e.g., display emotional support and warmth, show more sensitivity, and provide structure) (Johnston & Mash, 1989), whereas parents who lack confidence in their parenting abilities are likely to behave in ways that are less adaptive (Elder, Eccles, Ardelt, & Lord, 1995; Jackson, 2000). This perspective stems from Bandura's (1977, 1982) suggestion that when individuals have low self-efficacy, they become emotionally aroused and preoccupied with themselves. He asserted that these conditions interfere with their ability to perform effectively. In support of this assertion, Teti and Gelfand (1991) found that for mothers of infants, greater maternal self-efficacy was related to greater maternal competence observed in the home. Parks and Smeriglio (1986) reported that mothers who believe that they can influence their infants' performances in specific developmental tasks are more involved and stimulating when interacting with them.

The current research also generally supports an association between high maternal self-efficacy and specific adaptive parenting skills, such as responsive stimulating and non-punitive caretaking (Donovan & Leavitt, 1989), more active and direct parenting interactions (Mash & Johnston, 1983), and active maternal coping strategies (Wells-Parker, Miller, & Topping, 1990). High maternal self-efficacy has also been found to be positively associated with more specific behaviors and actions, such as parental efforts to educate themselves about parenting by attending parent education programs and reading literature relevant to parenting (Conrad, Gross, Fogg, & Ruchala, 1992; Spoth & Conroy, 1993). Parents with high self-efficacy apparently are interested in and seek out information related to child development and parenting. It is possible that these parents, in contrast to parents with low parenting self-efficacy, feel that the information will be beneficial, and they believe they are competent enough to utilize the information with their own children. Furthermore, the information they gain leads to an increase in parenting knowledge, which in turn leads to enhanced self-efficacy and parenting performance (Parks & Smeriglio, 1986).

Donovan, Leavitt, & Walsh (1990) have suggested that parents with high self-efficacy probably interpret child difficulty as a challenge necessitating greater effort and application of their skills in creative ways, whereas parents exhibiting low self-efficacy are likely to perceive child difficulty as a threat that exceeds their ability to cope as parents. Low maternal self-efficacy has been associated with maternal depression (Cutrona & Troutman, 1986; Teti & Gelfand, 1991), maternal defensive and controlling behaviors (Donovan & Leavitt, 1989), maternal perceptions of child difficulty (Bugental & Shennum, 1984; Halpern, Anders, Coll, & Hua, 1994), a passive parental coping style (Wells-Parker et al., 1990), actual behavior problems in children (Gibaud-Wallson & Waudersman, 1978, cited in Johnston & Mash, 1989), and a tendency to focus on relationship difficulties, negative affect, feelings of helplessness in the parenting role, and use of coercive discipline (Bugental & Shennum, 1984; Bugental, 1991). Bugenthal and Shennum (1984) found that parents who are low on parenting self-efficacy tend to become more irritated when interacting with an unresponsive child than parents with higher confidence in their parenting abilities.

Evidence for the association between parenting self-efficacy and competent parenting is not unequivocal, however. Brody, Flor, and Gibson (1999) found in a sample of African-American mothers with six- to nine-year old children that self-efficacy unexpectedly was not directly related to adaptive parenting, although efficacy beliefs were linked to mothers' competence-promoting developmental goals, and these in turn were related to competent

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parenting. Furthermore, cultural influences on the role of parenting self-efficacy have been revealed in studies. Elder, Eccles, Ardelt, & Lord (1995) concluded that among economically stressed African Americans and European Americans, there was a relationship between economic hardship and lower parenting self-efficacy for African American mothers, whereas this relationship was mediated by depression only among the European Americans. In a study comparing recently immigrated Mexican mothers versus American mothers, Dumka and his colleagues (1996) found an inverse relationship between self-efficacy and inconsistent discipline among the American mothers, but not among the Mexican immigrants.

Overall, though, this group of studies demonstrates that in most cases, parenting self-efficacy does appear to have some influence on actual parenting behavior in important domains such as emotion regulation and use of force and negative evaluation. The growing literature on parenting self-efficacy demonstrates with certainty that high parenting self-efficacy is strongly related to a mother's ability to foster a healthy and nurturing child-rearing environment, while **low** parenting self-efficacy may actually accentuate the negative impact of external demands on the quality of parent-child interactions.

Understanding the antecedents of parenting self-efficacy

The means through which parenting self-efficacy beliefs develop are complex, and research evidence on antecedents of individual differences in parenting self-efficacy is somewhat scarce. Numerous personal, child temperament and contextual factors are likely to influence the emergence and expression of one's overall sense of parenting self-efficacy. Ruchala and James (1997) explored the influence of social support and knowledge of infant development on maternal confidence in performing infant care tasks in a group of primarily African American women. Their results indicated that experienced mothers with social support and knowledge of infant development reported higher levels of confidence. Finally, a 2000 study by Coleman and Karracker demonstrated that high parenting self-efficacy was observed in mothers of less emotional and more sociable children, and among mothers who were better educated, had high family incomes, and reported more previous experience with children.

It seems intuitive that mothers' efficacy beliefs might be influenced by actual experiences the mother may have had with children, both encounters with their own children and with the children of relatives and community members. Goodnow (1985), in fact, argues that feedback parent-child interactions is a primary source of competency information, and therefore should exert a significant influence on parents' perceptions of their abilities to deal effectively with the challenges of parenting. One study by Gross, Rocissano, and Roncoli (1989) found that prior child care experience and, for pre-term births only, birth order of the child were strong predictors of maternal parenting confidence during toddlerhood. Studies have found lower levels of efficacy among parents with atypically demanding children when compared to parents of less demanding children. Cutrona and Troutman (1986) concluded that infants who were perceived to have difficult temperaments were related to mothers' level of postpartum depression and lower estimations of parenting self-efficacy. Similarly, Raver and Leadbeater (1999) concluded in their sample of low-income mothers that mothers with higher levels of stress who had infants with difficult temperament had lower efficacy scores. Interestingly, Mash and Johnston (1983) found that the self-efficacy of parents of more challenging children tended to decrease as children grew older, while the self-efficacy of parents of non-challenging children tended to show increases corresponding to the child's age.

It is important to note that these parenting and attachment studies are based on cross-sectional designs and thus make it difficult to disentangle the direction of causation. Child difficulty, for example, could be either an antecedent or consequence of parenting efficacy. Still, the purpose of this study is to advance understanding of how key family and individual variables contribute and interact in a complex manner to explain the nature of parenting self-efficacy. There is not a wealth of literature on the emergence of parenting self-efficacy as being related to actual experiences with children, but the idea that perception of parenting self-efficacy can develop as a result of direct experience is congruent with Bandura's contention that the most powerful determinant of self-efficacy beliefs is often actual experiences with the referent behaviors.

Early experience as an antecedent of parenting self-efficacy

In order to understand this study's approach to the origins of parenting self-efficacy, we should take into account the literature on attachment theory, which is considered one of the most influential theories in the field of human development and tries to explain the process through which relationship schemas develop. There is reason to believe that states of mind regarding attachment can play an important role in later psychological adjustment, including organizing parental responses. Attachment theorists suggest that individuals gradually construct working models for relationships based in part upon actual experiences with primary caregivers over the course of development, but also upon their abilities to reflect upon and coherently assess these interactions with early caregivers (Main, et al., 1985). These mental representations of attachment are thought to be fairly stable and trait-like constellations of emotions and cognitions about relationships (and may not be mere reflections of actual experience). Further, as individuals interpret and process environmental events, they are thought to regularly activate these working models as a way to guide their behavior.

A body of literature suggests that parenting self-efficacy beliefs can derive, in part, from parents' developmental histories, especially their childhood experiences in their own families (Belsky, 1984; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985; Grusec, Hastings, & Mammone, 1994). Schneewind and colleagues (1992) found in a sample of young American mothers expecting their first child that 18% of the variance in parenting self-efficacy could be explained by the extent to which they recalled receiving quality parenting during childhood. Simons and his colleagues in a series of studies based on the Iowa Youth and Families Project (Simons, et al., 1993) found that the quality of the grandparents' parenting (i.e., harsh discipline or supportiveness) is also related to the parents' own discipline and parenting beliefs, which in turn, influence their actual child-rearing practices. Literature on child abuse also point to an association between experience of mistreatment in one's own childhood and mistreatment of one's children (Belsky, 1980). These early experiences that are stored as internal representations appear to form a basis for subsequent relationships with one's own children.

This notion is related to John Bowlby's notion of "internal working models." According to Bowlby, the models young children develop of attachment figures and of self are important influences on behavior in new relationships (Bretherton, 1991). These mental representations help individuals interpret and evaluate new situations and may be related to later psychological adjustment across several domains of functioning. Thus, different experiences lead to different internal working models that, in turn, are likely to lead to different attachment behavioral patterns. Both Bowlby and Mary Main and her colleagues (Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985) propose that memories of the central relationships in our early family life provide us with these

"working models" and are representations of what we expect intimate family relationships to be like. As an example, Epstein (1980) found that individuals' perceived acceptance by their mothers during childhood was highly correlated with a sense of "love worthiness" in adulthood. As related to subsequent parenting, a number of studies further support the idea that internal working models of early attachment relationships reported by parents are associated with the quality of the attachment relationships they form with their own children during infancy (Main & Goldwyn, 1984; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985). These studies conclude that parents who recall their own parents as being accepting and sensitive to their needs, or who are able to provide an objective and coherent account of their early attachment relationships (positive or negative) tend to have infants who develop secure attachments to them (van IJzendorn, 1992).

Mary Main created the Adult Attachment Inventory because she, along with other researchers, proposed that attachment should be viewed as a dynamic process in the course of development (Main & Goldwyn, 1985). The AAI measures the impact of childhood experiences on adult functioning. This 13-item self-report instrument uses a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) to measure adult attachment orientations. Questions address the individual's experiences of parents or caregivers during childhood and their influence upon the individual as an adult. Based upon the individual's internalized views of relationships, attachment patterns emerged: secure/autonomous, dismissive, preoccupied or unresolved/disorganized.

After these numerous assessments, Alan Sroufe and his colleagues concluded in 2005 that early attachment experiences play a crucial role in the development of future relationships:

> "As development continues, early attachment, later family experiences, and peer experiences together provide the foundation for the intimate relationships of maturity. These adult partner relationships, in turn, of course, are additional foundations for parenting and other tasks of later adulthood" (p.67).

It makes sense to expect that mothers with secure states of mind, defined in part by the high value placed in attachment relationships, would commit more strongly to intervention efforts aimed toward improving quality of parenting and the parent-infant relationship than would parents with insecure states of mind. Attachment theorists suggest that parents who value attachment relationships and are themselves more secure are more likely to be sensitive and responsive to their own children, thus facilitating the development of security in their own children. Securely attached adults have successfully integrated past attachment experiences with current emotions, and thus would be expected to have greater openness and objectivity when it comes to navigating inevitable challenges in relationships. Main and her colleagues concluded that adults who describe insecure attachment relationships with their parents are more likely to have children who have insecure attachments to them (Main, et al., 1985). They also concluded that parents who either dismiss the importance of attachment relationships, or who are preoccupied or conflicted about them, are less likely to facilitate child security. Indeed, in studies based on laboratory-based observations, mothers and fathers with nonautonomous states of mind with respect to attachment (they are unable to evaluate attachment bonds freely and non-defensively) have been found to be less warm and provide less structure for children (Cohn, Cowan, Cowan, & Pearson, 1992), and for mothers, insecurity has also been related to lower provision of emotional support, controlling, or confusing behaviors (Crowell & Feldman, 1988), poorer preparation for separations (Crowell & Feldman, 1991), and less sensitivity (Das Eiden, Teti, & Corns, 1995).

Few studies have examined the association between adult attachment and maternal self-efficacy, but the theory would predict that mothers' feelings competence as a parent are shaped by the mental representations of relationships they have developed. Deutsche, Ruble, Fleming, Brooks-Gunn and Sanger (1988) found that among pregnant women, as the qualitative nature of women's reported relationships with their own mothers became more positive, women were more inclined to report possessing adaptive parenting skills in addition to expressing more self-confidence about the prospect of becoming a mother. Grusec, et al. (1994) proposed that parents' working models of relationships shape feelings of self-efficacy in parenting. These internal working models that "represent regularities in their patterns of interpersonal relating" are influential in guiding behavior in the parental domain (Bugental, 1991; Grusec, et al., 1994). Grusec, et al. (1994) found that parents who were classified as dismissive of attachment relationships saw themselves as having less power than their children (ages four to seven years) in difficult child rearing situations, compared to secure or preoccupied parents. Preoccupied parents perceived that they had greater power than their children in general, but experienced many negative thoughts about parenting in a challenging laboratory-based situation and attributed their failure to their children's personalities. This study was methodologically stronger than that of Teti & Gelfand (1991) in that parenting self-efficacy was assessed not only in general, but also with respect to a laboratory interaction with the child. Although few in number, these studies begin to demonstrate that parents' working models are related to parents' feelings of self-efficacy in childrearing situations.

Marital support as an antecedent to parenting self-efficacy

The impact of having a network of supportive, caring people is also a factor in the emergence of parenting self-efficacy. The type and amount of support mothers receive can affect their sense of efficacy as well as the quality of parenting (Cochran & Niego, 1995; Izzo, Weiss, Shanahan, Rodriguez-Brown, 2000). For example, Izzo and her colleagues (2000) found that positive encouragement that mothers gather from close relationships with friends, family members, and her spouse provides her with the support to act effectively on behalf of her children. Other investigations have proposed that individuals can also develop specific working models with particular adults that they encounter (Pierce, Baldwin, & Lydon, 1997; Pierce, Sarason, Sarason, Joseph, & Henderson, 1996). Belsky (1985) goes as far as to say that he believes "the marital relationship is the first-order support system, with inherent potential for exerting the most positive and negative effect on parental functioning." (p.90) Father involvement has been found to be related to lower maternal stress (Kalil, Ziol-Guest, & Coley, 2005). Because maternal stress appears associated with increases with marital conflict (Cohn, et al. 1992, Hoffman, 1989), it seems that women's feelings about their husbands' involvement may have important benefits for the emotional well-being of their wives. To address these findings, I investigated the role of these women's perceived husband support as a possible contributor to their maternal self-efficacy.

As mentioned earlier, both John Bowlby and Mary Main and her colleagues found that memories of the central relationships in one's early family life can create "working models", or pictures of what intimate family relationships should be like. Main found that when adults describe insecure attachment relationships with their parents, their children are more likely to have insecure attachments to *them* (Main, Kaplan and Cassidy, 1985). But is it possible to alter parents' models of their early relationships? More specifically, can the marital relationship have a role in altering internal working models? Main and her colleagues are clear in their research

that while the negative effects of very difficult childhoods may be forever etched in memory, a person can develop a model of relationships that makes it possible to break the links that tie an individual to the negative patterns of the past. This was demonstrated in a study by Pearson, Cohn, Cowan and Cowan (1991). Pearson et al. conducted a study of twenty-seven couples from whom they collected data on both parents' childhoods and their current relationships as couples and as parents. They found that two-thirds of the parents who were classified as having secure models of relationships with their own children described very difficult relationships with one or both of their own parents while growing up. Several had parents who were physically abusive or mentally ill while others experienced their parents' divorce or the death of a parent while growing up, yet somehow they managed to nurture positive relationships with their own children. Cohn, Pearson, Cowan and Cowan (1992) later explored the possibility that the choice of a marital partner can affect an individual's model of intimate relationships. Working models of attachment were assessed using the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI). They found that insecure women who were married to insecure men (insecure-insecure dyads) provided the least amount of warmth and structure with their children than did mothers in either the insecure-secure or secure-secure dyads. This finding suggests that in two-parent families, an insecure working model can be a risk factor for less competent parenting, but that the risk is compounded when *both* parents have insecure working models of attachment.

What was especially provocative about Cohn and her colleagues' study is their finding about insecure-secure dyads. In all but two of the ten insecure-secure couples, it was the wife who had an insecure model of relationships. During family visits with these ten couples, they showed just as much warmth and cooperation with each other during the family visit as the secure-secure couples did. Furthermore, when insecure women were married to secure men, the women's parenting was as warm, engaged and responsive as that of mothers described as securely attached. Quinton, Rutter and Liddle (1984) found a similar pattern in their study of 94 British families. When mothers who had been reared in institutional homes since early childhood were able to form positive, warm and confiding relationships with their husbands, the quality of their parenting did not reflect their own earlier deprivation. However, in the absence of positive marital support, there was a marked increase in the rate of poor psychosocial functioning and poor parenting practices among the institutionally raised women. Both of these studies suggest that a nurturing marriage can indeed modify the effects of early negative experiences on the parents' relationship as a couple. Cowan and Cowan (2000) succinctly posit a reason behind this pattern of malleable working models in their 2000 book *When Partners Become Parents*, referring to the "curative power of the marriage":

> "Something about the quality of the couple relationship appears to be providing a buffer that interrupts the potential carryover of the women's early negative experiences into the relationships with their husbands. And, despite the fact that these mothers had not yet been able to come to terms with their own difficult childhood experiences, the positive relationships with their husbands appeared to be helping them establish nurturant and effective relationships with their children." (p. 147)

They go on to speculate that secure men in these insecure-secure pairs are somehow able to de-escalate the conflict between husband and wife with warmth and humor. Thus, when women in these relationships express irritation or hostility, their husbands do not respond in kind, lessening the possibility of more irritability, anger and criticism between them. Since these wives with difficult childhoods did not experience as much nurturing in their early relationships,

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perhaps the responsiveness and warmth they experience from their husbands offsets the negative effects of their insecure working models and they learn more constructive ways of relating to their children.

Similarly, Isabella and Belsky (1985) argued that marital quality can affect the security of mother-infant attachment. Mothers reporting a continued decline in marital quality from 3 to 9 months postpartum had infants who were classified, at 1 year of age, as insecurely attached. In comparison, those whose reported decline in marital quality leveled off at 3 months had securely attached 1-year-olds, suggesting that less successful adjustment to parenthood can negatively affect the baby's socioemotional development.

The effects of marital quality can also be moderated by mothers' current working models: In another study examining the connection between maternal working models, marital adjustment, and the parent-child relationship, mothers' self-reported marital quality correlated positively with children's security, but only for mothers classified as insecure according to the AAI (Das Eiden, Teti, & Corns, 1995). It may be that for secure mothers, the current state of mind "drives" marital quality, sensitive parenting, and child attachment, whereas for insecure mothers, the current state of mind with respect to attachment is more malleable and open to the influence of the current marriage. Thus, it seems that relationships that contribute to the infant-parent attachment may be differentially influential for different people; marital quality is hypothesized to contribute indirectly to infant-mother attachment.

In sum, the literature reviewed in this section strongly suggests that to understand the emergence of parenting beliefs and parenting self-efficacy, attention must be paid to the marital relationship. Simultaneously, it is important to bear in mind the possibility that marital quality is a function of the developmental histories and personalities of the individuals in the relationship. Belsky (1985) states that "marital relations do not so much influence parenting directly as they do indirectly – by having an impact on the general psychological well-being of individuals and only thereby the skills they exercise in the parenting role." (p. 88)

Parenting Self-efficacy in Japan

The majority of the literature on parenting self-efficacy is based on studies conducted in the United States. With the exception of a few studies (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1995; Bornstein, et al., 1998), there is a dearth of research on how parenting self-efficacy develops in other cultures.

Bandura and others argue that the beneficial effects of having a sense of self-efficacy are universal and can be generalized across cultures, irrespective of the different values to which various cultures subscribe because the theory is "founded [on] basic psychological principles and mechanisms common to human agency in general." (Oettingen, 1995, p. 170) This may seem unlikely as the expression of high personal efficacy beliefs may be at odds with the beliefs of collectivist cultures, such as those more prevalent in Asia, that stress interpersonal harmony. For example, Kitayama and Markus (1990) found in Japanese subjects that feeling pride in one's accomplishments is associated with feelings of indebtedness, shame, and guilt. According to Stipek, Weiner, and Li (1989), the Chinese are less likely to claim their own successful efforts as a source of pride than Americans. If it is true that self-efficacy would by definition relate to feelings of an individual's personal efficacy, it would seem that the benefits of having self-efficacy beliefs should only make sense in individualist cultures. But Oettingen (1995) cautions against assuming we should believe that individuals from collectivist cultures do not form personal goals:

Whereas individualist persons may prefer to set goals for themselves that relate to self-actualization, collectivist individuals may set goals for themselves that relate to promoting the welfare of their in-group. For both types of goals, it should be the self-efficacious individuals that make good progress toward realizing their goals, whereas the less confident individuals plagued by self-doubt should be less effective. (Oettingen, 1995, p. 170-171.)

Based on these conclusions, it would seem that parenting self-efficacy can be viewed as a construct that transcends culture. It is true that the definition of a 'good mother' and how the role is conceptualized is different for each society, but self-efficacy is a construct that involves *one's own* evaluation of one's ability to handle the challenges of motherhood.

One goal of this study is to understand whether theories regarding determinants of parenting self-efficacy are applicable in Japan. As women in Japan are the children's primary caregivers, investigating Japanese mothers' self-perceptions of their parenting is intriguing. In fact, compared to mothers in other industrialized countries, Japanese mothers rate themselves as less competent (Bornstein, Haynes, Azuma, Galperin, Maital, Ogino, Painter, Pascual, Pechuex, Rahn, Toda, Vemuti, Vyt, & Wright, 1998; Shwalb, Kawai, Shoji, & Tsunetsugu, 1995; Kazui, 1997). According to Bornstein et al. in 1998, Japanese mothers also rate themselves as less satisfied with their parenting than European American mothers.

This finding seems to contradict all the data available of Japanese children's high academic achievement, and, as noted above, some researchers may question the validity of applying Bandura's construct of self-efficacy to a society that emphasizes more collectivist norms where the general welfare of the group has higher priority over personal goals. However, it is important to examine cultural models that may not be immediately apparent. For example, in Japan the practice of *hansei*, the practice of routinely reflecting on one's own shortcomings and problems (Lewis, 1995) is highly encouraged because recognition of one's own shortcomings and problems is seen as the first step toward self-improvement. There is also literature that shows that Japanese mothers highly value their role as parents and strive to be responsive and thoughtful caregivers of their children (Holloway, et al., 1990; Stevenson & Sigler, 1992; Holloway, 2000; Rothbaum et al., 2000), behaviors that are inconsistent with a psychological profile of low parenting self-efficacy. Japanese mothers report that they invest a great deal of time and energy in parenting (Bornstein et al., 1998; Kojima, 1996), and indeed, mothering and being active participants in their children's education is considered an extremely important role among Japanese women (DeVos, 1993). Many Japanese mothers believe that children's early development is highly malleable and that the type and quality of the care they provide will have a hand in determining whether their children will grow into productive adults (Hirao, 2001). Also at odds with previous studies on Japanese mothers feeling low parenting self-efficacy is the data from Holloway and Behrens' 2002 study. They were surprised to find in their analyses of forty Japanese mothers that many, in fact, reported feeling relatively confident in their parenting. They attributed this in part to the fact that the data from these forty mothers was gathered in a lengthy, open-ended interview format, allowing the interviewers more time to put these mothers at ease, thereby resulting in more candid discussions about parenting.

This study is based on the premise that maternal self-efficacy can indeed transcend culture and explores the experiences that lead to higher or lower parenting self-efficacy in this group of women. Given strong evidence of a connection between parental behavior and child outcomes (Maccoby & Martin, 1983), it is important to investigate the factors that account for

variations in perceptions of parenting self-efficacy, two of which this dissertation will focus upon: the connections that may exist between childhood memories and parenting self-efficacy in Japanese mothers, and whether the husband-wife relationship is related to mothers' parenting self-efficacy.

Early Childhood Memories

As noted previously, parents' recollections of their early relationships with their own parents, and the feelings and expectations that they derived from those relationships, are thought to influence internal working models which has some bearing on the quality of their parenting, which in turn influences their children's development. In fact, several studies have documented links between parents' conceptualizations of their childhood relationships and the quality of their parenting behaviors (e.g. Belsky, Hertzog, & Rovine, 1986; Cohn, et al., 1992; Ward & Carlson, 1995). For example, compared with mothers rated as having insecure attachment models as assessed by the AAI, mothers classified as securely attached displayed greater warmth, sensitivity, responsiveness and understanding when interacting with their infants. These studies indicate that parents who recall their own parents as being sensitive to their needs and accepting of them, or who are able to provide an objective and coherent account of their early attachment experiences – whether these were positive or negative – tend to have infants who develop secure attachments to them (van Ijzendorn, 1992). Mother who have negative childhood memories and have not come to terms with early attachment difficulties are likely to be less warm toward their children and to feel more helpless and out of control than those who perceive others as being responsive and trustworthy (Cohn, et al., 1992).

Contrary to these findings, Holloway and Behrens (2002) found unexpected results in their analyses of data collected from these Japanese mothers: those who reported greater rejection in their families of origin reported higher maternal self-efficacy. They explained this paradoxical finding by suggesting that the mothers who had experienced rejecting experiences as children were likely to feel more efficacious as mothers because they had been subjected to learn and master household and caretaking tasks that subsequently resulted in them feeling competent as parents. In light of these important insights, this study will examine the same question of a smaller sample of 16 Japanese mothers and whether marital support would be a factor in influencing maternal self-efficacy outcomes.

Marital Quality

Investigating the impact of husbands on mothers' parenting self-efficacy in Japan is intriguing since Japanese men appear to have a rather restricted role in the contemporary Japanese family, both as husbands and fathers (Shwalb, Imaizumi, & Nakazawa, 1987). In fact, it has been proposed that one reason Japanese mothers lack confidence as parents is the relatively low amount of involvement of Japanese fathers. Japanese fathers have often been described as being absent, restricting themselves to having a primarily economic role in the family.

Data involving Japanese fathers is lacking in social science research, although this phenomenon is not unique to Japan. It is true, however, that compared to fathers in the U.S., Japanese husbands and fathers have a lower level of participation in household and family activities (White, 2002; Shwalb, et al., 2004). Japan is a society where the norm is that men work primarily outside the home while women care for the children and maintain the household. In a 1997 study by Shwalb, et al., 76% of Japanese fathers surveyed described themselves as "not so active" or "not active" in the raising of their children. Exacerbating this problem is that men's

working hours continue to be long in Japan. According to a report by Retherford and Ogawa (2005) on the potential causes of Japan's declining birthrate and higher divorce rates, men in their 30s with a child less than five years old spent an average of 48 minutes a day on childrearing and household chores. Moreover, 23 percent of husbands in their 30s worked more than four hours of overtime per day, resulting in a total workweek of more than 60 hours. The traditional division of labor between husband and wife has not changed in Japan, despite the fact that more women are working outside the home. Men's attitudes have lagged somewhat behind women's attitudes in this regard, and this can lead to women's higher levels of dissatisfaction with marriage. Adding to many women's frustrations, in many Japanese families, men's focal point is the workplace and work itself, while for women, it is the home and children. In many families, the husband works downtown while the wife's radius of activity is confined to a smaller area around the home and the school as women are expected to quit work at the time of marriage or childbirth and manage all household and childrearing tasks (Tsuya & Bumpass, 2004). Problems relating to Japanese fathers' virtual absence in child rearing or family activities, largely due to work, have been often discussed in the cross-cultural literature (e.g., Iwao, 1993; Lebra, 1994).

In the United States, it is more common for men to be active or at least more present in children's schools or within the local community (NCES, 1997). That experience can likely lead to stronger ties within the family and between the spouses. In Japan, however, many fathers feel they can barely attend their children's school and sports events (Benesse Corp., 2005), much less spend time at home and nurturing their relationships with their spouses. This lack of communication and time spent together can thus feel like a lack of emotional support for women, causing the quality of the marriage to suffer. Certainly, there is data (Suemori, 1999; Ishii-Kuntz, et al., 2004; Benesse Corp., 2005) that show that fathers have increasingly taken on more active roles at home and express a desire to be more involved in the day-to-day tasks of parenting. This is important to note as studies in the U.S. and Japan have found that emotional support from husbands positively affects wives' marital satisfaction or marital well-being (Erickson, 1993; Suemori, 1999) which can, in turn, lead to an increased sense of maternal self-efficacy.

A significant contribution of this study to the theory of parenting self-efficacy lies in its examination of how mothers develop beliefs that increase or decrease their sense of confidence as parents. But how childhood memories and husband support combine to create these beliefs is not clear in previous studies. For this reason, I am interested in examining the processes by which parental perspectives are developed.

This qualitative dissertation examines the perspectives and experiences of sixteen Japanese mothers concerning relationships with her children, her husband, and her parents. By what means do mothers' developmental histories potentially influence their sense of maternal self-efficacy? This study proposes that mothers who recall having warm and positive relationships with one or both parents are more likely to feel confident in their parenting choices and thus experience higher maternal self-efficacy. Mothers who recall having negative or rejecting relationships with one or both parents, on the other hand, are proposed to be more likely to feel ineffective in their parenting approaches and lower maternal self-efficacy. This study proposes further that the negative effects of having experienced rejecting parental relationships can be buffered or offset in mothers who perceive supportive, positive relationships with their husbands. Analyses in this study will be based on interview transcripts and field notes.

Chapter 3

Recruitment and Participants

Sixteen Japanese women were interviewed about their childhood memories of their relationships with their parents, their experience meeting their husbands and getting married, and their transition to motherhood. The interviews were conducted in person by native Japanese graduate students who were investigators on a larger study conducted by Dr. Susan D. Holloway at the University of California, Berkeley from 2000 to 2002. These sixteen mothers participated in this larger mixed-method longitudinal study of 116 Japanese mothers whose children were ages 5 or 6, in their final year of preschool and were making the transition from preschool to elementary school. The research was aimed at examining parenting beliefs and practices among Japanese mothers of preschool-aged children. Because approximately 62 percent of the students who start elementary school have previously attended preschool, and approximately 80 percent of these students choose a private preschool (Ministry of Education, 2005), nine private preschools were chosen as selection sites. Selection of these mothers for this project was made with the assistance of area preschool directors who worked with research members or school staff to solicit the participation of mothers. In each school, mothers whose children attended the final year in preschool were invited to participate. Almost all mothers agreed to participate in the study with the exception of a few mothers who declined due to busy schedules or unforeseen circumstances.

In the summer of 2000, all 116 mothers were interviewed individually for 60 to 90 minutes concerning parenting beliefs, strategies, and feelings of efficacy. One of three native Japanese female graduate students from UC Berkeley conducted the interviews. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed, and then translated into English by native Japanese speakers. Subsequent to the interview, mothers were asked to complete a questionnaire covering similar topics asked in the interview. The questionnaire was developed based on findings from a pilot study of 40 Japanese mothers (Holloway & Behrens, 2001).

From these 116 mothers, researchers selected 16 subsample mothers in order to conduct qualitative interviews. All of these mothers lived in Osaka, an urban prefecture in western Japan. Parenting efficacy scores and educational background were used to select these 16 mothers: half had higher ratings and half had lower ratings than the mean score of parenting efficacy ratings on the questionnaire (4.2 on a 6-point scale) administered to the 116 mothers. In each high and low efficacy group, half achieved an education level beyond high school and half had not. The participation of the mothers was voluntary, and they were given a small gift as a token of appreciation for their time.

Table 1 illustrates general characteristics and information relevant to the 16 mothers, including socioeconomic status at the time of the interviews.

Table 1: **Characteristics of the 16 Japanese mothers**

Mother	Age in 2000	Mother's Education	Husband's Education	Family Income	Children's gender	Birth Order/Gender of Target Child	Number of Children in 2000	Mothers' Working status
Mrs. Kobayashi	30	High school	High school	2	Daughters	2, F	3	Part-time from 2002
Mrs. Ishimoto	30	High school	High school	3	Son	2, M	2	Part-time (FT from 2001)

Mother	Age in 2000	Mother's Education	Husband's Education	Family Income	Children's gender	Birth Order/Gender of Target Child	Number of Children in 2000	Mothers' Working status
Mrs. Kawabata	30	High school	College	2	Son & daughter	1, M	2	Home side-job
Mrs. Tanaka	32	2-year college	College	5	Son & daughter	1, M	2	No
Mrs. Yamamura	32	High school	High school	4	Daughters	1, F	2	No
Mrs. Nishimura	32	2-year college	Vocational school	2	Son & daughters	3, M	3	Part-time from 2002
Mrs. Kato	32	High school	High school	3	Son & daughter	3, M	3	Part-time
Mrs. Watanabe	33	High school	High school	4	Son	1, M	1 (2 in 2002)	No
Mrs. Maeda	33	2-year college	College	4	Son & daughter	1, M	2	Part-time
Mrs. Matsumoto	34	4-year college	College	4	Sons	1, M	2	Part-time
Mrs. Fukazawa	36	4-year college	College	3	Daughter	1, F	1	Part-time
Mrs. Hirao	37	4-year college	College	3	Daughter & son	2, F	2	No
Mrs. Hashimoto	40	2-year college	Vocational school	3	Daughter & sons	3, F	3	No
Mrs. Ito	41	High school	College	3	Son & daughters	3, M	3	Home side-job
Mrs. Inoue	42	4-year college	College	4	Son	2, M	2	Full-time
Mrs. Sugiwara	45	Jr. high school	High school	2	Daughters	2, F	2	No

Note: All of the names are fictitious to protect the mothers' privacy.
1= less than 3,000,000 yen (approximately $27,000), 2= 3,000,000 - 5,000,000 yen ($27,000 to $45,000), 3= 5,000,000 - 7,000,000 yen ($45,000 to $64,000), 4=7,000,000-10,000,000 yen ($64,000 to $91,000), 5= more than 10,000,000 yen ($91,000).

All 16 women were married during the years the interviews were conducted, and all of the women had at least one child in the last year of preschool at the time of the first interview in 2000. In 2000, their ages ranged from 30 to 45 years. Two of the 16 women had just one child while others had up to three children at the time of our interviews. Six of the target children (children who attended the last year of preschool in the first interview) were firstborn, seven were second-born, and three were third-born. Only one mother worked full-time between 2000 and 2002, while six mothers worked part-time over the course of the interviews. Additionally, three mothers started part-time jobs after the target child began attending elementary school, and one mother changed her job status from part-time to full-time between the second and third interview. Types of jobs that these women engaged in included: teaching, nursing, helping in the family business, factory work, and working as a cashier. Five mothers did not take outside jobs over the course of the three years they were interviewed.

The information above also includes educational levels of the husband and wife and their annual family income. Mothers' educational levels ranged from junior high school to university

graduate. Except in the cases of Mrs. Kawabata and Mrs. Ito, high school graduates who married college-educated husbands, women married husbands of similar educational background.

Demographic information, as well as information pertaining to these women's parenting self-efficacy, expectations for their children, and maternal involvement with the school, were collected for each family from three surveys that the 16 mothers filled out as they were still a part of the full sample of 116 mothers who were also administered the surveys.

Procedures

Two female native Japanese graduate students complete four open-ended interviews with these 16 mothers at 6 month to 1 year intervals: summer of 2000, winter of 2001, summer of 2001, and summer of 2002. At the time of the last interview, the target children were in second grade. Each interviewer interviewed the same mothers for all four interviews; each interview lasted from 90 minutes to three hours. The interviews were taped and transcribed in Japanese and subsequently transcribed into English. (See Appendix A for interview questions for the four interviews, translated into Japanese and back-translated into English which were checked by Susan Holloway for accuracy in conveying meanings and nuances of the original questions.)

The interviews contained personal questions, and it was of utmost importance that the interviewer created an atmosphere of trust and empathy. For these reasons, the interviews were conducted in the women's homes or in the case of one woman at the location of the woman's choosing. The anonymity of their involvement was emphasized, as some mothers expressed concern that their responses would be relayed to the staff at their children's preschools. Verbal and written consent were obtained. After each interview, to understand these women's lives further, the research team analyzed the transcript. Based on the women's responses, the team crafted questions to be asked of the subject in the subsequent interview. Field notes taken by the interviewers immediately following the interviews were also consulted.

During the open-ended interviews, interviewers strived to keep the interviews conversational and encouraged discussions of key themes and objectives relevant to the study including general questions about their role as a mother, their views of their children, their feelings about and interactions with their children's school, their interactions with friends or extended family, and activities such as paid employment, classes, hobbies and other outside interests. Specific questions were asked to gather more details about their childhood experiences, including characteristics of their parents, the nature of their relationship with both parents that they recalled and perceptions of whether they were treated differently from their siblings. These open-ended questions aimed to establish how the mothers integrated their childhood experiences as part of their current life and tried to elicit mothers' representations of their own childhood histories. Participants were also encouraged to discuss their current relationships with their husbands, including his level of participation and involvement with household and child-rearing activities, the nature of their interactions and how often participants consulted their husband on parenting issues. In the course of the interviews, mothers were not specifically asked to relate positive or negative experiences, but rather were asked non-leading, general questions about how they experienced their childhood or their marital relationship. The goal was to give them the freedom to say whatever they felt was relevant to answering the questions.

Analytic Strategies

To explore the themes presented in this thesis, I utilized grounded theory methodology (Patton, 2002). This approach allowed me to generate theories about this sample of mothers from

the interview data; hypotheses and concepts about parenting self-efficacy, childhood memories and marital support were formed in relation to the data. To form these hypotheses and themes, I perused each translated interview transcript and accompanying field notes repeatedly. I then wrote case summaries of each woman to identify key themes and key statements pertaining to their childhood memories of their relationships with their parents; their marital relationship; their relationship with and impressions of the target child; their impression of themselves as parents and their parenting style; and any general impressions and significant statements made about parenting overall. Narratives related to the three main topics of marriage, parenting and childhood memories were sorted into the appropriate category. See Appendix B for an example of a case summary.

Next, I focused on identifying repeated themes that emerged in the narratives across the women with the help of charts and tables to identify these general patterns to determine, for example, what makes for a positive marriage (see Marital Qualities Chart) or a positive childhood (see Positive Childhood Chart and Negative Childhood Chart). I tried to come up with explanations as to whether and how aspects of these women's childhoods would affect their subsequent levels of maternal self-efficacy. I tried to draw similar connections between the quality of their marriages and their level of maternal self-efficacy. This analysis resulted in two categories of mothers. Those mothers whose perspectives did not fall into the pattern of the first two categories were placed in a third category and analyzed as exceptional cases. To illustrate these three types of mothers, I selected specific narratives and examples of mothers to provide a more detailed description of my conclusions. Further explanation of this procedure is below.

Analyzing maternal self-efficacy: In order to further examine parenting self-efficacy, I focused on statements each woman made regarding views of her sense of confidence in herself as a mother, as well as her ability to carry out parenting tasks. I identified themes related to parenting self-efficacy that emerged repeatedly, and based on these themes, four general categories reflecting parenting self-efficacy were formed:

1. Evaluation of Nurturance/Valuing/Empathetic Responsiveness (Sensitivity & Warmth)
2. Evaluation of Discipline/Limit Setting/Parenting Strategies
3. Descriptions of Providing or Seeking out Intellectually Challenging/Stimulating Activities
4. Expressions of Well-Being as a Parent (Personal and psychological resources of the parent)

Even though mothers were classified as either high or low efficacy based on their responses on the pre-interview questionnaire, I developed a self-efficacy scale using the methodology of grounded theory specifically for these 16 mothers and assigned efficacy scores based on the interview data. In most cases, the mothers' score on the survey's self-efficacy scale was similar to the rating they received based on the interviews. However, several mothers' descriptions of their sense of parenting self-efficacy did not always reflect their self-rated efficacy score on the pre-interview questionnaire. For example, Mrs. Kato rated herself on the questionnaire as having relatively low self-efficacy when it came to child outcomes. However, in the interviews, she described herself as being quite relaxed and confident in her parenting strategies, approach to discipline, and ability to cope with challenges.

I. Mom's description of being a parent

A. Statements Pertaining to Nurturance/Valuing/Empathetic Responsiveness (Sensitivity & Warmth)

HIGH Perceived Self-Efficacy	LOW Perceived Self-Efficacy
Describes feeling unable to understand or meet child's emotional needs. Expresses frustration that she has difficulty understanding why child gets distressed.	Describes being aware of child's opinions, points of view; child-centered, sensitive to needs. Feels able to 'read' child's emotions and listen attentively to child.
Criticizes self for being unable to tolerate or make sense of when child displays negative emotions or behavior.	Expresses confidence in ability to accept child's emotions and behaviors, positive or negative
Describes situations where she feels frustrated by child and/or child's behavior	Describes situations where she feels like she knows and values qualities in child; speaks positively of child
Describes situations where she dismisses her role as a parent; feels that she doesn't have the skills to be a good parent. Doesn't seem satisfied with her role as a parent.	Describes situations where she values attachment-related experiences with child. Values intimacy between parent and child. Seems satisfied with her role as a parent.

B. Statements Pertaining to Discipline/Limit Setting/Parenting Strategies

HIGH	LOW
Criticizes self for or regrets using authoritarian, high power-assertive techniques (threats, force) when disciplining child.	Describes using adaptive parenting strategies in the realm of discipline. Feels able to put child's behavior into context.
Criticizes self for not being more thoughtful about parenting	Talks deeply, philosophically about parenting strategies and style
Blames child/self/others for child outcomes	Takes responsibility or feels empowered to find solutions for child outcomes

C. Provides or Seeks Out Intellectually Challenging/Stimulating Activities

HIGH	LOW
Little interest in school activities	Interest in school activities
Doesn't facilitate child's participation in recreation activities	Facilitates child's participation in recreational activities
Provides no or little materials to stimulate play or reading.	Provision of stimulating play and reading materials

D. Statements Pertaining to Well-Being as a Parent (Personal and psychological resources of the parent)

HIGH	LOW
Describes feeling helpless or disconnected, alone	Describes seeking or having support resources for stress, parenting issues.
Expresses resentment, bitterness, 'sacrifice' about role as mom	Expresses fulfillment as mom

Little or no effort made to improve self or find hobbies.	Makes efforts to self-improve, maintains a well-rounded life outside of being a parent
Makes statements expressing self-doubt and self-criticism as mom	Is not overly critical of self as parent.

I rated each mother's description of herself as a parent on a five-point Likert Scale, with 1 being low/none to 5 being high/often. Scores approaching 5 belonged to mothers who described themselves as feeling confident with their parenting choices, and aware and valuing of qualities of the child, while scores approaching 1 belonged to mothers who expressed self-criticism and not feeling confident in her parenting decisions. Mothers whose scores were above the mean (the mean of the self-efficacy scores was 3.97) were considered to have HIGH maternal self-efficacy. After reading all of the interview transcripts for one mother, I rated her responses using all 14 scales and then computed the mean.

Mother	Self-Efficacy Score
Mrs. Watanabe	4.75
Mrs. Hashimoto	3.43
Mrs. Hirao	4.30
Mrs. Ishimoto	2.43
Mrs. Kawabata	3.04
Mrs. Sugiwara	1.68
Mrs. Matsumoto	4.50
Mrs. Tanaka	3.14
Mrs. Yamamura	4.73
Mrs. Nishimura	4.57
Mrs. Maeda	4.14
Mrs. Kobayashi	4.96
Mrs. Inoue	4.81
Mrs. Kato	4.54
Mrs. Ito	5.00
Mrs. Fukazawa	3.54

Analyzing perceived childhood memories

This analysis consisted of a thorough examination of their characterization of their experiences within their families of origin and their perception of the nature of their relationships with their parents. Specifically, I noted discussions of:
- What makes for an unhappy/happy childhood? What terms are used to illustrate?
- How do the women describe positive/negative relationships with their parent(s)?
- How do the women remember feeling as children?
- How do they link their childhood experiences to their current lives as mothers and wives?
    To further examine the statements of women who recalled positive childhood memories and to illustrate the types of experiences that comprise "positive childhood memories", I sorted the statements into eight general categories (see Table 2)

Table 2: Positive Childhood Memories

	Mrs. Nishimura		Mrs. Ito		Mrs. Yamamura		Mrs. Watanabe		Mrs. Hirao		Mrs. Kato		Mrs. Maeda	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Spent time together					X	X		X		X	X		X	X
Parents talked/ communi-cated					X	X					X	X		
Felt understood by parents			X	X	X	X			X	X			X	X
Parents physically affectionate									X	X	X	X		
Behaviors: cooking, making clothes		X					X	X			X	X		
Felt indulged									X	X	X	X	X	X
Parents supported goals	X	X						X						
Imparted wisdom/ values			X					X	X				X	X

Similarly, to examine the statements of women who recalled negative childhood memories and to better illustrate what types of experiences comprise "negative childhood memories", I sorted the statements into seven general categories (see Table 3).

Table 3: Negative Childhood Memories

	Mrs. Ishimoto		Mrs. Inoue		Mrs. Kawabata		Mrs. Matsumoto		Mrs. Sugiwara		Mrs. Hashimoto		Mrs. Tanaka		Mrs. Kobayashi		Mrs. Fukazawa	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Physical violence	X				X				X				X			X		
Alcoholism	X								X						X			
Absent	X	X							X	X	X						X	X
Emotionally detached, indifferent	X	X					X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	
Harsh, intrusive, scary	X			X	X	X	X	X				X	X				X	X
Marital Conflict	X	X									X	X					X	X
Not understood	X	X	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X

I then developed a coding scale to be able to give each mother a perceived childhood memory score in order to characterize each mother as having either positive or negative childhood memories. Based on their narratives, each mother's statements about her childhood were scored on eight dimensions, including blame/taking responsibility; contempt/appreciation; criticism/appreciation of parents' behavior; and dysfunctional/adaptive parenting strategies.

II. Mom's description of her own parents

NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
Blames parents for outcomes	Takes responsibility for who she is today
Describes feeling disconnected from them	Currently uses her parent(s) as a source of support or resource for stress, parenting issues. Values their input re: parenting issues. Seeks their advice and respects their perspectives.
Critical of parents and their parenting style. Expresses contempt.	Expresses that they did a good job as parents
Recalls that they did not enjoy being parents	Recalls that they seemed to enjoy being parents
Critical of parents/parents' behavior	Values qualities in her parents; speaks positively of them
Describes parents using dysfunctional parenting strategies (threats, force, violence)	Describes parents using adaptive parenting strategies
Recalls parents as being authoritarian, non-child-centered. Describes violence, neglect, abuse.	Recalls parents as being sensitive to their needs and accepting of them. Felt that they listened to and understood her, for the most part.
Dismisses their role as parents; doesn't feel close to them. Lacks genuine insight into impact of own behavior or behavior of parent(s) on her	Values attachment-related experiences with parents. Seems to value intimacy with parents.

I rated each mother's description of the quality of her childhood relationship with her parents on a five-point Likert Scale, with 1 being low/none to 5 being high/often. Scores approaching 5 described loving, comforting, and involved interactions with the parent(s), while scores approaching 1 described childhoods full of conflict, neglect or even violence. Mothers whose scores were above the mean of 3.42 were considered to have positive childhood memories.

Mother	Childhood Memory Score
Mrs. Watanabe	4.43
Mrs. Hashimoto	1.94
Mrs. Hirao	4.50
Mrs. Ishimoto	1.00
Mrs. Kawabata	2.14
Mrs. Sugiwara	1.50
Mrs. Matsumoto	2.71
Mrs. Tanaka	2.67
Mrs. Yamamura	4.75
Mrs. Nishimura	4.40

Mother	Childhood Memory Score
Mrs. Maeda	4.71
Mrs. Kobayashi	3.17
Mrs. Inoue	3.50
Mrs. Kato	5.00
Mrs. Ito	4.75
Mrs. Fukazawa	3.50

Analyzing the marital relationship: This analysis also consisted of carefully examining each mother's narratives involving her relationship with her husband and identifying general patterns and themes. I was interested in statements related to:

- What makes for a happy/unhappy marriage?
- How do the women describe supportive/unsupportive husbands?
- How do the women characterize their experiences in the marriage?

I also noted discussions of what makes for a positive or negative relationship, feelings the mothers described, and whether they made links between their relationships with their husbands to their parenting. To examine the statements about their marital relationships and to illustrate the types of behaviors these mothers consider "supportive" and "unsupportive" in husbands, I identified general themes and sorted them into five categories (see Tables 4 and 5):

Table 4: Descriptions of Husband Support

	Mrs. Yamamura	Mrs. Watanabe	Mrs. Nishimura	Mrs. Hirao	Mrs. Ito	Mrs. Kobayashi	Mrs. Kato	Mrs. Inoue	Mrs. Ishimoto	Total
Husband actively participates at school	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	9
Husband as a source of support/friendship/ source of encouragement	X	X	X	X	X		X			6
Husband actively involved in care-taking and parenting responsibilities	X	X	X	X		X				5
No longer having to work outside the home	X	X	X	X	X					5
Financial security afforded by their husbands	X	X	X	X						4
Total	5	5	5	5	3	2	2	1	1	

Table 5: Descriptions of Unsupportive Husbands

	Mrs. Maeda	Mrs. Fukazawa	Mrs. Sugiwara	Mrs. Kawabata	Mrs. Hashimoto	Mrs. Matsumoto	Mrs. Tanaka	Total
Little or no participation at school events/household duties	X	X	X	X	X	X		6
Little interest in children or parenting: No active father role	X	X	X	X	X			5
Unsupportive: belittles or criticizes wife, or makes her feel unappreciated	X	X	X	X	X			5
Little communication/ mistrust/general unhappiness	X	X	X	X	X			5
Absent husband: constantly traveling or at work	X	X	X			X	X	5
Total	5	5	5	4	4	2	1	

I developed a coding scale to analyze the mothers' narratives related to her marital relationship. The narratives were scored on five dimensions, including criticism/valuing of husband's behavior; support; consultation with husband; the amount of time and involvement on the part of the husband; and dysfunctional/harmonious behavior in the marriage.

III. Mom's description of her relationship with husband

NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
Critical of husband's behavior as a husband and as a father.	Values qualities in husband; speaks positively of aspects of his behavior or personality
Feels that husband doesn't understand her needs and describes feeling unsupported	Describes husband as being sensitive to her needs and feels listened to or understood.
Rarely, if ever, consults husband on parenting-related matters. Dismisses husband's role as a parent or spouse.	Consults husband as a source of support or resource for stress, parenting issues. Values his input re: parenting issues. Seeks his advice and respects his perspectives.
Husband rarely, if ever, attends school events or spends time with family on days off.	Husband regularly attends school events or spends time with the family on days off.
Describes incidents of violence or abuse	Describes marriage as being functional and harmonious, for the most part.

I rated each mother's description of her relationship with her husband on a five-point Likert Scale, with 1 being low/none to 5 being high/often. Scores approaching 5 described harmonious, supportive marital relationships, while scores approaching 1 described relationships filled with conflict and little involvement on the part of the husband. Mothers whose scores were above the mean of 3.20 were considered to have supportive marital relationships.

Mother	Marital Relationship Score
Mrs. Watanabe	5.00
Mrs. Hashimoto	1.20
Mrs. Hirao	3.80
Mrs. Ishimoto	4.40
Mrs. Kawabata	1.20
Mrs. Sugiwara	1.20
Mrs. Matsumoto	2.00
Mrs. Tanaka	2.30
Mrs. Yamamura	4.20
Mrs. Nishimura	4.40
Mrs. Maeda	2.40
Mrs. Kobayashi	5.00
Mrs. Inoue	4.33
Mrs. Kato	4.50
Mrs. Ito	4.00
Mrs. Fukazawa	1.20

Chapter 4

[My mother was] nice and a very kind person…. She was the kind of mother who would accept me or things completely…She used to say that if parents sacrifice, children grow as much as the parents sacrifice….Mom used to make a point to say that even though she had seven kids, we were all equal to her.

[My father was] a *kowaii sonzai* (role of authoritarian, scary figure). He was the kind of parent who wouldn't hold conversations beyond regular daily interactions, but I had the impression he would understand me if I needed to talk with him….So he was strict, but I could sense his kindness, so I didn't feel he was *kowai* (scary)….I love the way he thinks and I like how he envisions the future.

I had always thought that I would be understood if I needed to talk and they would never scold us without a reason or in a mean manner.

<div align="right">-- Mrs. Ito</div>

Mrs. Ishimoto: [My father] is still like that (violent, abusive). He is strange. I haven't liked him since I was little. I don't want to think of him as my father. It doesn't mean I really hate them, but I thought my parents didn't really do anything as parents for me….[My mom] raised me until I was in 3rd grade and she didn't mentally grow up after that. When I look at my mother, I think I really have to raise my children until they are grown up.

<div align="right">-- Mrs. Ishimoto</div>

It is interesting to note the varied and wide-ranging experiences that mothers recalled and chose to share when asked to describe their childhood relationships with their parents. The mothers in our study gave many vivid descriptions about growing up with their parents – experiences as descriptive as those of Mrs. Ito and Mrs. Ishimoto. By what means do mothers' developmental histories potentially influence their sense of maternal self-efficacy? The first part of this chapter focuses on portraying the memories that mothers had of their relationships with their parents during childhood. Depictions of happy, carefree childhoods emerged in the interviews with some mothers, along with portrayals by others of childhoods filled with hostility and bitterness toward their mothers and/or fathers. The manner in which these mothers talked about their past ranged from humor to mild anger to acute resentment. Even though these mothers have all started families of their own, memories of childhood experiences with their own parents seem to influence their beliefs as mothers. I further explore the childhoods of four women; two with positive childhood memories and two with negative memories.

I continue by relating the experiences of women in both positive and negative marital relationships in order to investigate whether the mother's relationship with her husband might have some bearing on maternal self-efficacy. I conclude by describing the three typologies in which these mothers fall, based on their experience in childhood, the nature of their marriage and their subsequent sense of maternal self-efficacy.

Mothers' Recalled Positive Childhood Memories

Mothers who described feeling protected, safe, relaxed, cared for, understood, loved, and peaceful around their mothers and/or fathers and whose childhood memory scores were above the mean of 3.42 were categorized as having **positive memories** of their relationships with their

parents. Parents of women in this category were described as traditional, kind, generous, always on the children's side, "a real mom", affectionate, loving, easy-going, dependable, strict and very clear about what's good and what's bad. Through their conversations, seven themes emerged that seemed to characterize their experience of a positive childhood.

Mothers in this category appreciated that their parents took time to regularly talk with and communicate with them, despite busy family schedules. **Mrs. Yamamura**, the mother of two daughters, appreciated that her parents communicated with her and her siblings on a daily basis. She fondly recalled running to her parents' furniture shop after school each day to recount the day's events with her family. Despite the fact that her parents were often too occupied with their business and had few opportunities to take their four children on outings, it meant more to Mrs. Yamamura that they were able to spend so much time together as a family just talking about their daily lives: "We communicated better than other families who owned businesses."

Some mothers relished the security of simply being able to spend time together with their parents. **Mrs. Maeda**'s parents also ran a small business together, but were frequently home. In fact, she remembers her father as being home a lot, especially compared to other fathers. **Mrs. Hirao** recalls the comfort she felt just being with her mother after school: "I remember wanting to be with my mother all the time after I got home. I felt comfortable with her. She gave me a peace of mind…." **Mrs. Kato**'s father was often physically weak and ill, often having to miss work. She would volunteer to stay home with him which she enjoyed doing: [My father] was close to me. He really liked joking and I always followed him."

The feeling of being understood by their parents was another feature common to positive childhood memories. **Mrs. Maeda** felt that she could confide in her parents and could see them truly making an effort to understand her feelings: "I felt relaxed and they took care of us…They tried to understand my feelings and tried to let me do what I wanted to do as long as it was not outrageous." **Mrs. Watanabe**'s mother recognized her desire to play soccer despite it not being a popular sport for young girls and facilitated opportunities for her to practice and follow the sport. **Mrs. Yamamura** also talks about how she confided in her parents and had the distinct feeling that they believed in and trusted her.

Other mothers enjoyed the physical signs of closeness and affection they shared with their parents, often referred to in Japan as *amae*. There are many conceptualizations of *amae* (Behrens, 2004), but in the parenting realm, it can be described as a welcome sense of dependence that occurs between parent and child. Mrs. Hirao, Mrs. Kato and Mrs. Maeda all related experiences of feeling lovingly indulged by their parents. **Mrs. Maeda**'s parents gave her the freedom to do as she pleased "as long as it was not outrageous." **Mrs. Kato**, a mother of three children, loved being physically close to her mom: "I really, really liked my mother, so I always tried to follow her and cuddle with her and talk to her a lot. Because I was a girl, I cuddled with my mother more than my brother did… but I was closer to her." **Mrs. Hirao** was the only child of her parents and also described how much she enjoyed being physically close to both of them as it made her feel secure and loved. Because her father was not often at home, she delighted in being able to do *amae* with him: "I felt like doing *amae* with my father twice as much as I do with my mother…. I was always very close to him as a girl. I would walk arm in arm with my father, just like a boyfriend and girlfriend. We could only share a limited amount of time because he was very busy…. I would stick to my father when my family went out because it was not that I could see him everyday."

Other parents conveyed their love for their daughters through nurturing actions and behaviors. **Mrs. Nishimura** refers to her mother as a "real, traditional mom" who "made sushi in

the traditional style" for her children despite the fact that she worked outside the home. Even though Mrs. Kato recalls both of her parents as always working, she valued the fact that her mother always **made clothing** for her by hand and the times that her father would take her to the fields with him.

Finally, a few mothers shared how much they appreciated feeling supported and having their goals accepted by their parents. **Mrs. Watanabe** and her parents shared a passion for soccer. She recalls her mother being very supportive of her interest in playing soccer even though it was not necessarily an activity that was common for girls to engage in. In fact, she remembers her mother donning a thick coat and standing outside watching as Mrs. Watanabe jogged outside. Mrs. Nishimura's bought her a piano after she had been taking piano lessons for a while: "…my parents never had loan payments before then. But they made an exception for me to buy a piano. They begged me not to quit piano right away. I could not take back my words."

Clearly, there were a variety of salient experiences that these mothers shared that constituted happy childhood memories. Some mothers described instances depicting several of these themes at once while growing up while others recalled experiencing only a few of these themes. However, the recollection of their overall childhood could still be characterized as positive in their eyes.

Mrs. Maeda's and Mrs. Ito's Childhood Experiences

Parents' recollections of their early relationships with their own parents, and the feelings and expectations that they derived from those early relationships, are thought to influence the quality of their parenting (Cohn, Cowan, Cowan, & Pearson, 1992; Crowell & Feldman, 1988). These studies indicate that parents who recall their own parents as being sensitive to their needs and accepting of them are more likely to provide greater warmth and provide more structure when interacting with their own children. Given the loving and affectionate experiences recalled in childhood, it seems to make sense that these mothers would have something positive from which to draw when they became mothers themselves.

Two women, Mrs. Maeda and Mrs. Ito, were selected to further illustrate the experience of having positive childhood memories and its potential impact on their attitudes toward motherhood. The superficial elements of Mrs. Maeda and Mrs. Ito's childhood experiences were similar in various ways. Both grew up in households with parents who both worked outside the home, and both recalled their parents emphasizing the importance of studying and the value of having knowledge and common sense. Yet the two benefited from the affirmation they received in childhood in different ways when they became mothers themselves. Mrs. Maeda seeks her mother's advice about child-rearing and has such a positive recollection of her mother as a parent that she strives to adopt a similar style of parenting her own children. This could arguably be what allows her to trust in her own abilities in the face of parenting demands and proactively seek solutions to questions and challenges. She also seems to have achieved a sense of balance in her life as a Mary Kay Cosmetics employee, a mother, and a wife. Mrs. Ito has a very philosophical view about her role as a parent which she attributes to the warm and loving environment in which she was raised and attempts to create a child-centered environment for her children where their thoughts are respected and they can be as independent as possible.

Mrs. Maeda.

Mrs. Maeda was 33 years old and living with her husband and two children at the time of our first interview. Growing up, Mrs. Maeda recalled her relationship with her parents as being

quite positive. She described her parents as hard workers who ran a small business together, but who managed to be home quite often. Mrs. Maeda recalled that her father was often home with the family, especially compared to other fathers she knew who worked out of the house and rarely spent time with the family. They got along well throughout her childhood, although she remembered sometimes feeling misunderstood by them when she became an adolescent. She reflected during the conversation with the interviewer that at the time of her adolescence, they probably had "many other things happening to them, and maybe that's why they sometimes didn't understand me."

Mrs. Maeda was 27 years old when she had her first child, a target child in our study. Now that she has two children, a son and a daughter, Mrs. Maeda seemed content and comfortable in her role as a mother. She described her impression of herself in this way:

> Mrs. Maeda: If I want to be close to an ideal type of mother it might be difficult. But on the other hand I try to enjoy being a mother. I am trying to learn from my children. So I am trying to interact with them at the same level as they are…I am trying not to think it is hard to be a mother….I had a child because I wanted to, so I don't want to use the word 'sacrifice.'

She tries to balance her role as a mother, as vice-president of her the school PTA, and as a Mary Kay Cosmetics employee. When asked how she handled parenting issues and stresses, rather than allow herself to feel discouraged, Mrs. Maeda stated that she utilizes a variety of strategies, including reading books and talking with her work colleagues who are also parents. She observed how other mothers interact with and discipline their children and tries to take away lessons from them:

> Mrs. Maeda: [I have] read so many books and [have] learned so much information. But I also found that things don't work as it is said…. [My work colleagues and I] all have this in common and [I] can learn from them… it's really fun and with this thing that entertains me, I release my stress.

Mrs. Maeda also attended a lecture by a psychologist, sponsored by the school's PTA committee where she learned the importance of listening to her children when they talk, thereby making it easier for them to communicate when they're older. Mrs. Maeda realizes that as the children grow up, her role will continue to change and evolve. She plans to consult their teachers when she needs advice.

> Mrs. Maeda: Kindergarten is a place where children get used to others and play around…. That's why parents need to discipline kids at home to some extent, though a school needs to teach them academic stuff. Since the school or teachers can't check everything, parents need to do such things. It's like, there are quite responsibilities on the part of parents, but if I think about it, it is about my child, so it should be my responsibility, you know? Considering these things, I would like to spare more time for my children from now on.

She admits that now that her children are both in preschools, she finally has more time for herself which is a relief to her. She feels that her job as a Mary Kay Cosmetics representative not only

gives her the opportunity to work outside the home to bring in extra income, it is also gives her children the opportunity to see their mother working hard and having a dream. Mrs. Maeda describes feeling proud and empowered by the awards she has received at work. It has also changed her attitude toward herself and others: she feels more positive and thoughtful of others' feelings and less blaming of others. Mrs. Maeda describes how working with others has made her more assertive and active which lead to changes in how she disciplines her children:

> Mrs. Maeda: Well, the way I used to scold my children was a kind of lukewarm. It's like, I was mad only tentatively, so the kids only understood vaguely that I was upset for something. But now, I don't withdraw; I make sure and tell them what I need to say. I try to tell them. I think there are many mothers like me, who think it's enough to leave kids with 'yeah, yeah.' However, I try to scold kids whose mother work with me in the same group and who tell me to scold their kids in the say way as I scold my own kids.

She remembers her own mother as being very kind and thinks that they have similar styles of parenting. She talks with her mom once a week and sees her once or twice a month.

> Mrs. Maeda: She is like a good advisor for my child rearing….She tries to care for [my children] the same way she did with us…. I had a good image of her in childhood and I think a mother is a mother forever…. To my mother, her grandchildren are the most adorable thing … she wants me to prioritize them over anything lese…she was the type that would say to think about what to do with her life only after she had raised her children. But during that time, I have changed. I am still not perfect in my mother's eyes, but she realizes that I am improving, so she is becoming more supportive.

One could suggest that Mrs. Maeda has found a way to incorporate balance and happiness in her life, both in and out of the home. Accordingly, Mrs. Maeda has high expectations for herself and seems to constantly strive to improve herself:

> Mrs. Maeda: You know, even though I have children, I want to be a person who is really shining, shining from the inside as a woman, and a mother…The things that come from the inside…I think that they come from conscience and experience and so I want to meet people and gain experience like that…. There are more things to do, and I can widen my perspectives…. I began to exercise, or read books, and to listen to music to relieve my stress that way. I try to find my own way to relieve stress, and do different things every time.

The influence of Mrs. Maeda's upbringing is apparent as she recalls her parents' reminders that she "become a decent person, and not give others any trouble…an ordinary people's life…They wanted me to become a person who can do things that are general and common sense." Moreover, the fact that Mrs. Maeda seeks her mother's advice about parenting indicates that the value she places on her upbringing and her own parents' style of childrearing – qualities she hopes to emulate with her own children.

Mrs. Ito.
Mrs. Ito, who lives with her husband and three children, is a mother whose responses on the questionnaire indicated that she possessed a high level of parenting self-efficacy. Mrs. Ito has

chosen to adopt a child-centered approach to parenting and makes a conscious effort to be respectful of the perspective of her children. This is illustrated here as she relates her technique for problem-solving with her son, the target child:

> Mrs. Ito: First, I listen as much as I can and then before I suggest what he should have done, I ask him what he should have done. And I consciously do that. To listen to a story as a parent, it's so easy to think, 'Oh, it's such a simple problem.' But then I would be taking away the child's chance of learning how to solve the issue by himself. So consciously I always ask him, 'What do you think you should have done?'

When asked to describe her experience as a child living with her parents, Mrs. Ito described having a warm, loving relationship with both of her parents. She remembers her mother as being "nice" and "a very kind person. She was the kind of mother who would accept me or things completely," although Mrs. Ito admits that now that she is a mother, she wishes her mom could have been a bit more strict. She does recall her mom often making a point to say that even though she had seven children, they were all equal to her.

Mrs. Ito remembers her father as being strict, yet she felt a measure of security and consistency in how he behaved as a parent:
> Mrs. Ito: I could sense his kindness, so I didn't feel he was scary….He was the kind of parent who wouldn't hold conversations beyond regular daily interactions, but I had the impression he would understand me if I needed to talk with him… So he was strict, but I could sense his kindness, so I didn't feel he was *kowai* (scary).

In the course of discussing her three children and the milieu in which they are being raised, Mrs. Ito observes that while children in Japan today are being raised to be competitive and assertive of their individuality, she feels they are also losing a sense of collective or public morality. Mrs. Ito recalls that even though her parents did not explicitly state that she needed to achieve a certain academic level, she felt they imparted a clear sense of the importance of being educated and the kind of person they expected to her become.

> Mrs. Ito: One thing they always told me was that I should be conscious that knowledge is useful and important. I should stick to studying as much as I could because there's nothing wrong to know better… But they never told me to do homework…they were too busy working. [My father encouraged me] to have interests in various things and to constantly think about what to do next. [Also] have common sense, don't lie, help others.

Mrs. Ito seems to have internalized her father's approach toward education with her own children. She explains that she occasionally worries that children are being expected to do too much schoolwork too early. Rather than unquestioningly learning what is being taught at school, she would prefer that he be allowed opportunities to question the subject matter and be offered a wider breadth of subjects: "At least while he is a child, he can say no to things!… I think of education as not just studying at school, but the whole principle about being a human being."
She also credits her parents with teaching her to have a good heart and hopes to pass this awareness of "caring for the heart" to her children as she raises them. In fact, Mrs. Ito thinks deeply about her role as a parent and her goals for her children. She talks extensively about how

much she desires to truly listen to and be thoughtful of her children, to respect their autonomy, and to be as child-centered as possible.

> Mrs. Ito: I want to respect the communication between each other in my family. No matter how many times we have fights, I want us to be considerate of other's feelings, for example, to feel bad or regret for saying too much, to feel bad for whatever h/she did to others. That kind of consideration, think of others, not to be so self-centered, or selfish…"

Rather than adopt an authoritarian approach to parenting and telling them what to think or what to do, Mrs. Ito strives to encourage each of her three children to freely express themselves in the hopes that their true personalities and spirits can emerge. This way, she hopes they can learn to become independent thinkers as well children who are "rich in experience". In training herself to be a more attentive listener to her children, she discovered that she felt more confidence in herself as a mother.

> Mrs. Ito: I think it is difficult to be a mother or a parent. I think about this everyday, but understanding the child's feeling is what I think is difficult. To understand and to listen are the mother's job. I have no plan to let the child do whatever he wants to do, but I would like to listen to the child's *iken* [views]…I keep telling myself that I have to work hard to adjust my eye level to the child's eye level and take the child's perspective and stand in his shoes…but that is difficult, especially for me.

> The thing I feel strongest when I am doing child rearing is to put the child in the center and respect the child's autonomy but still be a good mother…that's what I feel like I would like to do. I want to nurture the child's opinions….Let the child do what he wants to do and listen to his *iken* [views], but at times maintain *kejime* [responsibility]…I think there is a thin line between selfishness and *kosei* [freedom]. So the parent really has to see where it becomes selfishness…it is my ideal to become a mother who can actually evaluate that thin line.

Another indication of Mrs. Ito's sense of conviction as a parent is her willingness to question herself and her parenting practices. True, she worries and expresses self-doubt in her skills:

> Mrs. Ito: I take a long view of my son's future (laugh). But actually I don't have confidence in my ability to develop my children's possibilities. Of course, I manage to come up with good ideas. But I'm afraid that my lack of confidence is reflected on my kids' feelings. I am indecisive and irresolute. I am constantly asking myself, 'Am I doing this right?' I think my kids sense what I am going through psychologically. I always need one more effort to convince my kids."

However, rather than being an indication of low parenting self-efficacy, it seems that she actively tries to recognize and identify areas in which she might need improvement. Instead of feeling defeated and vulnerable, Mrs. Ito perseveres and taps into her resources: friends, her siblings, her mother, parenting books. In her case, it seems that the process of questioning her own beliefs and finding new approaches and solutions is helpful for her growth as a parent.

Mrs. Ito: I think we all have to learn throughout our lives. We never reach the point where we don't have to learn anymore…My belief in child-rearing does not necessarily apply to everyone. I think there are certain types of things we all have to learn. Like morality. Or to be polite…Not matter how much the world changes, however, I believe that we should not forget the basic knowledge about life, the humanity. No matter how cold the contemporary world is, I know people are seeking for the same things after all. I should not forget this while I am raising my kids.

Despite her fears about her shortcomings, she seems to have an inner confidence that she is doing a good job as a parent.

Mrs. Ito: I am still growing in that respect, but at the same time, I am a little optimistic. My kids will someday understand my inner conflict and my wishes. They will be all right…I came to the conclusion that all I could do is believe what I was taught. So my kids, I will raise. And I am not sure how much they will understand me. But at least, I know exactly what I want to teach them. I will never change my belief.

It seems that when mothers come from backgrounds filled with warmth and acceptance, it makes it easier for them to provide similar models of relating when they become parents themselves as positive cycles are more likely to be repeated. A warm family environment characterized by supportive parents and parents involved their children's lives may provide a foundation for the kinds of values and decision-making these mothers can bring into their own parenting.

Mothers Recalled Negative Memories

Mothers who described feeling 'unhappy', 'made to feel unnecessarily wronged', 'angry', 'always scolded', and 'ashamed' and whose childhood memory scores were below the mean of 3.42 were categorized as having **negative memories** of their relationships with their parents. Mothers depicted their parents as being detached, serious, neglectful, abusive, alcoholic, strange, critical of her and her friends, angry at small things, distant, stubborn, very traditional, scary, violent when drunk, having no expectations of her, indifferent, really really strict, intrusive, extremely grim, spanking often, harsh disciplinarian, destructive, and 'not a father-like father.' Patterns replayed across generations are not limited to extremes of abuse – difficult and distant relationships with parents are just as likely to influence subsequent generations of families. In the course of the interviews with mothers who experienced painful childhoods, six themes appeared to characterize a majority of the negative childhood experiences.

Descriptions of **marital conflict** were common in the recollections of mothers who experienced difficult childhoods. **Mrs. Hashimoto**'s parents separated three times, forcing her to move and switch schools frequently, often with no explanation about why the family was moving again. To this day, she has few memories of positive family relations. Her father had several affairs with other women, a topic which Mrs. Hashimoto was quite ashamed to share. After years of witnessing her parents' fighting, **Mrs. Fukazawa's** parents divorced when she was young which was very painful for her. She recalled her mother would sometimes leaving the house and not returning for days. **Mrs. Ishimoto's** parents also divorced when she was in fourth grade and she was subsequently sent to be raised by her paternal grandparents. Until their

divorce, Mrs. Ishimoto endured years of marital strife between her parents: her mother "often ran away from home" and she recalled cleaning up after fights between her alcoholic father and abused mother.

Four of the mothers in our study had childhoods clouded by their fathers' struggles with alcohol. None reported having current problems themselves with alcohol, but as children of parents who often drank heavily, there seemed to be clear consequences as they were growing up. Besides Mrs. Ishimoto's experiences living with an alcoholic father, **Mrs. Sugiwara's** father was a heavy drinker who became violent when drunk. She and her siblings sought refuge with each other when his drinking lead to their parents' fighting. **Mrs. Kobayashi** also recalled that her father became quite 'scary' when he drank heavily, even though she pointed out that he was never physically violent.

Three mothers recalled their families experiencing **financial problems** that lead to difficult familial relations. **Mrs. Nishimura** and her parents grew up very poor; both of her parents worked long hours away from home in order to afford a house for her and her siblings. In fact, she recalls her father as having "no interest in children" allowing his to wife handle everything related to the family. **Mrs. Sugiwara's** parents both worked outside the home, as well, so she cared for her younger siblings. She did not recall spending much time with her parents together and in fact, they seemed rather indifferent to her and her siblings. After her father passed away when she had just completed junior high, she did not continue her education because she and her older brothers were forced to work to support the family.

Four mothers reported having experienced **harsh physical violence** in their childhoods at the hands of their parents, especially fathers. It is true that thirty years ago, when these mothers were children, physical methods of discipline were a more common practice in Japanese households (Yoshihama, 2002). However, these mothers' reports of punishment at the hands of their parents seemed especially extreme and excessive. **Mrs. Kawabata**'s father turned dinner times into painful and scary occasions for her as he would become angry if he perceived that her table manners were poor, or if he believed that she was not understanding math lessons at school or was not learning concepts immediately. "My father was just slapping, punching, and if it was too extreme, my mother tried to stop it." She has a part of her head that is "dented" from her dad hitting her head against a pointed corner of a desk. When she knew she was about to be scolded, she often left the apartment. She recounts one time she ran out without taking time to put on her shoes, saying, "There were mothers in the neighborhood gossiping, and ask[ing] me what happened, but I went back into my house from the back door without saying a word." It mortified her that everyone in the housing complex could hear him yelling and hitting her. Her mother would let him discipline her at mealtimes, but when his hitting got out of control, she would say, "Stop it!" **Mrs. Tanaka** described her father as being "extremely grim". She was often scared of his methods of discipline as he could be a harsh, destructive disciplinarian. For example, one method of punishment he used was to hang her and her siblings upside down from a tree branch.

Two mothers discussed the pain of growing up with their parents frequently **absent** from their lives. **Mrs. Ishimoto**, whose childhood experience I will discuss in more detail later, had a mother who worked outside the home and often left the house for days at a time following severe fights with her husband. **Mrs. Sugiwara**'s parents, as mentioned earlier, both worked**,** so she was often charged with caring for her younger siblings. She recalled that her parents had no goals or expectations for her future and described them as being 'indifferent.'

Harsh and intrusive parenting behaviors characterized the childhoods described by two mothers. **Mrs. Hashimoto** reported that her mother was very strict and traditional, forcing her to do "everything" for her brother while he did nothing. When she was old enough to date, she remembers her parents as being very "picky" about her boyfriends. They intruded on her privacy by eavesdropping on telephone conversations with him, tagging along on dates, and hiding and appearing out of nowhere to admonish him to take care of their daughter; their behavior drove some boyfriends away.

The bitterness that **Mrs. Hashimoto** feels about her mother's **emotional detachment** from her children remains with her today as she describes her current feelings about her mother: "Why do I have to cry because of my mother?… There's not much I could do about her attitudes toward me. I let her say whatever she wanted to and I pretended I understood her. Actually, I can't be honest with my mother… All my mother did was worry about appearances…Pretending to care about her kids, she only wanted to keep up appearances. I gave up on being *sunao* (open-hearted) with her because she would not understand me." Because her relationship with her parents were "not good when I was a kid", Mrs. Hashimoto consciously tried to change her own approach to parenting: "I wanted to create a very homely atmosphere for my kids. I wanted to read my kids books every night. I wanted to be a sweet mother who could stay with my kids all the time." **Mrs. Ishimoto**'s mom "often ran away from home" after her father's bouts of drinking before her parents finally divorced when Mrs. Ishimoto was in fourth grade. She has painful memories of her abusive, alcoholic father heavily favoring her younger sister, faithfully attending all of her sister's school events, but never attending hers. Violent when he became intoxicated, Mrs. Ishimoto remembers cleaning up after her parents' domestic battles while her mother cried.

Mrs. Ishimoto and Mrs. Sugiwara's Childhood Experiences

The recalled childhoods of two women, **Mrs. Ishimoto** and **Mrs. Sugiwara**, were selected to illustrate the effect of having negative childhood memories.

One theme that emerged in the interviews was that mothers who recalled negative childhood memories felt disadvantaged as parents because they presumed that the negative relationships they experienced with their own parents made them less equipped to handle the challenges of parenthood. They felt more threatened by child-rearing tasks and blamed these negative feelings on the fact that they did not have proper parenting role models growing up. Mrs. Ishimoto illustrates this tendency as she describes her childhood and her role as a mother.

Mrs. Ishimoto.

The memories that Mrs. Ishimoto shared with us of growing up with her parents and younger sister were mostly unhappy. In fact, she had few memories of growing up with her mother because in the last half of her third grade year, her mother often ran away from home; her parents finally divorced a couple months later. Prior to that, she remembered her mother as someone who was intimidating, but who "worked a lot, she worked always."

When asked to describe the experience of her mother leaving, Mrs. Ishimoto recalled feeling very angry at her mother and even questioned why she had given birth to her and her sister:

> Mrs. Ishimoto: I couldn't bear it, to tell the truth….I wanted to run away and I come to think at the end even now that I wanted to die, always….I wanted to go with my

mother….It was like, 'I can't do anything but run away.'… My father's violence was terrible, also. Oh well, it was really horrible.

Mrs. Ishimoto and her younger sister were raised by an aunt and uncle for a short time after her parents divorced until she was sent to boarding school because her father was a single father. Her grandmother participated in raising Mrs. Ishimoto and her sister for a considerable amount of time, as well. Mrs. Ishimoto chose to go to a boarding school in Osaka, hoping she would be able to see her mother, who also lived in Osaka. In a heartbreaking attempt to bring her mother back, Mrs. Ishimoto remembered cleaning bathrooms at the boarding school as hard as she could, believing that fate would eventually reward her for her virtuous behavior. She was able to see her mother once, by accident, which caused an uproar in her family because her paternal grandmother disliked and blamed the mother for all of the family's problems.

Mrs. Ishimoto portrayed her father as exceedingly strict and remote, and "not a father-like father." She described detesting her father and admitted to marrying to escape him. One aspect of growing up that was especially painful for Mrs. Ishimoto was her father's clear favoritism toward her younger sister who was five years younger: she remembered that he attended all of her sister's school events, but never attended hers; she described her parents buying toys and games for her sister, but did not have a memory of them buying gifts for her. Violent when drunk, her father often became abusive toward her mother after he had been drinking. Mrs. Ishimoto remembered cleaning up after their fights while her mother cried.

> Mrs. Ishimoto: He is still like that [violent, abusive]. He is strange. I haven't liked him since I was little. I don't want to think of him as my father.

Today, Mrs. Ishimoto is the mother of two children, a daughter and a son, the target child in our study. She describes Kenzo as being good at many things: soccer, baton twirling, baseball and karate; she is proud that he strives to be first and fastest at whatever he does, is so protective of his older sister and is interested in learning hiragana and English. Mrs. Ishimoto volunteers at their elementary school and plays on the volleyball team which she describes as the main source of her information and news about the school. To relieve stress, she plays volleyball with other PTA mothers at the elementary school and attends rock concerts a couple times a year with a friend.

In her conversations with the interviewer, Mrs. Ishimoto came across as highly critical of herself. Not surprisingly, she also scored low on the parenting self-efficacy scale in our questionnaire. When asked to describe her experiences as a parent, Mrs. Ishimoto expresses self-doubt, self-blame, and worry: worry that she is not a good listener and worry that she will be too controlling of them as her children grow older. In her first interview, the responsibility of being parent appears to overwhelm her at times and she feels that being a mother is difficult.

> Mrs. Ishimoto: I don't want to be a mother anymore. It's hard when I don't understand my children's feelings….at many times I get so tempted to go somewhere and escape…not only from volleyball, but also from taking care of children. But it's me who brought them into this world. And I feel responsible for that… child-rearing is quite a job, unexpectedly.

She explained that she hoped her children would not have her personality as she described herself as shy and awkward around people. She worries about being blamed for her children's mistakes "especially if they become murderers." In fact, she frequently blamed herself for her children's faults:

> Mrs. Ishimoto: Because if I could calm down and listen to my kids and if they had been raised by a mother who could listen really carefully I don't think they would be really forgetful. But my children are really forgetful.

The effects of her childhood seem to haunt her as she makes frequent references to her unhappy childhood. Mrs. Ishimoto resents that her past was so full of painful experiences and that she never had a chance to be a child. For example, she feels that she was not able to fully appreciate how cute her children were when they were little because she herself had not been properly loved. When her daughter entered fourth grade, Mrs. Ishimoto worried that she would not be able to "handle" her own daughter because she herself experienced so much trauma in her fourth grade year. In fact, she believes that her negative experiences in her own family as a child played a role in shaping her personality:

> Mrs. Ishimoto: They made me unnecessarily to feel wronged, and I think I am quite jealous compared to other people…. The fact that my parents were gone was terrible (had a big influence on my psychology).… It doesn't mean I really hate them, but I thought my parents didn't really do anything as parents for me.

Mrs. Ishimoto is aware of the negative aspects of her childhood and makes an effort to do things differently so that her children do not have to endure the same painful experiences:

> Mrs. Ishimoto: I don't want my children to experience that kind of thing (being moved around a lot) so they belong to *Kodomo kai* (child community center) and I really envy my children because they can join those kinds of activities.

One could suggest that Mrs. Ishimoto's feelings of self-doubt as a parent, which she attributed to not having proper parenting models as a child, are a reflection of her low maternal self-efficacy, making parenting feel like a more daunting, overwhelming task for her.

One last mother will demonstrate the lingering effects of negative childhood relationships. Another finding that surfaced in our conversations with the mothers was that mothers who recalled negative childhood memories were more likely to express a greater degree of self-doubt and self-criticism about themselves as parents and feel more negative about their own children. One factor that could be associated with this tendency is that they were not exposed to enough warmth and affection as children and thus they find it difficult to find anything positive about the parenting experience. Mrs. Sugiwara was quite critical of her daughter and expressed low expectations for her children "because their mother is not smart. I just want them to be average. I do not mean to bring them up to be extraordinary. I want them to be average. I don't expect them to be brighter than other kids." Mrs. Sugiwara had very few hobbies, friends and outside interests and was easily irritated by her children's behavior. She frequently felt ineffectual and had a hard time explaining or speculating why her daughters behaved the way they did.

Mrs. Sugiwara.

Mrs. Sugiwara was the third of six children in her family. Because her family struggled financially and both parents worked, she felt she did not get to spend much time with her mother while growing up: "maybe only at dinner… I remember that when I talked to her I quarreled with her." She remembers that her father would frequently become intoxicated and would often become belligerent and violent while drunk. Her parents both happened to be physically frail. For these reasons, she recalls spending most of her childhood surrounded by her siblings, either looking after them or working with them to care for the family.

Mrs. Sugiwara feels that her parents had very few expectations of her and in fact, describes them as being "indifferent." She completed only junior high school because she "had too many brothers and sisters" and her parents expected her to both look after them and to start earning money to support the family. Soon after Mrs. Sugiwara completed junior high, her father passed away, so she and her two older brothers began to work to support the family. Mrs. Sugiwara took on an assembly-line job in a small factory, but despite working her full-time like her brothers, the family still had trouble making ends meet.

Her relationship with her mother today is more comfortable yet still somewhat volatile as she reports quarreling with her every day; Mrs. Sugiwara admits that they both have sharp tempers and can be verbally mean to one another. On the other hand, Mrs. Sugiwara does grocery shop and cook for her almost every day as she lives nearby; her mother's joints ache and she has become more physically weak with age. Even though they quarrel every day, Mrs. Sugiwara still feels like she can tell her mother anything. Their relationship is better now because she sees her so often and helps care for her, but she does note that, "I barely talk about my kids to my mother." Mrs. Sugiwara does recall, however, that her mother was "a great help" after she gave birth. She stayed at her mother's home because her husband was often not home. Mrs. Sugiwara does not feel very close to her siblings, nor does she feel she can rely on them if she needed help.

Now that Mrs. Sugiwara is the mother of two daughters, she sometimes seems at a loss about her own role as a parent. In her conversations with the interviewer, she came across as quite self-critical in many ways. In fact, her questionnaire responses indicated low parenting self-efficacy which was borne out in her description of herself as a mother. She expressed that she feels uncomfortable talking with other women she encounters at her daughters' school: "I'm not good at making friends." When she sees other women chatting comfortably, she described wishing she could do the same. Her low confidence when it comes to social interactions seemed to prevent her from making connections with other parents. Her typical routine involves dropping her children off at school and then coming home to clean, do laundry and then watch television until it is time to pick up her children. Yet, Mrs. Sugiwara describes the urge to do something more: "I wish I could find something else to do, but I don't know what I can do…I have a lot of time. I can do something if I want to, but I don't know what I want to do." When asked if she would consider working again, she replied, "I do not like to step out from home. I do not go out unless I have errands to run. I do not go out unless I need to go."

Mrs. Sugiwara also expressed doubt and uncertainty about what behaviors to employ when her children are distressed or need to be disciplined. "I never think I could do a good job." She quarrels frequently with her daughter: "The morning is like a war." Indeed, Mrs. Sugiwara had a difficult time explaining or speculating why her daughters behave the way they do in any situation. When asked about what she does when confronted with a parenting challenge, she seemed at a loss.

Whereas some of the other higher efficacy mothers described turning to parenting books or consulting with other mothers, Mrs. Sugiwara has few social connections even though she admits that other mothers are friendly to her at her daughters' school; she'd rather to keep to herself. She also spoke on a couple of occasions of her distaste for reading books, either for herself or to her children. "I never read books to my child…I'm not smart so I don't think I can teach my children like other mothers." At a later interview, she reiterates: "I hate books myself. I do. I hate books…I never read books for my kids." She justified not reading books about parenting by saying that it makes her worry less. "I don't worry about it in such a way because my daughters won't be so bright as they are my kids."

At her most recent interview, however, Mrs. Sugiwara did seem more talkative and even happier. With her children in school for longer hours, she began taking lessons in learning to dress in a kimono. She also discovered the novelty of using the computer to play games. Mrs. Sugiwara's negative childhood memories that she recalled seemed to impact her subsequent attitudes about being a mother. The self-doubt and self-criticism she expresses appears to reflect the 'hands-off' parenting she experienced in her own childhood. True, shyness and introversion could have something to do with her helplessness when it comes to making social connections. Yet, because it seems she rarely experienced the security and comfort that can come from close interpersonal relationships, it is difficult for her to have a model from which to draw as a parent to her own children. Negative cycles are more likely to repeated in her case as evidenced in her low parenting self-efficacy score and her expressions of low self-confidence.

Marital Relationships: Positive and Negative

[My husband] bathes the kids and "hangs out with the kids all day long on holidays.… We have different opinions which often leads us to argument…on the other hand, there's something we can learn from each other during those arguments. It gives us opportunities to reconsider what we individually think and feel. I think we inspire each other that way. Because of the fact that we have different opinions on many issues, we are able to learn from each other.

■ Mrs. Hirao
■

I don't know how to say this. He loses his temper quickly, so I try not to make him angry when I say something to him.… He becomes quiet, he won't talk…It's worse. I'm more afraid of him. I rather want him to get angry and talk. I hate him being silent. So recently I'm so sensitive around him.

-- Mrs. Sugiwara

There is good reason to view marriage as a phenomenon that can be rooted in the early family experiences of the individual. Increasingly more research on marital relationships is focusing attention on the role of developmental factors in shaping the quality of marital relations. In decades past, most examinations into the determinants of harmonious or unharmonious marital relationships focused on factors such as social class, religious affiliations, attitudes and values rather than childhood experiences. In more recent decades, however, more investigators, including Cowan & Cowan (1987) and Rutter (1987), are providing support for the hypothesis that "the higher the marital quality of the family of orientation, the higher the marital quality of the family of procreation" (Lewis & Spanier, 1979).

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Some observers have asserted that the core of a traditional Japanese family is *not* the husband-wife relationship, but the parent-child bond (White, 2002), primarily between a mother and a child. In theory, the mother meets the psychological and physical needs of the child, such as cooking, clothing, planning social and educational activities, and helping the child with schoolwork. The father-child relationship tends to be more distant, although he is still the head of the family; the traditional assumption is, if fathers become too close to the children, the children would treat him as a friend and his authority would eventually be undermined (Tamura, 2001).

All of the women in our study were married and had only been married once. They generously shared details about their marital relationship with their husbands, and in fact, we were pleasantly surprised by how much open and honest they were in their responses.

One important goal of the study was to find out details about the nature of the husband and wife relationship and how the quality of the marriage might be another dimension that contributes to a mother's sense of competence as a parent. We asked questions about how they met their husbands, their parents' reactions to their marriage, the kinds of expectations they had toward their partner and whether and how these expectations had changed through the years. We posed the questions in a way that allowed the women to start wherever she felt comfortable. Moreover, it gave them no sense that we expected them to make certain kinds of statements, and it gave them room to describe their relationships as a realistic mixture of positive and challenging elements.

As outlined in Chapter 3, after perusing the transcripts of the conversations with the mothers, I developed a coding scheme to categorize each marriage as being either positive or negative, based on the conversations with the sixteen women over the course of the study. Criteria for a supportive marriage included:
• Wives speaking positively about aspects of her husband's behavior or personality;
• Descriptions of husbands participating in family routines and parenting responsibilities;
• Wives seeking out their husbands as a source of comfort or parenting advice.
Criteria for an unsupportive marriage included:
• Descriptions of violence or abuse;
• Descriptions of husbands as frequently absent or uninvolved at home or with the children;
• Wives feeling unsupported or uncared for by their husbands.

Out of the sixteen women in the study, nine characterized their husbands as being supportive and reported qualities of positive marital relationships, while seven women characterized their husbands in such a way that they were deemed unsupportive and their marriages as negative.

Positive Marital Relationships

Mothers who were categorized as having **supportive marital relationships** with their husbands had marital relationship scores above the mean of 3.20. They described feeling content that their goals seem aligned and that husband and wife shared the same beliefs about education and parenting. Husbands were described as doting fathers, cooperative, helpful, gentle, supportive, trustworthy, ideal, "a really great father", "always tell[ing] me that he appreciates me… he's always thinking of me and my kids, too."

As mentioned in Chapter 3, while each woman stressed different aspects of their relationship, five qualities that led to these women feeling like they were in a positive marriage emerged from our conversations:
  i. Husbands actively participating at school

ii. Husbands as a source of support/friendship/source of encouragement
iii. Husbands actively involved in caretaking and parenting responsibilities
iv. No longer having to work outside the home
v. Financial security afforded by their husbands

Four mothers emphasized the **financial security** that their husbands afforded them. **Mrs. Watanabe** stated that her husband's most important role in the family is to earn money as it allows them to live comfortably, thereby giving them the means to afford extra lessons and classes to further their children's educations. **Mrs. Yamamura** shares this belief that her husband's job is to make enough money for the family while her job is to take care of their children's educations and all household duties, including cleaning up after him.

Hand-in-hand with having financial security, several mothers described feeling appreciative of their husbands since they are **no longer required to work**, but rather could stay home as homemakers and mothers which they were happy to do. **Mrs. Yamamura** quit her job at a retail shop after she was married because husband didn't want her to work. His family suggested she not work, as well, and since work was becoming mores stress-inducing for her anyway, it was also her decision to stop. "I knew what my husband was going to say. My husband usually agrees with my idea. He is good at convincing me he is right, anyway." **Mrs. Nishimura** stated strongly that it is important to her that her husband focuses most of his energy on his work. "All I want him to remember is the minimum things…I don't think he has much room left to think about other things after dedicating that much of his time to the company. I told him, 'When I am desperate for your help, I will yell at you. I am not the type of woman who becomes quiet when she is in trouble.' When asked if she has considered going back to her career, she said, "Well, my husband has to come first in my family…you know, it will be impossible…My husband's job requires a detail-oriented mind, you know. I do not want to let him pay attention to the small things at home." After they were married, **Mrs. Watanabe**'s husband left the decision of whether to continue working up to her. He said she could work as long as she was home when he got home (he said he was alone a lot as a child and didn't want to be alone). She agreed and was happy to be a homemaker: "It was what I wanted."

Nine out of nine moms in supportive marriages described their husbands as being very **involved in their children's school**. Even though **Mrs. Kobayashi**'s husband's job as at a restaurant required him to work late hours (often until 11:00 p.m.), she reported that he attended school events as much as he could, even if it was just for an hour. **Mrs. Kato**'s husband took their son to school on his way to work each morning and attended school events; he had a flexible job with a railroad company that allowed him to take time off as needed. **Mrs. Inoue**'s husband, who had also attended their son's preschool when he was a child, was a member of the board and visited the school often. **Mrs. Watanabe's** husband was also very involved in their son's school: "He comes out to participate, he even cut on his work for that…but so far, he has perfect attendance [for kindergarten program]."

Several moms were most grateful that their husbands were so **participatory in caretaking and parenting responsibilities at home**. **Mrs. Yamamura** and **Mrs. Hirao** both reported that their husbands bathe with both of their children, a common practice in Japan when children are young. Mr. Yamamura takes their two daughters to the pool after work so that she has time for herself. He also shuttles the children to and from school, takes the family to the shopping center on weekends, and plans family vacations. "He's been trying to do what his parents could not do to him…One thing I can tell you for sure is that he loves our kids. He is a very doting father (*meromero*)…My husband never saw his own father, you know. That

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probably influenced how he treats his own kids…He is a good dad…The children enjoy being with him… he is cooperative compared to other husbands." **Mrs. Nishimura** also described her husband as 'cooperative': "He loves kids… he teaches so many things to his kids, such as the computer, basketball, and the rollerblades. My kids love when their father jokes with them." She also noted that he takes part in the discipline process. **Mrs. Kato**'s husband also bathes with their three children, takes them to play baseball or to the park, and plays with them on weekends despite his busy work schedule. She expressed the wish that he would spend even more time with their children, but she conceded that he does more than other fathers.

Six mothers described their relationships with their husbands as a **source of friendship, emotional support, and partnership**. **Mrs. Nishimura** explained that when she has a child-rearing issue, she consults with her husband first. "I rely on my husband. He covers my weaknesses like that, which is great about our child rearing experience. He looks like he is not listening to me, but actually he listens and thinks about me. I think he is great…I just want him to be like what he is now." **Mrs. Ito** credits her husband with changing her perspective on life: "He repeatedly told me not to be self-centered when I look at the world, and not to assume that the way I think applies to everyone. Also, if I fail to get rid of the self-centered idea, I would misunderstand what people say and end up have a biased view of them… I found myself changing little by little…Before then, I was a stuffy sort of person {laugh}. I became more flexible." **Mrs. Hirao**, despite having conflicting opinions with her husband about childrearing concerns, still values his feedback: "…There's something we can learn from each other during those arguments. It gives us opportunities to reconsider what we individually think and feel. I think we inspire each other that way. Because of the fact that we have different opinions on many issues, we are able to learn from each other. **Mrs. Kobayashi**, who refers to her husband as a "really great father", is pleased that she is "always told that he appreciates me…he's always thinking about me, my kids, too. When I ask who they like more, they say both (laugh)." Their weekends are spent as a family together, running errands, enjoying picnics by the river, going on family outings with his parents. After their children go to bed, Mrs. Kobayashi and her husband talk each night.

When examining factors that can contribute to a mother's sense of parenting self-efficacy, we cannot ignore the impact of partner or social support. These nine women who were fortunate to enjoy comfortable, supportive marriages illustrated many qualities that they appreciated in their husbands. Having a supportive partner who is willing to listen and actively participate in parenting responsibilities can provide the women with a sense of confidence in her abilities as a parent as she goes about the business of day-to-day child-rearing. Wives who feel nurtured by their partners, especially those women whose husbands were actively involved in the family routines (e.g. school, daily home rituals, discipline of children), are more likely to be able to weather the demands of parenting and better respond to children's needs (Elder et al., 1995; Ozer, 1995).

To provide a deeper sense of what a positive marriage looks like to these women, I will focus in on the descriptions of marriage depicted by Mrs. Watanabe and Mrs. Nishimura.

Mrs. Watanabe's and Mrs. Nishimura's Positive Marriages
For some couples, parenthood can help define a marriage, promote psychological growth, and provide countless joyful experiences, along with both expected and unexpected challenges. Children can provide a sense of stability and purpose to happily married couples, as well as a sense of generational continuity. Mrs. Watanabe and Mrs. Nishimura are both women who are

fortunate to enjoy emotional support and closeness from their husbands in their roles as wives and mothers. The relationships they describe may not be idyllic, but they are able to talk about the frustrations and challenges they face in a balanced, matter-of-fact way.

Mrs. Watanabe's Marriage.

Mrs. Watanabe and her husband met through Mrs. Watanabe's friend. They had an immediate connection because of a common passion: soccer. "That was all we talked about." They played soccer together and in fact, his family even encouraged her to play. After they were married, her husband supported them not living with his parents, going against the family's expectations. When they discussed whether Mrs. Watanabe should continue working after their wedding, his only stipulation was that she be home when he arrived home from work. She, in fact, was happy to stay home and be a homemaker and gladly took on the role of full-time housewife. When their first child, Toshi, was born, her husband took the initiative to find them a larger place to live so that their baby would have room in which to crawl. They subsequently had another son when Toshi was about seven years old. The transition to parenthood for this couple seemed quite seamless and Mrs. Watanabe is satisfied with her husband as a father:

"I already knew he liked kids before I married him. He loved his nephew so much as if it was his own kid…My husband is not like one of those fathers who works too hard, and does not even care about their kids. I could have an intimate relationship with Toshi while I was breastfeeding him. I thought I would let my husband give baths to Toshi so they can also have that kind of relationship."

As they have settled into parenthood, Mrs. Watanabe admits that she is both pleased and surprised at how similar Toshi is to her husband. They share many of the same interests, and she believes this is a lot to do with the fact that they are constantly having conversations as a family. She tries to encourage these conversations and relishes that the three of them talk a lot, versus other families:

"…there might be conversations between a father and a mother, or between a mother and a child, but not among the three of them….they have individual conversations but not family conversations."

They all talk about soccer, trains, and horse races. Mrs. Watanabe also credits her husband's consistent work schedule that allows them to spend so much time together as a family. He comes home at exactly the same time each night – 5 minutes before 6:00 p.m. – and helps out with the children's baths:

"He goes to work on time in the morning, and returns home on time in the evening which makes it possible for the three of us to spend time together. Probably we have more time together than other families….Toshi has chances to actually experiences things besides just talking about them."

Because her husband does not work on the weekends, they are also able to go on outings together.

"Oh, we get out anywhere. Riding the car. We drive around with the children in the car because we have purchased the kind of carseats that can seat infants."

The goals of Mrs. Watanabe and her husband seem to be in alignment when it comes to work, parenting, and leisure activities, an important aspect of a stable, satisfying marriage. They also share the same religion and similar family values.

"My husband really takes each life seriously and keeps his eyes on children and paying attention to them. So that has been greatly helpful. I think it probably is very hard on him to take care of children when coming being tired after work, but he does not complain at all and takes care of kids. It has very very much been helpful."

Mrs. Watanabe's husband is very involved at Toshi's school, participating in most, if not all events, and even taking time off of work to do so. Because they both value education deeply, both Mrs. Watanabe and her husband find ways to naturally incorporate Toshi's interests and hobbies into opportunities for learning: they ride trains on the weekends to give Toshi an opportunity to read signs and maps; they watch educational videos together. The roles seem well-divided between husband and wife: he works (Mrs. Watanabe believes his most important role is to earn a good living for the family as it allows them to live comfortably), participates in school events and helps out with discipline and basic child-related routines; she takes care of the household, makes most of the education-related decisions, and is responsible for the majority of the parenting. She also continues to play on two soccer teams: one sponsored by Toshi's school's PTA and the other coached by her husband.

The fact that both husband and wife seem to enjoy talking with one another is helpful in another way. When it comes to handling conflict in their marriage, Mrs. Watanabe says,

"…we can solve problems quickly because we communicate so often. It's like we have so many opinions; I would stay up until 2 in the morning talking to my husband."

When it comes to discipline and parenting, Mrs. Watanabe consults her husband first. She also describes how they have made an arrangement to not be angry at Toshi at the same time. This way, she explains, Toshi has an 'escape route' where he can go talk to the other parent. Under this agreement, when her husband scolds Toshi, she keeps quiet and he does the same when she is being the disciplinarian. Later, the other parent guides him to apologize to the scolding parent.

Compared to other marriages described by the women in this study, one of the unusual strengths in Mrs. Watanabe's marriage is their ability to communicate and listen to one another. It seems that the good feelings between Mrs. Watanabe and her husband seem to spill over to their children in the form of family outings and family conversations. Mrs. Watanabe describes her family as members who are fully engaged with one another in both serious and playful activities.

"He does everything. {laugh} He really does everything. {laugh} I cannot think of anything else. I want him to stay home more. He takes Toshi with him everywhere he goes."

Mrs. Watanabe articulately expressed her feelings about how she envisions her marriage:

"…when raising children, first we ourselves should have a foundation as reasonable decent humans and then we can play with, talk with children as well as share our experiences with them."

Mrs. Watanabe's thoughts on marriage reflect the sense of optimism that many contemporary Japanese women are beginning to feel about marriage. She also speaks for a society of women that desires in their husbands friendship, compassion, encouragement, and a sense of being understood and appreciated. It seems implied that the active support of her husband contributes greatly to her sense of well-being as a wife and a mother.

Mrs. Nishimura's Marriage.

Mrs. Nishimura and her husband's marriage was arranged. The arrangement was meant for her older sister, but because her sister was sick, Mrs. Nishimura was allowed to date her future husband instead! After they were married, she voluntarily left her job as a librarian; she had the sense that her husband preferred that she stay home rather than work. It was not that she felt forced to leave her job, but they both seem to value the importance of having her taking care of the household. Both Mrs. Nishimura and her husband seem to enjoy this very traditional household arrangement.

"My husband has to come first in my family …My husband's job requires a detail-oriented mind, you know. I do not want to let him pay attention to the small things at home."

Her husband, who works at his family-owned plumbing business, seems rather helpless when it comes to practical matters at home. He cannot cook, do laundry or operate the video player at home; at the time of our second interview with Mrs. Nishimura, he had just recently learned to make tea for himself. Mrs. Nishimura states that it is important to her that he focuses most of his energy on his work.

"All I want him to remember is the minimum things…I don't think he has much room left to think about other things after dedicating that much of his time to the company. I told him, 'When I am desperate for your help, I will yell at you. I am not the type of woman who becomes quiet when she is in trouble.' We all have limitations, you know. I wanted to let him know about that."

Mrs. Nishimura and her husband have two daughters and one son, their youngest, who was the target child in our study. She also cares for her mother-in-law as if she were her own mother. She describes her husband as being both cooperative and helpful when it comes to parenting matters. He is involved at the children's schools, takes the children on outings on the weekends when he is not working, and according to Mrs. Nishimura, "loves kids." When she has a child-rearing issue, she consults her husband first and then her mother: "I usually tell him everything that happened that day." Despite the fact that they are in agreement when it comes to family expectations and roles,

"…but after all we disagree with each other….We have different opinions which often leads us to argument…on the other hand, there's something we can learn from each other during those arguments. It gives us opportunities to reconsider what we individually think and feel. I think we inspire each other that way. Because of the fact that we have different opinions on many issues, we are able to learn from each other."

In the last interview with Mrs. Nishimura, with all three children in school full-time, she had taken a job working the early morning shift at a convenience store. The reasons she cited

was to earn extra income in case her husband is unable to work someday. Plus, she believes that working "keeps [her] mind sharp." She wakes up at 4:00 a.m. in the morning to go to work, but still manages to keep the household running smoothly. Her solution is to prepare his meals for him a day in advance. Mrs. Nishimura likes having the extra spending money and in fact, says she appreciates her husband's work now that she has gone back to work. In turn, she says that he is impressed that she is able to wake up at 4:00 a.m. as she used to sleep in.

After twelve years of marriage, Mrs. Nishimura continues to be satisfied with their relationship. She relieves stress by talking to him, although she concedes that he can be insensitive at times. Her husband's mother babysits the three children for three days once a year so that Mrs. Nishimura and her husband can go away on their own. However, on their most recent trips, her husband spent most of the time working. His workaholic tendencies keep the family from taking many family vacations, but Mrs. Nishimura still seems content:

> "The relationship between my husband and I have been going well…I rely on my husband. He covers my weaknesses like that, which is great about our child rearing experience. He looks like he is not listening to me, but actually he listens and thinks about me. I think he is great…I just want him to be like what he is now."

Mrs. Nishimura has carved out a fulfilling life for herself as a devoted mother, wife and daughter-in-law. Their roles are quite traditional, but both Mrs. Nishimura and her husband agree on those roles. In fact, Mrs. Nishimura seems content and confident in her abilities to carry out her responsibilities as a mother of three children. She is very involved at their schools and seems to understand her children very well, speaking affectionately of them and valuing their unique personalities. She mentions specifically that she views her husband's chief role to be the breadwinner, to provide the family with a comfortable life, while she manages the household domain.

Negative Marital Relationships

Mothers whose marital relationship score was below the mean of 3.20 were categorized as having **negative marital relationships** with their husbands. They described feeling lonely, envious of wives whose husbands were more participatory, resigned, unappreciated, afraid, misunderstood, angry, resentful, and unhappy. Husbands were described as anxious, selfish, lazy, and oblivious about how to deal with the children, "leading his own life", lacking an understanding of her life, quick to anger, and critical of them in front of the children. Seven out of the sixteen mothers in this study were coded as having unsupportive negative marital relationships based upon the coding criteria established in Chapter 3. Five qualities of these negative relationships emerged from our conversations:
1. Absent husband: constantly traveling or at work.
2. Little or no participation at school events/household duties.
3. Little interest in children or parenting: No active father role.
4. Unsupportive: belittles or criticizes wife, or makes her feel unappreciated.
5. Little communication/mistrust/general unhappiness.

Five mothers related that their husbands were **frequently not home**, due to work or business travel schedules, in some cases causing strain on the family life. **Mrs. Maeda**'s husband leaves for work at 8:00 a.m. and works as late as 9:00 p.m. on some evenings. He sometimes stays overnight at work and works during the weekends. **Mrs. Sugiwara**'s husband's

commute lasts more than two hours each way, so he leaves the house at 5:30 a.m. and comes home at 7:30 p.m. **Mrs. Fukazawa**'s husband works from 10:30 a.m. until midnight and is usually asleep during the times he is not working. When he goes away for company excursions, Mrs. Fukazawa wonders whether he is telling the truth about his whereabouts. **Mrs. Tanaka**'s husband typically leaves at 7:00 a.m. and comes home at around 11:30 p.m.; he also frequently works over weekends and holidays.

Six mothers described husbands who had **little interest or participation in school, household duties**, which leads to mothers feeling overwhelmed and unappreciated. **Mrs. Kawabata**'s husband, who works at his family's business, occasionally picks up their son from preschool, but otherwise remains relatively uninvolved. "He sleeps a lot and doesn't really play with the children – he prefers to sit and relax." He also does not like to be told to help out with chores. In fact, Mrs. Kawabata is happier when he is not at home: "It's much easier for me because I can just cook anything. It's just more peaceful." **Mrs. Maeda** wishes her husband would model to their children how to do things for himself, even simple tasks such as taking dishes to the sink after meals or picking up clothes off of the floor. Instead, her husband uses his free to time to nurture his hobbies: exercises to strengthen his abdominal muscles, running, listening to music, reading novels and books recommended by friends, and health-related activities. For this reason, Mrs. Maeda insists that her son learn to do housework as she articulates that men and women should not have set roles in the household: "…regardless of being men or women, it would be the best that you can do everything. It's because if one of us fall down, the other has to do all the things… It should not be like, well, a woman has to do this, and a man has to do that." **Mrs. Hashimoto** acknowledges that her husband is old-fashioned. When she considered finding work outside the home, her husband was opposed: "Since he has no intention to share [the household chores]… you cannot have a job without your husband's understanding." He also vetoed the idea of her taking some open lectures at a nearby college, his reasoning being that he did not think she would benefit much and that she was too old.

In stark contrast to some of the fathers depicted by mothers in supportive marriages, five husbands were depicted as having **little interest in their children or parenting**. **Mrs. Sugiwara** lamented that her two daughters have no relationship with their father, to the point where her younger daughter is indifferent to his anger. She does not consult him on parenting issues because they cannot agree and "he doesn't understand me, so I just do it myself." After their children were born, her husband was often away on business. Mrs. Sugiwara has now "come to expect nothing from him" and prefers him to be away because they fight less often. When he does come home, he takes a bath and goes to sleep. When he spends time with the children, she complains that he barely speaks to them and instead takes them to the pachinko parlor where he gambles. **Mrs. Fukazawa** talked at length about how little she, too, has come to expect from her husband as a father. She is resigned to him not playing a role in their daughter Maki's life, sleeping when he is at home and preferring to do things without them: "He is not really playing that role, so I don't really need him…" Mrs. Fukazawa explained her bitterness at seeing other fathers dote on their children: "My friend's husband seems to adore his kids so much, which my husband never does. So I would get mad at him…."

Several mothers discussed feeling **unsupported by husbands** who belittled or criticized them as wives or mothers. **Mrs. Maeda** reflected that she wishes that her work around the house were more recognized by her husband, yet she also feels rather conflicted having that thought:

"…housework is really hard…But it's considered natural that you do it. If you don't do it, you'll get complaints. Since nobody values it, it gets stressful, and I would pick on my husband….But after all, I should thank my husband for working. Recently I think it's wrong to expect my husband to thank me while I don't thank him, but housework is still not recognized nor valued, rather it's considered natural. Yeah, we need to do something about it, but well, so there was a time when I wanted to do something more fun, a work that would have a substantial result, like money… He actually has an old-fashioned way of thinking and so he thought that it was taken for granted that women stay at home to do chores. It's not like I hated that, but I just didn't feel joyful, I guess, or I mean, I am sure that they appreciate me, but I couldn't really feel it."

Mrs. Hashimoto expressed that her husband seemed to lack an understanding of her life. "He thinks I'm not experiencing any problem." They used to talk about these issues more, but now they no longer do so. "Well, the more I do [talk about it], it might sound strange, but the stronger I feel a gap [between us]. Then I sometimes get further depressed out…" She also does not want to fight with him in front of the kids. They have "different policies about education…he doesn't compromise with me…I think in my mind it would be futile to talk [to him]…I seriously wonder if he understands what I want to say. Yeah, so I feel like the other way around I'd better not talk." Mrs. Hashimoto struggles with the feeling that she does all the work trying to understand her sons' problems while he does very little to intervene and avoids the problems.

The final challenge pointed out by mothers in our study was the **lack of communication and resulting feelings of mistrust** that occurred between them and their husbands. **Mrs. Sugiwara**'s marriage to her husband seemed to grow increasingly rocky with each subsequent year of our study. Earlier in their arranged marriage, her husband frequently traveled for work, coming home only once in two weeks. "When we are home, we always fight (*kenka*)…" and was described as being generally uninterested in the family. Mrs. Sugiwara now has "come to expect nothing from him." To avoid fighting with him, they essentially lead separate lives. "I don't know how to say his, but he loses his temper quickly so I try not to make him angry when I say something to him…. He becomes quiet, he won't talk… it's worse. I'm more afraid of him. I rather want him to get angry and talk. I hate him being silent." When he is not working, Mrs. Sugiwara reports that he spends much of his time either playing computer games or he goes to the pachinko parlors to gamble. At the time of the fourth and last interview with Mrs. Sugiwara, she was still unhappy in her marriage and her children continued to avoid having a relationship with him. **Mrs. Hashimoto** described a similar situation of her husband not meeting her expectations as a father to their three children. She described her frustration with her husband's lack of understanding of her life. "He thinks I'm not experiencing any problem…Well, the more I do [talk about it], it might sound strange, but the stronger I feel a gap [between us]. Then I sometimes get further depressed…. I seriously wonder if he understands what I want to say. Yea, so I feel like the other way around I'd better not talk."

Mrs. Fukazawa's and Mrs. Kawabata's Negative Marriages.

Partners who are raising children together will naturally experience a near-constant plethora of changes in routines and household activities. Under such circumstances, it would seem that effective marital communication would become more important than ever. The stress of having a problematic relationship with a partner can make one's capacity to cope with the demands of childrearing quite limited. Indeed, not being able to share the joys and hardships of

the parenting experience with an understanding partner can greatly diminish the satisfactions and pleasures of being a family. The marriages of two women, **Mrs. Fukazawa** and **Mrs. Kawabata**, were selected to illustrate the effect of having negative, unsupportive marital relationships.

Mrs. Fukazawa's marriage.

Mrs. Fukazawa and her husband met and started dating while they were still in high school. They have one child, their daughter Maki. Mrs. Fukazawa reported that her husband worked long hours in his job, often from 10:30 a.m. until midnight. He traveled for business, but Mrs. Fukazawa wondered allowed during one of the interviews if he was telling her the truth about where he was going.

His long work hours did keep him away from home and their daughter which was difficult for Mrs. Fukazawa. She lamented often during the interviews that she wished he would spend more time with Maki. According to Mrs. Fukazawa, he would see Maki in the mornings only and attend some of the big preschool events, but otherwise was "no touch" in their every day lives: "I want him to sleep less and spend more time with Maki." Moreover, she believes that her husband disapproves of how she spends her time, thinks she is lazy and does not appreciate all she does at home. For the sake of their daughter, however, she said she was resolved to maintain a good relationship with him.

Mrs. Fukazawa struggled with the fact that her husband was so unsupportive and uninvolved as a parent. In one conversation, she expressed how little she has learned to expect of her husband and compared him to a husband of her friend. Witnessing other fathers doting on their children caused even more resentment on her part:

"I do not expect much out of him now. I do not, because it angers me if he fails to come up to my expectations. All I expect him to do is to work. And not to be violent….My friends' husbands are all nice. They take their kids here and there, unlike my husband. My friends were so generous that they sometimes invite my kid."

Mrs. Fukazawa's dissatisfaction with him as a father extended to his role as her husband, too. Her description of their relationship seemed to indicate an unhappy, unfulfilled marriage. She described him as often being in a bad mood while at home, preferring to either sleep or do things on his own. She expressed that she wished they "were still like boyfriend and girlfriend…I want him to see me as a woman." The state of their marriage was also stressful for her as she made efforts to "not talk to him unless [she needed to]" or to be careful to not speak badly of him in front of Maki. In fact, she stated that she has been trying to be careful to not argue or become angry at him or make retorts to her husband.

Mrs. Fukazawa also describes how most of the parenting is left up to her, except when it comes to financial matters.

(*Do you consult with him?*) Actually I don't consult with him…when I need his financial support, in that situation I'd say 100%….But for everyday little things I do not consult with him at all. I do everything by myself….He is not really playing that role, so I don't really need him."

His indifference toward her and their daughter seemed quite painful to her. Yet Mrs. Fukazawa seemed resigned to this and had decided to remain in the marriage because he can pay for most of Maki's school fees as her job as a make-up artist does not provide enough money for her to live on her own; the money she earns pays for Maki's extra English, ballet and piano lessons. She expressed wistfully, "I want to be young again to live another life." In that life, she would be "married to a guy of my ideal." Mrs. Fukazawa admitted that if she had the courage to

divorce him, she would, but because of how much her own parents' divorce scarred her, she remains in the marriage for the sake of their daughter. Fortunately, Mrs. Fukazawa does find support in other mothers as she is quite social and makes time to meet with them for lunch on a regular basis.

These obstacles so candidly described by Mrs. Fukazawa are common to women universally, and they illustrate the inevitable trade-off that many mothers face in balancing parenting and a difficult marriage. What makes Mrs. Fukazawa's marriage seem especially negative is that it does not appear that Mrs. Fukazawa and her husband have managed to stay connected to one another as their relationship has progressed and evolved into different stages, i.e. parenthood. All marriages change, if simply because each spouse changes as he and she grow older. External circumstances change in addition to the needs, expectations, and wishes of each individual. In the case of Mrs. Fukazawa's marriage, it seems that they are no longer in sync with one another: there is little communication between Mrs. Fukazawa and her husband, they seem to have different priorities, and they no longer trust one another. In fact, it appeared that Mrs. Fukazawa felt quite alone in the marriage as she lacked her husband's care, encouragement and friendship; she seems to long to be appreciated and understood by him and his lack of support undermines her overall sense of well-being. Unfortunately, she also feels her choices are limited and that she would sacrifice too much by divorcing her husband, even though the marriage is not adding anything positive to her life. Her desire to protect her daughter and maintain their current lifestyle overrides her desire for divorce.

Mrs. Kawabata's marriage.
Mrs. Kawabata and her husband have two children, Kai, the target child in our study, and his younger sister. They dated for four years before marrying; her father was initially critical of her husband, but stopped doing so when Kai was born.

Mrs. Kawabata's husband works at his family's restaurant where Mrs. Kawabata somewhat grudgingly helps out, as well, per her husband's wishes. In fact, her first job was as a server in the restaurant. She once had dreams of attending fashion school, but she tabled those thoughts when she realized how expensive tuition would be – she knew her family would not be able to afford it. Now, she works part-time from home at a job that involves assembling circuit boards. She enjoys this job because she can do it while listening to music or watching television. In addition, she takes care of her in-laws, especially when they are ill. Her mother-in-law will sometimes criticize Mrs. Kawabata about her child-rearing choices or say critical things about the children's behavior, which Mrs. Kawabata finds hurtful.

Mrs. Kawabata remembers her husband was "beside himself with joy" when they found out that Mrs. Kawabata was pregnant with their first child. She described him as having an anxious, worrying personality with a nervous temperament. "He is relatively detail-oriented and sticks his nose to the trivial things." Now that the children are older, she describes him as being a relatively uninvolved father, preferring to sleep, sit and relax when he is at home rather than play with them. He sometimes picks up Kai from school and occasionally roughhouses with them "when he's in the mood and the kids attack him," but it is rare; she misses the time he used to cherish his children more. "Nowadays he's more concerned about the little things they do. To me, he is not like a father in that sense."

Their relationship as a couple seemed challenged as well. Mrs. Kawabata stated that he does not help her with domestic duties around the house, even when she asks. In fact, he has made it clear to her that he does not like to be asked by her to do chores, even though she is

trying to set an example for their children. Mrs. Kawabata said she is happier when he is not at home: "It's much easier for me because I can just cook anything. It's just more peaceful." When he is at home, she feels like she has to be on her guard in his presence. She is happy that he has finally quit smoking after many years, but it has unfortunately made him more irritable and sensitive. He also still drinks which leads to some explosive arguments that scare their children.
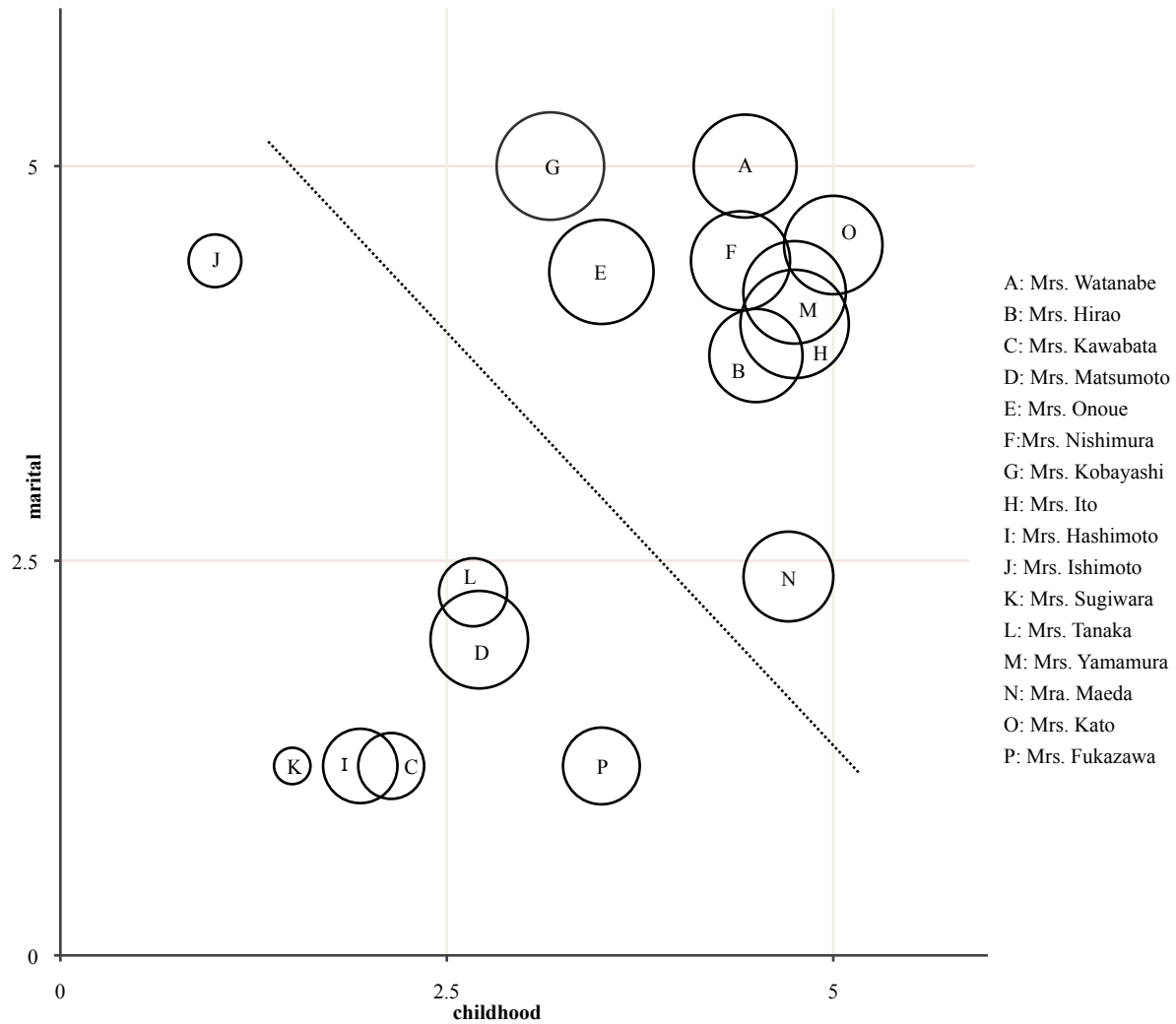
The family rarely spends time together, even at home. She watches television with him or eats ramen with him occasionally, but they rarely spend time playing all together with the children. She wistfully described how she envies other husbands who are more supportive and involved with their families, who spend more time listening to their children. Instead, Mrs. Kawabata is aware of how little they communicate and how much they argue. There is a sense of resignation in Mrs. Kawabata's voice: she has learned to not dwell, but rather nurture some of her own interests outside of her marriage: relationships with friends, attending rock concerts, her side job.

Mrs. Kawabata's relationship with her husband provides another example of the kind of breakdown that can occur when couples no longer feel connected with one another. Mrs. Kawabata resents that her husband is so unwilling to help out at home or with their children. His detachment toward the family seems especially difficult for Mrs. Kawabata to bear as she sees the husbands of her friends who are more involved with their children.

The relationship between maternal self-efficacy, recalled childhood relationships and marital satisfaction

This study proposed that mothers who recalled having warm and positive relationships with one or both parents were more likely to feel confident in their parenting choices and thus have higher maternal self-efficacy scores. On the other hand, mothers who recalled having a rejecting or negative relationship with one or both parents were proposed to be more likely to feel ineffective and thus threatened in their parenting approaches resulting in a lower maternal self-efficacy score. It is further proposed that the negative effects of having experienced rejecting parental relationships can be buffered or offset in mothers who perceive supportive, positive relationships with their husbands.

What emerged from the data were three patterns of experience. The typology of mothers is based on the coding scales described in Chapter Three which I created and used to analyze mothers' narratives related to positive/negative childhood memories, high/low marital satisfaction and high/low maternal self-efficacy. Each mothers' statements related to these three factors were rated on a five-point Likert Scale.

A: Mrs. Watanabe
B: Mrs. Hirao
C: Mrs. Kawabata
D: Mrs. Matsumoto
E: Mrs. Onoue
F: Mrs. Nishimura
G: Mrs. Kobayashi
H: Mrs. Ito
I: Mrs. Hashimoto
J: Mrs. Ishimoto
K: Mrs. Sugiwara
L: Mrs. Tanaka
M: Mrs. Yamamura
N: Mra. Maeda
O: Mrs. Kato
P: Mrs. Fukazawa

The purpose of this bubble chart is to display the data in a way that allows the reader to visualize and compare the mothers' various ratings. By charting the ratings and scores, clusters and patterns emerge in the data that are not readily available by just looking at the numbers.

- The horizontal x-axis represents the childhood memory score, with scores ranging from 1.50 (negative) to 5.00 (positive).
- The vertical y-axis displays the marital relationship score, ranging from 1.20 (negative) to 5.0 (positive).
- The widths of the circles represent the self-efficacy rating based on their responses to the interviews using the coding method I created. Scores ranged from 1.68 (low self-efficacy) to 5.00 (high self-efficacy).

Mothers with higher childhood memory scores that reflected more positive childhood memories as well as higher marital relationship scores that reflected more supportive marriages were more likely to have higher maternal self-efficacy scores. On the other hand, mothers with lower childhood memory scores and lower marital relationship scores tended to have low maternal self-efficacy scores. It is interesting to see the pattern that emerges. Looking at the

cluster of circles in the top right section of the chart, mothers with high self-efficacy ratings tended to have both more positive childhood memories and more positive marital relationships, as in the examples of Mrs. Watanabe, Mrs. Kato, Mrs. Yamamura, Mrs. Nishimura and Mrs. Ito. These mothers with this pattern of experience were categorized as Pattern 1.

On the other hand, there were mothers with low self-efficacy ratings who had less positive marital relationships such as Mrs. Sugiwara, Mrs. Hashimoto, and Mrs. Kawabata, also known as Pattern 2 Mothers.

Finally, there were two mothers who, despite having somewhat negative childhood memories, described having positive marital relationships and had high maternal self-efficacy ratings. Mrs. Kobayashi and Mrs. Inoue are two Pattern 3 Mothers who seem to demonstrate that the support received from a partner can alleviate the negative effect of having negative memories of childhood.

The chart makes it easier to see outliers in the data, in this case, Mrs. Ishimoto, who we can see expressed a very low sense of maternal self-efficacy and yet described having a positive marital relationship. It is interesting to note the bifurcation on the bubble chart. With the exception of a couple outliers, scores were clustered in 2 distinct groups: high on both childhood memories and marital quality and low on both childhood memories and marital quality. According to the chart, overall, marital quality scores were lower than the childhood memory scores, and if one's marital score is low, self-efficacy score is low, as well. In some ways, this highlights the importance of influence of marriage.

Pattern 1 Mothers recalled experiencing positive, loving relationships with their parents which presumably lead to them developing a positive working model of relationships. They subsequently married supportive husbands (in all but one case). I propose that due to the influence of this positive working model, they were able to or were better equipped to seek out a partner that conformed to their internal working model. When these women subsequently became mothers, these Pattern 1 Mothers described themselves as having developed effective parenting strategies and adaptive maternal behaviors and seemed to have an overall sense of well-being as parents.

Pattern 2 Mothers recalled negative, difficult childhood memories which presumably lead to them developing a negative working model of relationships. They subsequently married unsupportive partners. With this combination of negative childhood memories and unhappy marital relationships, these women scored low on maternal self-efficacy when they became mothers.

Pattern 3 Mothers demonstrate the idea that although early experiences influence individual working models, these models can change. These mothers recalled unhappy childhood memories yet they describe themselves in terms of having high maternal self-efficacy. In the case of our sample of mothers, being in a relatively happy marriage could be enough to off-set the effects of having negative childhood memories.

Pattern 1 Mothers:
+ Childhood Memories → + Working Model → +/- Marriage → High maternal self-efficacy → Effective parenting
Mrs. Ito
Mrs. Hirao
Mrs. Kato
Mrs. Watanabe

Mrs. Yamamura
Mrs. Nishimura
Mrs. Maeda

Of the seven mothers who recalled positive relationships with their parents, all seven mothers scored high in maternal self-efficacy. Six out of the seven mothers described positive marital relationships. Some defined a supportive husband as being someone who was heavily involved in co-parenting and enjoyed spending time with his children. Other mothers described husbands with whom they still felt a strong bond and whom they felt supported by. Regardless of what qualities they appreciated in their marriage and partner, feeling supported by their husbands in conjunction with having experienced the warmth of a positive childhood could be what lead these women to be considered high in maternal self-efficacy.

There was one highly efficacious mother who recalled a positive relationship with her parents, but described a negative marital relationship: Mrs. Maeda. This could imply that the outcome of having had a relationship with both parents who modeled warm and loving parental behaviors was enough to bolster Mrs. Maeda's sense of assurance that she had the ability to make effective parenting choices, despite the fact that her husband's involvement was inconsistent. It also suggests that having developed a positive working model from her loving relationship with her parents (both her mother and father in this case) was enough to overcome the challenge of having an uninvolved husband. In fact, she is more likely to turn to her mother when parenting needs arise:

"She is like a good advisor for my child rearing….She tries to care for [my children] the same way she did with us…. I had a good image of her in childhood…I think a mother is a mother forever."

Rather than letting the difficulties of marriage affect her attitude toward being a wife and mother, Mrs. Maeda found other outlets and sources for support: her work colleagues, other mothers at her children's school, her own mother and even her son's cram school teacher.

I perused the transcripts of our conversations with these seven mothers to determine if there were patterns that emerged, or links made between their pasts to their current lives. We did not specifically ask the mothers about this link, but would connections between their own childhoods and their current parenting approaches be made explicit? Would their past experiences be related to their evaluations of themselves as mothers?

In examining the conversations with these seven mothers about their childhood relationships with their parents, there were no consistent patterns that emerged. Some described feeling very attached to their mothers while others talked about feeling more affection for their fathers. Some recalled that their mothers had worked outside the home, while others remembered their mothers always being at home taking care of the family and domestic responsibilities. Several mothers described their fathers as being quite absent in their lives, disinterested and uninvolved. A couple mothers recalled being encouraged to study and achieve academically while some could not recall their parents ever reminding them to attend to their school lessons. Yet despite there being no fixed prototype for these mothers of what constituted a loving parent-child relationship, these Pattern 1 mothers all experienced what they perceive to be largely positive upbringings. This presumably lead to them developing a positive working model of relationships that perhaps better equipped them to select supportive partners and have a higher overall sense of parenting self-efficacy.

Pattern 2 Mothers:
- Childhood Memories → - Working Model → - Marriage → Low maternal self-efficacy →
Ineffective parenting
Mrs. Sugiwara
Mrs. Tanaka
Mrs. Fukazawa
Mrs. Kawabata
Mrs. Hashimoto
Mrs. Matsumoto

Of the 16 mothers in our study, seven mothers recalled experiencing negative relationships with their parents, and of these seven, six mothers scored low in maternal self-efficacy (see attached table and chart). All six of these mothers also described being involved in difficult marriages, suggesting that the lack of support and comfort she derives from the marriage could be reinforcing her lack of confidence in her parenting abilities. One could speculate that these mothers who did not experience acceptance but instead felt rejected by her parents while growing up perhaps had a more difficult time selecting a partner who would be supportive of them as a wife and mother. Moreover, the fact that these mothers have not had consistent models of a warm relationship in either her childhood *or* her marriage suggests that she may feel less effective and more threatened in her parenting choices. As an example, when Mrs. Kawabata is asked to describe her mothering, her description demonstrates her lack of confidence in her ability to understand and explain things to her children.

> "Well, personally, I do not have confidence for child rearing. But maybe especially scolding way. I am not really good at letting my child understand in a good way. I lack words, I tell them something I don't need to, but I cannot explain things well so I become loud and I slap their butts. That part I am not confident about. I am not confident about letting them understand or listen to me. I cannot explain to my child in a nice way like the preschool teachers do."

Mrs. Kawabata's words convey the impression that she does not always believe that she can be an effective parent to her two children. The fact that she did not experience a warm, accepting relationship with either of her parents and that she did not marry an individual who is compassionate or encouraging of her both as a mother and as a wife appears to play a role in her feelings of inadequacy with her children.

The combination of negative life experiences in the lives of the Pattern 2 Mothers – unhappy childhoods seemingly leading to negative working models of relationships – perhaps made it more likely that these mothers would choose uncooperative husbands and subsequently experience low parenting self-efficacy when they became mothers.

Pattern 3 Mothers:
Childhood Memories → - Working Model → + Marriage → High maternal self-efficacy →
Effective parenting

There were two mothers that fit the category of Pattern 3 mothers: Mrs. Kobayashi and Mrs. Inoue. Both of these women recalled negative childhood memories, but both described

themselves as having high maternal self-efficacy behaviors. The common element seemed to be that both described positive relationships with their husbands, suggesting that the support they received from their husbands buffered the negative effect of the rejecting relationships they experienced in their childhoods.

In our interviews with Mrs. Inoue, she did not recall having warm relations with either of her parents. Both of her parents were very strict, and she grew up feeling fearful of her parents as she remembers she was always being scolded. Despite not having a warm relationship with either parent, Mrs. Inoue was able to select a partner whom she finds supportive of her wishes and domestic responsibilities. This suggests that the encouragement she derives from her marital relationship buffers the potential negative impact of having had a negative bond with her own parents, thus resulting in her feeling confident in her abilities as a parent. Another factor that could be related to her feelings of maternal self-efficacy is that she is a third grade teacher, trained and accustomed to being around young children. She detects a connection between her job as a teacher and her role as a parent and feels that becoming a mother has made her both a better mother and more sensitive to her students' parents.

> "I have been working as a teacher in the hope that it will ultimately work out great for my kids. I think that my profession will bring much benefit to my kids, in many ways." (p.11) "…to let my kids learn that there are a whole lot of other worlds, we'd better have a dual income. That way we can have extra money to travel. On top of that, my profession enables me to look into other worlds. It would be hard for me to stay home devoting all my time to my children. I would lose myself. In addition, I want to work to improve myself. Yeah, it embraces all the issues." (p.11)

Mrs. Kobayashi also experienced a difficult childhood with her alcoholic father and very strict mother who often hit and scolded her. They're relationship has improved now that she is an adult, but she remembers that she did not feel close to either of them while growing up. Fortunately, like Mrs. Inoue, Mrs. Kobayashi married a husband whom she refers to as a "really great father" who always tells her that he appreciates her. He is supportive of her hobbies outside the family (volleyball, socializing with friends) and enjoys planning weekend outings for the family. Again, this warm partnership seems to have shielded Mrs. Kobayashi from the negative outcomes of having had a challenging upbringing. She seems to enjoy being the mother of three children, describing family life as "lively and cheerful." There are certain areas she acknowledges she could improve: she lacks confidence in her discipline techniques and initially felt inadequate about her parenting skills around other parents. However, now that her children are a bit older, she feels much more capable and connected with other parents. She is very involved in her children's lives and enjoys being around them.

Mrs. Kobayashi also acknowledges that having a job outside the home makes her feel more relaxed as a parent: she has more patience for her children and worries less about money.

> "Before, I was 'Junichi-kun's mom' and 'X's mom', but I am an independent individual as long as I'm at work. It might be also partly because of a sense of my own superiority, my realization someone needs me…yea. I think it's good for me that I started working."

In the cases of these two Pattern 3 mothers, Mrs. Kobayashi and Mrs. Inoue are both high self-efficacy moms, despite having had negative relationships with their parents. Yet, the effect

of having a positive marital relationship seems to have transformed their negative working models, proving that working models can indeed change.

There was just one exception to our typology of mothering types. Mrs. Ishimoto's maternal self-efficacy score was rather low, despite reporting a relatively positive relationship with her husband. When one takes into account her extremely harsh childhood experiences, however, having a supportive husband may not be enough for Mrs. Ishimoto to overcome her negative working model. As reported earlier in this chapter, Mrs. Ishimoto endured a childhood full of marital conflict, emotional detachment, absent parents, alcoholism, and physical violence and abuse. Of all sixteen mothers in our study, she experienced the most severe conditions as a child.

With such a deeply entrenched negative working model of relationships, it makes sense that Mrs. Ishimoto would have a difficult time feeling confidence in her abilities as a parent, despite having a supportive partner. In fact, in one interview, she blames her unhappy childhood on why she is not a more ideal mother, stating that it is difficult for her to parent. "I don't want to be a mother anymore. It's hard when I don't understand my children's feelings." She worries about being blamed for her children's mistakes, especially if they become murderers. "Sometimes when I get along with my husband I am really glad I have children with this person, but most of the time we fight so when I think about those murders [as reported in the news] I think it is scary." Mrs. Ishimoto also worries that she won't be able to parent them when they are older and yet they are not young enough for her to "just push them". She articulates that she resents that her childhood was so unhappy and she never had a chance to be a child. In fact, she admits that she was not able to truly appreciate how cute her children were when they were little because she hadn't been properly loved.

It is clear that Mrs. Ishimoto's deeply unhappy childhood conditions continue to haunt her. Fortunately, she has a husband whom she finds relatively encouraging and helpful, but the relationship is not enough to bolster her sense of confidence in herself as a mother.

Conclusion

The mothers in our study provide strong evidence that their parents have bequeathed legacies to them that are powerful and enduring. The childhood relationships in which the mothers emerged feeling nurtured by their parents (Pattern 1 mothers) had fewer negative results than those who grew up in families with significant rejection, dysfunction and strain (Pattern 2 mothers). Nevertheless, there are some compelling exceptions (Pattern 3 mothers) in which mothers with painful early family experiences manage to avoid the negative outcomes and find ways to establish nurturing, satisfying relationships in their own families. Perhaps these mothers chose partners they knew would be supportive in an effort to overcome their negative childhood models or create a different kind of childhood for their children. In any case, the support they receive from their husbands could be buffering or alleviating the negative effect of having a negative working model for relationships. The husbands could also be providing a model for a positive relationship that the mothers previously did not have.

Chapter 5

Over the course of four years, what emerged from this conceptual work is a detailed narrative describing the lives of sixteen women. I examined these narratives for central aspects of family life: 1) the quality of the relationship between the mother and her parents, with special emphasis on childhood memories; and 2) the quality of the relationship between the wife and her husband, with special emphasis on their family roles and patterns of communication. By following these sixteen women over time, we could better discern how elements in these mothers' past upbringing and present milieu might have some bearing on her sense of parenting self-efficacy. Specifically, I investigated how their childhood memories of their relationship with their parents and their current marital situation might contribute to their current sense of parenting self-efficacy.

In this chapter, I discuss the findings and what I believe to be the implications of this study. Strengths and weaknesses of the methods and suggestions for future directions for research will also be discussed.

Summary of Findings

The following objectives guided the present study: 1) examining the mothers' descriptions of and satisfaction with both their early relationships with their parents and their current relationships with their husbands; and 2) based on these descriptions, investigating how and why the support they received as children and the support they currently receive from their husbands are related to parenting self-efficacy.

The first experiences we asked mothers to recall were with regards to their memories about their relationships with their parents. Those mothers who recalled positive childhood memories described feeling safe, protected, understood, emotionally nurtured, loved and at peace with their parents. Having a positive relationship with their parents meant different things for each woman. Some spoke of how fortunate they felt to have been able to spend so much time with their parents and the security and comfort they derived from this. Some spoke of how they felt understood and listened to by their parents, others of how they enjoyed their parents being physically affectionate with them, and still others of feeling how much they appreciated that their parents supported their goals. But all of these mothers with positive childhood recollections seemed to believe they, as children, had been central in their parents' lives.

Unlike these mothers, almost all of the mothers who recalled negative childhood memories described feeling misunderstood by their parents. Many shared incidents involving physical violence and/or emotionally detached, harsh and intrusive parenting, while others had parents who were either heavy drinkers, absent or were experiencing marital conflict. In the course of the interviews, a few mothers who recalled negative relationships with their parents stated that not having appropriate parenting models put them at a disadvantage as parents. They felt threatened by challenging parenting tasks and often did not feel equipped to handle their role as mothers.

These findings support the literature suggesting that Japanese fathers in previous generations were essentially not involved in childrearing nor were they considered positive parenting role models by their own children (Fukaya, 1995; Shwalb, Kawai, and Shoji, 1997)). According to most of the mothers' recollections, their fathers were more devoted to work, spent little time at home and rarely communicated with their children. If anything, the picture that

emerged from my analyses is that some father-daughter relationships were seriously impaired by alcoholism, marital conflict and other serious problems.

We also asked mothers to describe the state of their relationships with their husbands. Mothers who recalled supportive marital relationships each stressed different aspects of the marriage, but five themes emerged as being the most descriptive of supportive husbands: being actively involved at their children's school; being a source of support and friendship; being an active caretaker and parent at home; being supportive of their wives no longer having to work outside the home; and earning enough income so that the mother feels financially secure. No one denied that there were challenges along the way – conflict, anger, even physical violence – but all viewed the satisfactions gained from the marriage as far outweighing the frustrations. It makes sense that mothers who are fortunate to enjoy stable, supportive marriages will be better able to endure the challenges of parenting.

Finally, there were mothers who described negative marital relationships. These mothers described feeling lonely, unappreciated, afraid, resentful, and misunderstood. Four descriptions of unsupportive husbands emerged from the interviews: little participation at school events or in household duties; little interest in children or parenting; unsupportive, critical comments about the wife; and absent husbands. The challenge of having an unhappy marriage seemed to influence how these mothers perceived their role as parents as they were less likely to feel they could cope well with the demands of parenting.

Based on our conversations with these 16 Japanese mothers, the women in this sample happened to conform to the picture in the literature about contemporary Japanese families: the married woman's primary role is at home (Tanaka, 1995). Family and societal expectations influenced all of the mothers in our sample to take on most of the child-rearing and household responsibilities while the husbands were absent for most of the day and even parts of the weekend. In all but a couple cases, each woman interviewed, no matter how busy, indicated that she always managed her home affairs first, so that her children and husband never had to be put out by her activities outside the home. What also became apparent from my investigation, however, is that some women do or at least hope for their husbands to be a source of emotional support and close companionship in their marriage. Some mothers described their pleasure in being able to consult with their husbands on parenting matters while others noted that their husbands regularly attended their children's school events or were involved with household routines such as bathing or playing with the children on weekends. Sadly, there were a number of mothers who expressed a great deal of disappointment that their husbands were non-participatory in both their children's and their home lives and wished their husbands would be more involved.

Three Patterns of Experience for Mothers

Based on these mothers' recollections of their childhood relationships with their parents, the nature of their marriage, and their subsequent sense of maternal self-efficacy, my analysis reveals that three patterns of experience emerged: Pattern 1 Mothers described their relationships with their parents as generally warm and loving. Having experienced such positive parental interactions presumably led to them developing a positive working model of relationships. I suggest that armed with this early foundation in how to form loving, balanced relationships, they were better equipped to seek out partners that conformed to their internal working model, and thus, subsequently married supportive husbands (in all but one case). It could even be the case that the wife's experience of having a healthy working model for relationships somehow changes the husband's behavior and causes him to be more supportive. In any case, when these women

subsequently became mothers, these Pattern 1 Mothers described themselves as being efficacious in the parenting realm, scoring high on sensitivity and warmth; developed adaptive maternal behaviors; provided stimulating activities for their children; and seemed likely to have an overall sense of well-being as a parent. Seven out of the sample of 16 mothers belonged in this category.

Pattern 2 Mothers recalled their relationships with their parents as being full of conflict and negativity. This presumably led to them developing a negative working model of relationships. I suggest that these mothers either chose partners who were unsupportive or something about their behavior caused the husbands to be less likely to be supportive of them in their parenting efforts. With this combination of negative childhood memories and uncooperative husbands, these women scored low on maternal self-efficacy, perhaps because they lacked the example of the adaptive behaviors that can influence solid, healthy relationships. Not having a supportive partner could have even compounded the damaging influence of having unhappy developmental family histories. Six out of the sample of 16 mothers belonged in this category.

Pattern 3 Mothers were an especially unusual group. Like Pattern 2 Mothers, these mothers also recalled negative childhood memories, presumably developing a negative working model of relationships in the process. Yet, these Pattern 3 Mothers describe their marriages as being supportive and positive, for the most part. I suggest that although early experiences influence individual working models, these models can change. In the case of our sample of mothers, having a compassionate, supportive partner could have been enough to offset the effects of recalling a difficult, less-than-loving childhood and thus, lead to a mother feeling bolstered in her parenting choices, thus offsetting the negative impact of difficult childhood memories. It could be that these women chose partners whom they knew would be supportive of them in an effort to overcome their negative childhood models or to create a different kind of childhood for their children. The husbands could also be providing a model for a positive relationship that Pattern 3 Mothers did not have previously, and the mothers perceive this as being supportive. In any case, the support they receive from their husbands could be buffering or alleviating the negative effect of having had negative working models of relationships. Two out of the sample of 16 mothers belonged in this category.

The objectives of this study were to examine whether an association exists between childhood memories and parenting self-efficacy in Japanese mothers and to investigate whether the marital relationship has any bearing on mothers' parenting self-efficacy. In this sample of mothers, my analysis reveals the importance of recalling a positive relationship with parents during childhood in the formation of a healthy working model of relationships. Armed with this positive working model, mothers were subsequently more likely to have a higher sense of parenting self-efficacy when they had children of their own. In addition to, or in the absence of the formation of this positive working model, the perception of a positive marriage seemed to bolster the mothers' overall sense of well-being as a parent. Main and her colleagues reached a similar conclusion in 1985 when they concluded that given the appropriate level and amount of consistent love and care, individuals are capable of developing a model of relationships that differs from the negative patterns they were immersed in as children.

Sadly, the Pattern 2 mothers in our study with both negative childhood memories and a negative perception of their marital relationship seemed to fare the worst as they lacked both a model for sensitive parenting and a supportive partner in the process. These findings from this sample of Japanese mothers are supportive of the theory and research that has come out of the United States, specifically, that for parents who live in a disharmonious relationship it might be

particularly difficult to build a strong and efficient co-parenting alliance (Gable, Belsky, & Crnic, 1992).

There is research evidence that suggests that strained marital relationships are associated with a less effective parenting style (Isabella & Belsky, 1985). Easterbrooks and her colleagues (1988) suggested that parents who were unhappily married would be more irritable and emotionally drained and less able to attend to their children, producing a negative parent-child relationship. This parallels a finding by DeKlyen and her colleagues who theorized that a negative marital relationship could also lead to stress, poor social support and an increase in a parent's overall negativity and irritability (DeKlyen, Speltz, & Greenberg, 1998). According to Cowan & Cowan (2000), the less involved a father becomes with the care of his children, the more likely it is that he and his wife will become disenchanted with their relationship as a couple over the next year. They went on to conclude that the higher fathers' involvement is, the happier they and their wives are. Unfortunately, particularly in Japan, there are a number of obstacles that could be preventing a large majority of husbands from becoming more involved with care-taking including a) long-held beliefs that child-rearing belongs to the realm of women; b) fathers (and mothers) discomfort with men knowing "how" to look after a child's basic needs; c) attempts by men to take a more active role being frowned upon by other family members, co-workers or friends; d) economics – men have much more earning potential in the workplace than women (Ishii-Kuntz, Makino, Kato & Tsuchiya, 2004). Further emphasizing the negative consequences of having an unhappy marriage, Levenson and his colleagues also hypothesized that a poor marriage can result in long-term stress and lead to poorer health in women versus men, in part because women may be more likely than men to take on their husbands' physiological arousal (Levenson, Carstensen, & Gottman, 1994).

On the other hand, receiving support from one's spouse has been found to have an important impact on maternal self-efficacy (Elder et al., 1995; Cochran & Niego, 1995; Crockenberg, 1988). As the data collected from the Pattern 1 Mothers suggest, when mothers' emotional needs are met, they are more likely to be more responsive to their children's needs. This was demonstrated by Elder and his colleagues in 1995. G.H. Elder, Jr. concurred when he stated in Bandura's 1997 book, *Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies*: "Hardship conditions made no difference at all on parental mood and beliefs of parenting efficacy when the marriage was strong. This protective influence occurs in part because supportive marriages are seldom coupled with depressed feelings" (Bandura, 1997, p.59). Elizabeth Ozer's 1995 study examining the psychological well-being and distress of full-time, professional women concluded that a woman's belief in her capability to enlist the help of her spouse for childcare was the most consistent predictor of both well-being and distress. The quality of a marriage can also play an important part in the development of parent-child relationships (Cox, Owen, Lewis, & Henderson, 1989; Easterbrooks & Emde, 1988). Easterbrooks and her colleagues' "spill-over" model suggests a positive association between marital quality and the parent-child relationship. This model posits that parents who are happily married will be more available and responsive to their children, leading to a more positive parent-child relationship. This data from the U.S. seems to mirror my finding that parenting self-efficacy beliefs were demonstrated to be higher in our Pattern 1 Mothers who felt they were in compassionate marriages.

Research on children and families has shown that our expectations about love grow out of our earliest experiences in life. Each person's concept of human relationships – its potential for providing steady nurturance and love or hostility and abandonment – is shaped in infancy and continually influenced by subsequent relationships and experiences. Of course, these experiences

will consist of a mix of gratification and deprivation, of love and rejection as each individual will encounter disappointments and losses while growing up, no matter how loving the parents or the partner. Yet, it is the mother's perception of the sum of these relationships that informs his or her perceptions about love and trust. I suggest that these feelings inevitably cultivate and inform women's self-efficacy beliefs, which in turn influence her parenting beliefs and her ability to care for and support her children.

Working Models and Parenting Self-Efficacy

As discussed in Chapter 2, the working models and childhood experiences that individuals bring to parenthood can – and apparently do – have powerful and theoretically meaningful effects on perceptions of partners and marriages and on through parenthood. It is true that parents bring internal representations of relationships with them into the experience of parenting. As individuals with either positive or negative models of intimate relationships grow up and marry, can their choice of partner affect their sense of confidence as parents? In this study, I explored the likelihood that a nurturing marriage can modify the effects of early negative experiences on the mother's sense of parenting self-efficacy. Our two Pattern 3 mothers seemed to demonstrate this possibility: both had nurturing marriages which seemed to have modified the effects their early negative experiences could have had on their sense of parenting self-efficacy.

Main and her colleagues (Main, et al., 1985) are clear that while the traumatic effects of very difficult childhoods may be forever etched in the memory, a person can still develop a model of relationships that makes it possible to break the links that tie them to the negative patterns of the past. This is illustrated in the data: Nine out of 16 mothers who were classified as having had a rejecting relationship with either one or both parents described very difficult experiences growing up. Several had parents who were physically abusive or engaged in harsh, punitive discipline styles. Others experienced their parents' divorce while growing up. Despite these traumatic childhood experiences, it was still possible for some of these mothers to build solid relationships with helpful, caring partners and to feel competent as parents, thus breaking up a potentially negative family pattern.

Perceptions of Japanese Parenting Practices

Parenting and socialization practices in Japan have often been compared with those in the United States (Bornstein, 1989; Conroy, Hess, Azuma, & Kashiwagi, 1980). Contrary to some prevailing stereotypes about Japanese mothers being preoccupied with getting their children into the top schools, Japanese mothers assume fundamental responsibility for moral and character development and manage their homes in a manner that best reinforces their hopes and aspirations for their children. Centuries-old traditional views about family roles and the rigid nature of the corporate workplace where middle-class men are expected to work long hours are still taken as the norm in Japan and can be resistant to change (Imamura, 1996). It is true that most of the families included in this sample consisted of husbands who worked long hours at the workplace and wives who maintained the household and oversaw their children's educations. But the families included in this sample are not meant to represent the entire country of Japan and were not selected as typical. In a country as heterogeneous as Japan, finding "typical" families has limited value.

It is also important to not have an oversimplified image of Japanese mothers and their lifestyles. The role of mothers, the forms of discipline they use, the quality of the mother-child relationship, the many roles they juggle both in and out of the home, the nature of the marital

relationship, the aspirations these mothers have for themselves and for their children is more complex, humane, and less militaristic than it is currently assumed in the popular press. Many mothers expressed a strong desire for their children to be independent-minded free-thinkers, contrary to the stereotype that all Japanese mothers wish to raise their children to be conforming, group-oriented adults who keep a low-profile.

Finally, several of the mothers in our sample who recalled negative childhoods reported rather extreme situations in childhood, including physical violence, alcoholism and harsh and intrusive parenting (see Table 3 in Chapter 3). Yet, it would be an overstatement to say that all mothers who recall negative childhoods experienced such extreme situations. In fact, I think there are indeed mothers who could be characterized as having "negative childhoods" whose experiences are less extreme. These could be mothers who simply did not feel understood by their parents, who lived with their parents' marital conflict or who had absent parents. Moreover, the mothers who were categorized as having negative childhoods were scored accordingly based on not just their recollection of negative experiences but also the absence of recollections of positive childhood interactions with their parents. The question of how negative a childhood must be to be characterized as negative should be an area for further study with a larger sample size.

Qualitative Method of Inquiry

One of the advantages of using a qualitative method with this kind of inquiry is that when we find associations between qualities in different family relationships, we know that they are the result of an interactive approach that includes efforts to personalize the dialogue. The personal nature of qualitative inquiry derives from its openness and procedures of observation and in-depth interviewing in a way that communicates respect to the subjects. Their ideas and opinions as stated in their own terms are crucial for this type of examination and allow us to pay attention to variations. Moreover, because Japanese women can often be viewed as reticent and highly private about their personal lives, particularly about a topic as personal as motherhood, this "deeper" inductive method of gathering data allows dialogue to unfold in a way that takes into account complex dynamics and idiosyncrasies.

Because the pre-interview questionnaires measured self-efficacy using a 6-point self-rating scale, I found the interview responses to be more revealing of their beliefs and sense of confidence as mothers. I also felt that the conversations and themes that emerged more naturally with the interviewers captured a more honest and true description of their experiences. By answering open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview format, our sample of Japanese mothers seemed more comfortable revealing the salience of their own childhood experiences and of their marriage in affecting their feelings about their current relationships with their children. These representations would then be examined in depth with a focus on the connection to their current perceptions of parenting efficacy.

Interviews can provide only a brief snapshot, of course, of what is a very long and complicated process of growing up, becoming adults, and developing intimate relationships, but they help us explore legacies carried from one generation to the next. They also help us to explore the origins of a mother's sense of herself as a parent and allow us to unearth stories, unique challenges, and thought processes that a mere questionnaire would never reveal. The richness and depth of these mothers' stories give us a greater context in which to view their lives and relationships. Qualitative data also allows us the ability to examine cultural models that may not be apparent when looking at quantitative data.

The ideal way to study the developmental antecedents of maternal self-efficacy is through a longitudinal design where one can follow subjects through childhood, adolescence, and eventually marriage and the transition to motherhood. Unfortunately, this is difficult to do as this process takes many years and is quite an expensive undertaking. Thus, it is important to point out that the goal of this present study is to offer an analysis of the relationship between mothers' *perceived retrospective reports* of how these mothers were reared as children and *self-reports* of their current experiences and feelings about motherhood (assessed over the course of four years). Reliance on retrospective reports of experience in one's family of origin can be a limiting factor in this method of inquiry. However, even though we cannot verify the nature and validity of their childhood memories, neither can we assume that these recollections have no significance to the individual. These perceived memories are considered valid and useful for the purposes of this study as we are interested in their interpretations of what actually occurred – their perception is their reality. Interviews and questionnaires can provide only a sketch, but these first-hand stories do help to explore the continuity and discontinuity between generations.

Study Limitations and Future Directions for Research

There are several factors that I do not explore in the present study. First, the present analysis focuses on examining parenting self-efficacy based on semi-structured interview questions that were not focused solely on examining the evolution and potential influences on parenting self-efficacy. Certainly, there are other variables that can influence mothers' sense of maternal efficacy: resilient personalities, easy child temperaments, feeling encouraged and self-confident due to work achievements (as in the case of Mrs. Maeda). Future research could focus on clarifying the quantitative measurement of parenting self-efficacy, marital support and childhood memories.

Second, the small sample size in this study limits us from thoroughly examining how childhood memories and marital quality can influence maternal self-efficacy. However, I feel that the limitation of this is outweighed by the potential understanding to be gained from exploring subjectively defined happiness in marriage and efficacy in motherhood. Although 16 families may seem too small a number from which to make sweeping conclusions about motherhood and marriage, my conclusions are not meant to explain all there is to know about this subject. I am looking for commonalities as well as individual differences, hoping to find patterns on which to build general hypotheses.

Third, it would useful to interview fathers to hear their perspectives on parenting, childhood memories and marriage as much of the existing research on parenting is focused on the perspectives of mothers. Even though many of the fathers in the families we investigated in this study worked long hours outside the home, fathers still have independent needs, agendas and points of view that are valuable and worth investigating. It is never possible to understand how one parent approaches child-rearing and child development without knowing something about what the other parents is doing. Also, given the large number of multi-generational households in Japan, it would be useful to talk with the children about their perceptions about family and their upbringing living with both parents and grandparents.

Finally, the findings of this study may not apply to several other groups of Japanese, including Japanese minorities, mothers living in poverty, or families from various other areas (e.g. rural areas) in Japan. It would be useful to investigate whether the patterns that emerged with this small sample of Japanese moms would emerge with a demographically similar sample in other countries besides Japan. More subjects, greater ethnic, geographic and economic

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diversity along with the use of experimental and longitudinal designs could help untangle the issues of causal direction between parenting self-efficacy and parenting and potential transactional processes.

Implications

It is critical to point out that these findings should not be interpreted to mean that there is little hope for mothers who recall rejecting/negative relationships in their childhoods. Instead, we should continue to investigate strategies and opportunities to nurture competence and confidence in mothers, thus buffering the negative effects of those difficult relationships. Therapeutic interventions may be able to alter internal working models. Nor should we assume that mothers who experienced positive, accepting relationships will necessarily become highly efficacious parents. As the research literature has made clear, other factors can influence a mother's level of parenting self-efficacy.

What are couples to do when they want to have children of their own, but their family histories are bleak? Cowan and Cowan's findings (1999) show that some partners can overcome painful and even traumatic early experiences by creating a more nurturing and satisfying relationship with a spouse. Mrs. Kobayashi, a Pattern 3 High Efficacy Mother, is an example of this. A daughter of an alcoholic father and an authoritarian mother, she and her husband enjoy a warm partnership where she refers to him as "a great father." This cheerfulness and marital "good will" may have laid the foundation for Mrs. Kobayashi to begin to modify her notion of intimate relationships.

Research elucidating the nature of the links between mothers' recalled childhood relationships and subsequent level of maternal self-efficacy has a number of important implications. First, from a research perspective, a more thorough understanding of the impact of the mother's childhood experiences on parenting self-efficacy is gained. Second, the extent to which maternal attitudes and behaviors is negatively affected by the mother's early relationships allows researchers and parenting experts to further understand risk factors for the development of negative maternal behaviors. Third, the impact of the mother's perception of the amount of support and comfort she derives from her husband on her sense of maternal self-efficacy cannot be ignored and should be examined further in future studies.

This study has important implications for clinicians and mental health professionals working with children and families in both Japan and the United States. Although clinicians are often aware of the difficulties posed by parents with challenging childhood experiences and backgrounds, greater understanding of the specific mechanisms by which negative early experiences can affect parenting and children will allow more effective interventions to be made. More thorough and systematic investigations of these factors may prove to be beneficial to both clinicians seeking to help parents modify their self-efficacy beliefs as well as researchers interested in understanding the evolution, maintenance, and expression of parenting self-efficacy beliefs.

Previous descriptions of Japanese marriages might mislead mental health professionals into thinking that women in Japan do not expect their husbands to provide emotional support. My analyses provides evidence that this is a mistaken assumption and that, in fact, some women in Japan anticipate and hope that their husbands will be involved and caring fathers at home. The Japanese government formulated the "Child and Child Rearing Support Plan" in 2004 as an attempt to promote men's participation in child rearing (Kamiya, 2007). More systems that support working fathers with children to balance work and family life are needed. This could be

in the form of a childcare leave system, shorter working hours and flextime. But beyond these measures, there also needs to be more awareness of and a shift in how Japan thinks about the paternal role. Japanese fathers who are involved in child-rearing often face a conflict between their jobs and their familial responsibilities.

Because we have learned that it can be possible to identify many of the couples whose marital and parenting relationships are at risk based on their developmental histories in their families of origin, the next step is to go beyond describing these family dynamics. Early family interventions may be needed so that the parents' distress will not be borne by their children. Psychologists, nurses and therapists could consider assessing women at risk for suboptimal parenting self-efficacy and intervene through teaching, support, and parenting self-efficacy boosting interventions. In Japan, family-based preventive interventions could help parents work on their troubling marital and parenting issues, the hope being that they would be able to increase their satisfaction and effectiveness as partners and parents. If the work with couples helps them feel more competent and satisfied as parents and partners, this could free the children to cope more effectively with the academic and social challenges of school in Japan.

Alcoholism is a growing concern in Japan, and although more attention is being paid to this issue (Kitanaka, 2007), the data from this study suggests that the problem is indeed serious. Mothers in our sample detailed several incidents in their childhoods that involved violence or parenting negligence stemming from heavy drinking. In a culture where drinking figures into all social occasions and is encouraged as a way to socialize with colleagues after work, it is easy to see how alcoholism can be an epidemic. Mental health professionals working with families in Japan may need to find ways to address this problem before it negatively impacts another generation of children.

There is extensive documentation that social support is helpful for parents (Cowan & Hetherington, 1991; Gottlieb & Pancer, 1988). In Japan, where household responsibilities and parenting decisions often rest upon the shoulders of mothers, women should perhaps be encouraged to find support elsewhere when they do not get the emotional support they need from their spouses. For Mrs. Maeda, for instance, the stimulation of a meaningful job and co-workers bolstered her sense of confidence in herself and as a parent. Similarly, a caring preschool teacher can provide essential support for parents by relieving anxiety about their child's behavior. Most of the mothers in this study actively sought support from two main outside sources: friends, usually mothers of their children's friends, and extended family members. They tended to not rely as much on organized support groups and health professionals. None of the mothers described the existence of organized support groups. Every parent, though, needs to have a trusted source to talk over things related to parenting, discipline, school choices and their children's behavior. Many of the women in our sample used their volunteer positions at school and with the PTA as a primary social outlet. People or situations that provided them with satisfaction, challenge, understanding, or direct advice and services were able to help them solve specific problems so they could stop worrying so much about their family responsibilities, relax and have some fun, and feel emotionally connected to others.

Perhaps the most important implication of this research study is that there should be no single way to promote parenting self-efficacy. In some cases, the best way may be to promote marital relationships. In other cases, it may be to help parents address issues of conflict in their families of origin. We may also need to find ways to help shape how parents think about the causes of child behavior or enable them to better regulate their negative emotions. Of course, there is no reason not to target multiple avenues of potential influence on parenting self-efficacy.

Concluding remarks

The parents of the mothers in our study seemed to bequeath legacies to their children and grandchildren that are both powerful and often invisible. Some mothers found themselves repeating the nurturing or painful family patterns they grew up with, and others found ways to break their families' negative cycles. As Grusec et al. (1994) states, parents bring internal representations of relationships with them into the experience of parenting. These patterns of interpersonal relating are influential in guiding behavior in the parental domain (Bogental, 1991; Grusec et al., 1994). Deutsche, Ruble, Fleming, Brooks-Gunn and Sanger (1988) found that among pregnant women, those who reported the qualitative nature of women's reported relationships with their own mothers as being more positive were more inclined to report possessing adaptive parenting skills in addition to expressing more self-confidence about the prospect of becoming a mother. Parents who lack a sense of efficacy in their own ability to parent not only seem unable to put knowledge of parenting tasks into action, they also seem more likely to become preoccupied with themselves and have poorly established beliefs in their own competencies (Grusec, et al., 1994). This characterization is congruent with Bandura's general conceptualization of self-efficacy. Bandura (1982) has proposed that when confronted with stress, individuals with low estimations of personal efficacy tend to give up easily (presumably due to failure expectancies), internalize failure, and experience pronounced anxiety and depression.

This study highlights the influence that childhood memories and marital support can have on parenting self-efficacy. The results suggest that mothers with positive childhood memories and supportive husbands are more likely to describe themselves as having high parenting self-efficacy. Mothers with negative childhood memories compounded with unsupportive partners may be more likely to experience low parenting self-efficacy. However, mothers who experience negative childhood memories who are married to supportive husbands may be able to overcome the negative effects of having an unhealthy working model of relationships and have high parenting self-efficacy. Helping couples understand how they can support one another as parents can be a crucial contribution to parenting education. It is important to continue to examine parenting self-efficacy – its origins and if there are indeed ways to cultivate it in parents.

<div align="center">**References**</div>

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Japanese Moms Interview I
Administered Summer 2000

1. **About your child**
- Please describe the personality of your child.
- What makes you feel proud of your child? (Please give examples which seem significant to you)
- What makes you worry about your child?

2. **Role as a Mother**
- We would like to ask you about your own image of the ideal mother. Does seeing other mothers make you think that "I want to follow her example", or conversely, "I don't want to be like her."
- Is it hard for you to be a mother, or is it a relatively easy thing for you?
  - Do you have to suppress your anger or sacrifice yourself to be a mother while doing certain types of things?
  - Overall, to what degree do you think you are patient or sacrificing yourself? Please choose the one that is applicable: "slightly", "comparatively", or "considerably".

3. **Childrearing: "Spoiling" or** *amae*
  - When does X want to be spoiled by you?
  - On what occasion do you feel like spoiling X, or do you want X to play the baby?
  - On what occasion do you not want your child to behave like a spoiled child?
  - Generally speaking, is your child overly spoiled, spoiled, or slightly spoiled?
  - Do you sometimes have no clue of what your child is angry or crying? Or is it easy for you to find out the reasons?
  - Please describe a situation in which you particularly had a hard time (also please tell us how you felt at that time).

4. **Childrearing: Discipline**
  - Has X done something bad lately? Has there been a time when X didn't listen to you? If so, how did you react to it?
  - Generally speaking, when do you recognize that your scolding or warning your child is done so well that s/he understands what you say?
  - Knowing that it is against your better judgment, do you ever leave your child doing whatever s/he wants to because you want to avoid the complications?
  - Has the above mentioned happened to you lately Please tell us about it.
  - Are there times when you end up not scolding your child, worrying that it would hurt his/her feelings or make her/him feel sad or embarrassed?
  - Has that happened to you lately? Please tell us about it.
  - It is understood that some mothers become emotional with their children according to the mood of the moment. Is that your case?
  - Has that happened to you recently? Please tell us about it.
  - Has your scolding or warning your child ever worsened the situation?

- Has that happened to you recently? Please tell us about it.
- We are going to change the subject here. Is X interested in learning Hiragana letters?
- For instance, do you try to play the games which requires her/him to read hiragana letters or read hiragana that appear around you with her/him?
- Have you ever purchased a toy which also can be used as a teaching material for your child?
- Have you ever purchased a workbook or educational magazine for your children?
- Do you read books to your child? How often do you do so in a week?
- Do you encourage your child to watch an educational program or work on an education-oriented computer software?

5. Global Efficacy
- Everyone has her/his own strong and weak points. Is there an aspect of child rearing that you feel less confident about?
- On the other hand, is there anything that you are good at doing, you have confidence in your own ability with, or you are handling okay?
- Please let us ask about you about yourself. How many siblings do you have?
- Are you the oldest sibling, youngest or other?
- Where did you grow up?

6. Child's Education
- Have you actively participated in the group or circle activities at your child's kindergarten? Have you ever befriended someone in those activities?
- It sometimes takes quite a long time to befriend people in groups or circle activities. Is that your case?
- Is there a park where your child can play with her/his friends?
- Are the mothers whom you meet in the park generally accessible?
- Do you meet your old friends from school or the workplace?
- Among them, is there anyone whom you can consult regarding your concerns and worries about child rearing?
- How often do you talk about your concerns and worries regarding child rearing with your friends?
- Among your relatives, is there anyone whom you want to consult regarding child rearing?
- How frequently do you do so?
- Since X starts the final year of kindergarten, have you ever had a talk with your child's teacher in person? If so, how often?
- Has there been anything that worried you, or you were concerned with about X's kindergarten life since last year? Did you do something about that? How did the teachers try to solve the problem(s)?
- I would like to ask the reason why you chose this kindergarten for your child.
- How did you collect information about the kindergarten?
- Prior to your decisions of which kindergarten to pick, did you visit all the kindergartens in which you were interested?

- Have you participated in the activities and events held by the kindergarten? What kinds of events were they?
-
- What sorts of expectations did you have toward your husband/partner when you first got together? Have your expectations toward your husband/partner changed? In what ways have they changed? Why do you think it has changed?
    - What is your current expectation of him? Is there anything you expect him to do at least/minimum? How familiar do you feel he is with your family's daily routine?

7. When we talked with mothers in the first interview, some mentioned that **friends or relatives** gave them support. Other mothers told us that they felt that they were often criticized or compared and they felt depressed or discouraged.
    - What sorts of experiences have been the most noticeable to you in the recent past?
    - Also, some mothers said that when they found that other mothers had similar concerns, they felt relieved. Have you had such an experience?

8. I'd like to ask you a few questions about your thoughts on **XX's future**.
    - Tell me a little about your expectations or goals for XX. How do you want XX to be as an adult? Do you have an expectation about XX's education or occupation? How far do you want him/her to pursue education? What kind of job do you want her/him to get?
    - What do you think you can do to help him/her attain these goals? How much influence do you feel you have over your child's learning and development?

Japanese Moms Interview II
Administered Winter 2001

9. **How is XX doing?**
- What are the major changes that have occurred with XX since we last spoke over a year ago?
- Is there anything s/he is particularly interested in recently?
- Is there anything you are concerned about? If so, how did you deal with it?
  (Include questions about other children if the mother mentioned problems in the first interview. Ask about other children in the home and their ages.)

10. XX is currently in **kindergarten/elementary school**.
- How do you think XX felt about leaving preschool? Which elementary school is she/he going to? (Is it close to your house?) How did you decide on that elementary school? From where/how did you collect the information?
- What has changed now that XX is in elementary school (i.e. daily routine)? Is there anything you've said or done to help your child have a positive experience during the transition? Is there anything you wish you had done that you didn't do? What differences do you see between XX's experience in preschool vs. elementary school, if any?
- How do you think XX feels about going to elementary school?
- What are the things about kindergarten that XX seems to like the most?

- How do **you** feel about XX going to elementary school?
- Is there anything you are anxious about?
- What kind of contacts have you had with XX's teacher so far?
- How well do you feel his/her teacher understands XX's needs?
- What does a kindergartener/first grader like him/her need to know in order to be successful in elementary school?
- What do you think should be a mother's role when her child is in elementary school? Will it be different from when s/he was in preschool? How?
- Ideally, how do you envision getting involved in XX's school? How possible will it be for you to do those things? How do you plan on supporting XX's education at home?

11. Now let me ask you about **your childhood**.
    - What was your experience of elementary school?
    - What types of expectations and goals about your education and future did your parents have? How did that change as you got older? What is your memory of how they influenced your academic experience?

12. Let me ask you about your **life after you graduated from high school**. What did you do after graduating from high school?
    - **Work**
        i. What kind of work did you do? What was your experience like? Did you think about going to a vocational school or college (junior college) instead of working after high school? Why did you decide to work?
    - **College/Junior College/Vocational School:**
        i. How did you decide to go to the college/junior college/vocational school you went to? How did you decide what to study there? (Was it your decision? Your parents'? Teacher's or friends' influence?) How did you feel when you became a college student? How was your life as a college student?

13. Let me ask you about when you became **a mother for the first time**.
- After becoming a mother, was there anything different from your image of what being a mom was going to be like? If so, how?
- Did you consider keeping your job after having a baby? Did you discuss it with your husband? With your relatives or friends? What did you think to be an advantage or disadvantage of keeping a job?

14. How long have you and your **husband/partner been married/together**?
- How did you meet your husband? How old were you when you married him? What were you parents' reactions to your marriage?
- What sorts of expectations did you have toward your husband/partner when you first got together? Have your expectations toward your husband/partner changed? In what ways have they changed? Why do you think it has changed?
    - What is your current expectation of him? Is there anything you expect him to do at least/minimum? How familiar do you feel he is with your family's daily routine?

15. When we talked with mothers in the first interview, some mentioned that **friends or relatives** gave them support. Other mothers told us that they felt that they were often criticized or compared and they felt depressed or discouraged.
- What sorts of experiences have been the most noticeable to you in the recent past?
- Also, some mothers said that when they found that other mothers had similar concerns, they felt relieved. Have you had such an experience?

16. I'd like to ask you a few questions about your thoughts on **XX's future**.
    - Tell me a little about your expectations or goals for XX. How do you want XX to be as an adult? Do you have an expectation about XX's education or occupation? How far do you want him/her to pursue education? What kind of job do you want her/him to get?
    - What do you think you can do to help him/her attain these goals? How much influence do you feel you have over your child's learning and development?

Japanese Moms Interview III
Administered Summer 2001

17. **Transition to First Grade**
- So far, what are the things about first grade that X seems to like the most?
- What things are troublesome?
- Is there anything you have said or done to help your child have a positive experience during the transition?
- Is there anything you wish you had done that you didn't do?
- What has changed in your life since the transition?
- What does a first grader like him/her need to know in order to be successful in elementary school?

18. **Stress**
- Are you presently experiencing any stress involving members of your immediate family? If so, how do you cope with that stress?
- Are you presently experiencing any stress involving people outside your immediate family (e.g. friends, members of PTA)? If so, how do you cope with that stress?

19. **Attributions**
    - Why do you think X has/is ABC (mention positive attribute or behavior)?
    - Why do you think X has/is ABC (mention negative attribute or behavior)?

20. **Neighborhood**
    - What are the families like in this neighborhood?
    - What is your image of the families in a shitamachi neighborhood?
    - What is your image of the families in a yamanote neighborhood?

21. *Amae* **and** *kejime*
- What is your definition of *amae*?

- What are some examples of good and bad *amae* at X's age?
- What is your definition of *kejime*?
- What are some examples of *kejime*?

22. Pie Game
- Please divide this pie into the extent to which you are focusing on the following roles: mother, wife, interests, work, friends.
- Please divide this pie to reflect your dream for the future as far as how much you focus on those roles.
- Please divide this pie to reflect the likely reality in the future, when X is in middle school.

Japanese Moms Interview IV
Administered Spring 2002

23. **X has been in second grade since April**
- How is school life for X in second grade so far?
- What subjects is he liking or disliking?
- What is the teacher like?
- Have you met the teacher?
- What sort of contact are you having with the school these days?

24. **Is there any change with X since last year (first grade)?**
- How did the latter half of first grade go for X? How did school events, which were his/her first experience at elementary school, go?
- Overall, how was his first grade like?
- What subjects did X like or dislike when he was in first grade?
- What was the teacher like when he was in first grade?
- What sort of contact did you have with the school last year?

25. **Regarding X's life besides school, does he/she do any activity or take a class?**
- How does s/he spend time after school?
- The *yutori kyoiku* with both Saturdays and Sundays off started this April. How has X spent his/her time on weekends?
- There are various opinions about *yutori kyoiku*, such as "it does not give enough time for study" or "it's good since kids will have more time to spend with family." What do you think about it? Are you concerned about your child's studies?
- How is X's relationship with friends? Did s/he make any new friends? Does X have a particularly close friend? Are there any concerns related to X's relationships with friends?

26. **What about your other children (X's sibling(s))?**
- How is school life or relationships with friends for your other children?
- Is he/she similar or different from X? How? Why do you think they are similar or different?

- Do you think that your ways of interacting with your children are different or the same? How are they different or the same? Do your children get along with each other?
- If X has an older sibling, does s/he say something to you about your childrearing with X? Does older sister or brother sometimes take care of X?
- If X has a younger sibling, does X say something to you about your childrearing with the younger sibling? Does X sometimes take care of the younger sibling?

27. What is your life like these days?
- Any new hobbies or activities you have been engaged in lately?
- How do you spend your weekdays?
- What do you do with your friends or how do you interact with your friends or acquaintances?
- How are your parents Any chance in family responsibilities?
- Yoko Version:
    a. Do you parents belong to any religious/spiritual group? Do you belong to a religious group?
    b. If so, how long have you been in a religious group? What type of activities and how often do you do them?
    c. Is there any close friend in the same religious group? Does husband also belong to the religious group? How does your involvement in the religion influence your childrearing and family life?
- Sawako Version:
    a. What are your family-of-origin's religious/spiritual childrearing beliefs?
    b. What were the religious/spiritual activities that you, as a child, participated in, e.g. visiting ancestral graves, ancestral worship, attending church services.
    c. Are you engaged in any religious/spiritual activities? What kind of activities? How often? Since when?
    d. Do you have close friends from that organization?
    e. Does your husband hold similar religious/spiritual beliefs?
    f. How do you think your spirituality has helped your childrearing or family life in general?

28. How is your husband these days?
- Any change in his job situation?
- Any change in family life?
- Any changes in how he interacts with the kids lately?
- Would you describe how your husband spends him time at home these days (weekday nights, weekends)?
- Do you and he ever go out without your kids? (What?)
- Do you go out as a family? (What?)
- Regarding husband's support, there were seven support items which were valued by mothers in our last survey. Among these seven items, could you rank them as you value them from most to least? Why this order? Why important or not? What does each item mean to you? (What does the item mean in the context of her life?)

29. Tell us a bit about the community
- How long have you lived here? Why did you move or decide to live here?
- Are there any places that children can play around this area? What type of play area is that? How long does it take to get there?
- How long does it take to get to school? Is this neighborhood safe? How is the environment? Pollution? How is the accessibility to public transportation?
- What would you like to see changed or not changed in this community?
- How close do you feel to your neighbors? Do they share similar value and opinions with you?
- Are you and your neighbors actively involved in the community? For example, would your neighbors scold children if they witnessed dangerous activities in the neighborhood? Would they caution children doing mischief (*itazura*)? Would they contact the children's parents? If you saw children engaged in dangerous activities, would you say something to them? Would you scold them if they were doing mischief?
- When you are your family are gone (on vacation), would your neighbors keep an eye on your home for you?
- Which hospital do you go to when your child is sick? Is the doctor trustworthy? Can you consult about childrearing with him/her? Is there any health professional who you can consult about childrearing other than medical doctors?

Case Summary of Mrs. Hirao

HI maternal efficacy
HI education; HI income 5M to 7M (wealthiest family)

Time 1, Time 2**, Time 3***, Time 4****

X= daughter; older brother – 2 years older

Relationship with husband:

Time 1
- Husband attends "all kinds of activities" at the kids' schools. He is also more strict in his discipline style. "It sometimes shocks our kids. Our kids normally don't talk bad about their father." They seem a bit frightened of him (p.11B).
- Father bathes the kids and "hangs out with the kids all day long on holidays." Mom shares her childrearing concerns with him (about 20% of the problems she encounters), "but after all we disagree with each other." (p.11B) "We have different opinions which often leads us to argument…on the other hand, there's something we can learn from each other during those arguments. It gives us opportunities to reconsider what we individually think and feel. I think we inspire each other that way. Because of the fact that we have different opinions on many issues, we are able to learn from each other." Has a positive outlook.

Time 2**
- Met husband while they both worked for the same bakery. He was a young baker and she was the nutritionist. (p.10) They met when she was 22 and married at 25. They were in love (p.11).
- When baby was born, he helped with bathing and was as supportive as he could be. She half-jokes that Japanese men think of their sons as equals, so they get mad when the baby breaks things that belong to the dad. (p.15A) He disciplines them, too.
- Mom wishes husband weren't so lazy (p.16A). "There are times when what he tells the kids and what he does are completely different." Contradictory behavior. Also wishes he would play and communicate more with the kids, but she's grateful he participates in all school activities. "I think he is doing more than average."

Time 3***
- When asked about what stress she feels, she says she feels some stress "trying to take good care of my husband. In a way, he is living with my parents for me (us). We all have blood connection, but he is the only one outside the blood…but he seems to be just fine because he can live in comfort…he just does whatever he likes, you know?" (p.16)
- Husband says she is a good mother…"but he complains that I'm no good as his wife." (p.20) "He's more like having a big kid, big child husband…and he is the most demanding of all. The biggest one [laugh]." (p.21)

Time 4****
  - Father attends big school events – takes a day off of work. (p.18) After work, he usually watches sports on TV. She wishes he would put kids first after work, but seems resigned that he won't. On his days off, he goes to see a movie or shops while the kids are at school. She and him go shopping on their own sometimes: clothing, computers, household gadgets. (p.19)
  - She and her husband: "We both want our own time, so we'll do whatever it is that we each want to do separately… it's actually a very age-relative thing and I think it all has to do with how many years the marriage has been in place. It also has to do with the kids' age." (p.21) It's important to her that her husband makes enough money for the family. They seem not especially close, but marriage seems relatively satisfactory.

Relationship with parents in childhood and as an adult:
Time 1
  - Mom is an only child. Parents live in the same building so they see each other each day.
  - Growing up, her mother was very quiet. "She was rather inconspicuous. She was very affectionate. She loved children very much… The distance between us was not too close, but not too far either…I was the only child. I remember wanting to be with my mother all the time after I got home. I felt comfortable with her. She gave me a peace of mind…My mother allowed me to do whatever I wanted to (in terms of amae). I was thankful for that and thought to myself that I should not make her worry about me. To look back, that's how she controlled her daughter. She was that kind of mother." (p.7B)
  - Father: "I was always very close to him as a girl. I would walk arm in arm with my father, just like a boyfriend and girlfriend. We could only share a limited amount of time because he was very busy…He was very generous." (p.7B) Compared to mother, "I would stick to my father when my family went out..because it was not that I could see him everyday. We only had a limited amount of time to be with. I felt like doing amae with my father twice as much as I do with my mother." (p.8B) Now that she's married, "I don't do amae with my father anymore. I think I drew a line between us at some point." (p.10B)
  - Mom was protective of her because she was bullied as a child. (p.8B) "My mother didn't hesitate to have a talk with people when I was bullied in kindergarten and elementary school." (p.8B) Their relationship hasn't changed much…"still like the one between a mother and her young daughter." (p.9B)
  - Whenever mom is upset with X, X runs to her grandmother who tries to calm down mom. Overall, though, she's thankful for her presence. (p.10B) Doesn't really share parenting concerns with mom.

Time 2**
  - Doesn't remember her parents telling her to study. Was self-motivated and "very careful about doing things right. I tried hard, I guess." Hated being told that things were easier for her because she was an only child. (p.18) "I wanted to have the kind of personality that made it seem as though I had brothers and sisters." Didn't want to be thought of as a typical only child: obedient, cry-babyish. Wanted to be seen as vivacious, standing out, and as if she had a brother. Felt proud when people were surprised she didn't have sibs.

Thought of being an only child as being a burden. Resented people's perceptions and assumptions about her. (p. 18)
- Wanted to be in the medical profession as a pharmacist or exam technician, but father persuaded her not to because "it wouldn't be something pretty…dirty work." She thinks it also influenced him that she was their only child and a woman. Didn't want her to struggle with living on her own. She was accepted at both schools (clinical exam tech or nutrition) and she chose nutrition.
- Realizes she was a "daddy's girl" (p.11A) He gives her advice and she likes to please him. They walked arm in arm and people would ask if he was her boyfriend.
- When first son was born, thankful that her parents were around to help and advise her (p.15A) Enjoys living with her parents in the same house (2 levels) because "we have more conversations. So it feels like the family itself is cheerful." (p.16A) Likes having a communal family. The kids always have someone at home and they can go to their grandparents for protection when they need it. Really appreciates having them help her around the house (p.17A) They moved in after the kids were born. Remodeled her parents' home because mom realized that she "can't do things without [her] parents." Husband suggested the grandparents move in.

Time 3***
- Living with her parents seems relatively harmonious for the entire family. (p.15) Her husband is the most strict on the kids, followed by mom, followed by grandparents who act as a haven.

Relationship with/Impression of child:
Time 1:
- Describes X as independent-minded and girlish. Enjoys origami, drawing, playing with dolls and is not easily distracted from her interests. Doesn't like to play outside. (p.1)
- Likes that she is friendly, not shy, and able to connect with others easily. Thinks that it could be because she's a girl. (p.1)
- Worries that X is bossy with her friends and must have her way. Wishes she was more cooperative as she wants her to get along with others.
- Feels that her older son is more 'kawai' than X. (p.2) Feels that she is "more mean or strict" with her. Feels bad when she colds older son, but doesn't feel that way with X. Has less patience for her and speculates that it could be because she's a girl.
- Feels that she doesn't understand X sometimes because she becomes quiet and doesn't talk when she asks her. "I ask her why she's crying, or what she doesn't like or what happened to her. She doesn't express it. She stays inside her shell and I cannot see her." (p.2-3) "Also I think I don't understand children's life. It seems like she has many parts that she shows to other people, but which she doesn't show to me. I don't know, maybe she does more amae at home. But when she is outside, it's like she is creating an image for other people." (p.3)
- X apologizes the following day when mom scolds her, so mom feels that X understands when she's scolded. (p.3)
- Mom forced X to go to preschool again after a long vacation when X was resistant.

- X learned hiragana letters when she was about 3-4 yrs. old. (p.3B) They frequently play Karuta game. Studies with Kumon materials from school. Mom has bought children's magazines. Reads to X until recently when she stopped asking her to do so since she wants to read on her own. They watch educational programs on NHK, too. (p.4-5B) They also watch English TV programs for pronunciation practice and the songs. She has also purchased CD-ROMS for the computer.
- "I am the type of mother who consciously lets the children experience a variety of things. I think my children have more chance to explore the world compared to other kids…I think my kids know more things. It doesn't mean that I spend much money in doing so. It's just that I take them out to have a cherry blossom viewing party, swim in the river or go to a movie…I think my children have more opportunities to go out and experience things." (p.6B)
- Makes a conscious effort to converse with them a lot, even though she also thinks she nags a lot, too. (p.6B) Tries not to compare her kids with other children.
- X had some problems with friendships at school, acting possessive of friends and excluding others (p.16B). Mom and teacher conferred about it.

Time 2**
- X has become more independent and "uses such surprising words, I don't know where she could have picked them up. She tries saying things just like adults would." Mom admits that she's doing well overall. (p.1)
- Mom worries about X excluding others at school, but admits that she experienced being excluded as a child and so is especially worried about her daughter doing it because she can be bossy. (p.2) Mom sees that X is maturing when kids come over to play. Worries less now.
- X says she's sad to leave kindergarten (p.6), but also happy to start elementary school. Worries a bit about having to wake up an hour earlier.
- X has recently expressed interest in and started learning piano.
- Mom worries that X can sometimes say things to avoid getting into trouble. Makes up excuses and doesn't take responsibility for actions (p.10) Mom knows that X gets embarrassed when others are mad at her. So she makes things up to avoid it.
- Mom wonders about X's future. Hopes that because she's a girl, she'll take up a craft of some sort: beautician, seamstress, pianist, artist, because she (mom) doesn't have these skills. Would like her to have hobbies. Mom notes that her "fingers are quite nimble". Mom notes that when X "concentrates, she gets totally absorbed in what she's doing." Mom says she'll try to expose her to many different activities. "Right now there's nothing but learning for her." Would like X to try things at least once. Mom has considered ballet, Japanese dance, piano, English conversation classes. X currently takes piano from a neighbor. (p. 13-14)
- Mom wants her to attend college, but doesn't think it's necessarily the most important thing. Would rather X "make the most of her chances to meet people. Of course studying is important, but getting to know different people, making good friends that she can meet, and having fun – those are the things I really want her to do. That's good for her life." (p.14)
- "Well, she's a girl, so I want her to be a kind-hearted girl. But not in a way that is to be liked by someone, you know…someone who other people are happy just to be with. So

people say, "It's fun to be with her." Someone with a sense of their existence. It's not about standing out or not. Just that girl is kind and if she can be friendly with everyone that that's good. Even if she's not smart…" (p.17) Wants son to be well-educated and have a family and make a good living.

Time 3***
- X now enjoys first grade, despite not liking kindergarten. She cried a lot back then. Mom is relived she "really seems to enjoy going to school." (p.1) Mom also thinks that X adapted to school more readily because her older brother was there, too. (p.2) Mom doesn't know what changed or why she was so unhappy in kindergarten (p.5), but knows that having her brother at school with her made a big impact (p.10)
- Mom says X is making friends and even has a crush on a boy. (p.3-4) X showed notes she wrote to mom. X spends more time playing with friends now and has grown more independent.
- Mom describes X as cheerful and "pretty easy to take to people." (p.10)
- Mom finds that looking and talking to X reminds her of herself. (p.14)
- Would like X to go to a university, but "really wants her to acquire some kind of skills rather than just academic knowledge." (p.22)

Time 4****
- X enjoys school (2nd grade) and likes doing Japanese kanji. Mom thinks it's because she's a girl (p.1) X dislikes subtraction. Mom's friend has noticed that X is more responsible in various ways. She also has more opinions, is more cooperative, and becoming more of a leader in class (p. 2-3).
- X takes piano and English lessons. Mom believes it's important to know English b/c "it's an international society". (p.4) The kids attend after school club, too, where there are activities, games, homework time, parties, etc. (p.6) Older son is involved in baseball and X goes to cheer him on (p.7). Mom's not in a hurry to enroll kids in cram school yet… wants them to be stress-free (nobi nobi) for now. (p.8)
- Mom thinks both of her kids are both meddlers and good caretakers of others (p.10). She also describes them as shy: "lions at home, but mice outside." Seems to have a preference for her older son because he's a boy and he's "kawaii" (p.11) Mom thinks of herself as "boyish" and active, too. X defends brother when mom scolds him sometimes; brother looks out for X, too. (p.12)

Impression of herself as a parent:
Time 1:
- Her idea of an ideal mom is one like the mom in the TV drama: powerful, cheerful, unconcerned about small things, busy. Describes the mother as not being overtly demonstrative, and even strict and somewhat outwardly detached. But in the end, they appreciate it. "They don't express their kindness usually, but they have an internal kindness, the real kind inside." Doesn't want to be a mother who blindly loves her children or one who forces her ideals onto children. (p.1) Also wishes she could be logical and "talk at the same level as the child." Thinks she can't be like those "wonderful mothers" because she is too impatient. (p.1)

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- Doesn't want to be a mother who thinks her "children are really smart or their children can do everything. Or the mothers who think their children are not wrong. It irritates her when other mothers at the preschool can't accept when their child has done something wrong.
- Thinks parenting can be difficult and worries that she's still "childish. I am not mature enough. I sometimes wonder if I have the qualification to be a parent. I am not great so you know for children they can't choose their parents…I sometimes feel sorry for them." (p.2) Also feels like there's more she wants to do and study: "I am still developing.
- Wishes she could "work outside" but knows she probably can't have a full-time job with young children. Thinks she might find a job when the kids are in upper elementary school. (p.2) "I do not like this kind of life. I want to get stimulation and I want to see the outside world. I feel that I have many things to learn outside. Maybe I can go to school or I can study or I can get a job and I can start my life. And I don't know what it means to me…But to do that I need my own time…not as a mother, not as a housewife." (p.2) Doesn't feel like she does 'gaman' or have much stress.
- Because X's feelings are sometimes difficult to understand, "I just feel like I am not a good mother and I feel like I should be able to understand her feelings more….I think I am restricting her so I feel sorry for her." (p.3)
- Frustrates mom because X doesn't like to play at other people's houses, but "always invites them to come to our house. I think it's because she doesn't want to be apart from me. She wants me to stay around her." Part of her is happy that X wants to be near her, but she realizes it's too much "amae". X cries at the prospect of going to someone else's house to play the next day (p.3).
- Mom chose this preschool for X because it provides a school lunch, has a small class-size,. Older brother attended as well. Mom visited SIX preschools and attended meetings before selecting this one. Older son like the school because it's beautiful "like a castle." "I collected information and it met my requirements." (p. 3A) Wishes the preschool had more athletic activities.
- Older son attended an infant class because she "wanted him to interact with other children around his age (p.3B).
- Mom participates in the cultural and educational committee at the preschool. Elected position.
- Mom is careful to not scold X in front of her friends or her friends' mothers. Waits until they are in the car or away from the setting. (p.1B) Doesn't want to embarrass X. When mom is talking with friends, she's fine with stopping the conversation to scold X if necessary (dangerous situation). Doesn't want other mothers to think she doesn't discipline her kids. Admits that she sometimes scolds them more strictly when she's stressed or in poor health (p.2B), but realizes that "mothers are all so to a greater or lesser extent."

Time 2**
- Mom misses the more relaxed atmosphere of the preschool in terms of events. Misses the times when the families would do more 'playing' together. Enjoys very much being a member of the school committee (PTA). (p.4) Admits that there are issues they are divided on, especially since it's a lot of women, but overall she enjoys it. "I was of the opinion that as long as I managed to have fun while I was doing it, that was good

enough, so I did things from that perspective."(p.4-5) Enjoys working with other moms and seeing her kids more often. Sense of achievement and satisfaction from being involved. She likes being busy and realizes it's her choice. (p.5)

- Feels more relaxed with X entering school because she already went through it with her older son. Older son's transition to school was smooth (p.6) Mom helped organize a "sample-tasting" of the food that would be served at the school (p.8). Cares about how the food is prepped and served and the nutritional value.
- When mom was younger, she was involved in many lessons: abacus, swimming, piano, cram school. "So everyday I was running every which way."
- Mom tries to be reasonable when X misbehaves. She gets mad, but they have a discussion (p.11)
- Mom went to university and has good friends – wishes they could see each other more (p.15) They exchange holiday cards. Mostly spends time with her PTA friends.
- Has different expectations of son vs. daughter. Wants son to be a sports player. (p. 17)
- Was self-motivated and "very careful about doing things right. I tried hard, I guess." Hated being told that things were easier for her because she was an only child. (p.18) "I wanted to have the kind of personality that made it seem as though I had brothers and sisters." Didn't want to be thought of as a typical only child: obedient, cry-babyish. Wanted to be seen as vivacious, standing out, and as if she had a brother. Felt proud when people were surprised she didn't have sibs. Thought of being an only child as being a burden. Resented people's perceptions and assumptions about her. (p. 18) Acknowledges that she's "smart" and didn't have to be told to do anything be her parents (p.19). Sees herself as outgoing.
- She has always wanted "lots of children." Likes kids and wishes they could have 4. (p.18-19) Likes having a boy and a girl.
- Plans to run for PTA office again when her daughter is in elementary school (p.21). "Housewives definitely have to do it or else everyone thinks poorly of them." She also likes the opp. To meet different people and get a good look at the school.
- Was excited to become pregnant (p.13A). Pregnancy and gender of baby was predicted by a fortuneteller, but was somewhat difficult. Fearful that she would lose baby due to complications. She took parenting seriously and was a bit nervous and scared about it (p.14A), "but since he was born safely and the joy of that exceeded any anxiety or stress, I didn't feel them." Feels fortunate that she had her parents to help and advise her.
- When the kids argue, she listens and talks with them and also consults teachers and other mothers on their strategies. (p.19A) But admits that she doesn't like to say much to others because she doesn't want others to think badly of her family. Prefers to be the one dispensing advice (p.20A) Feels like she's an experienced mother now so she can reassure others. "My experience as a committee member at the kindergarten might also help me to get into a position where I can say things. Before that, I was just watching."(p.21A)

Time 3***
- Mom is a PTA class representative for the first grade, so she has opportunities to see her kids at school. (p.2) She is one of 24 chairpersons for all 6 grades at the school. Mom is very familiar with X's school subjects and schedule. As a licensed dietician, she also likes the school's lunch policies.

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- Mom places great importance on "getting along with other people" (p.6) Tries to teach her kids the importance of listening and being patient, and expressing oneself when it's appropriate. "I think it's more important for them than being academically smart at this point." (p.6)
- Interviewer asks about her self-described low maternal efficacy on t he questionnaire. Mom said she described herself as low confidence because "I easily get emotional…I myself need to be less emotional and stay calm."(p.14) She does feel like it's easier to parent the 2ⁿᵈ child because it's more familiar.
- Thinks that living with her parents increases her confidence level. "You can consult them about anything…I think it is a big help." (p.15)

Time 4****
- Mom is still a class council member, so she's able to drop by the school often and visit classrooms. She likes that being an officer gives her access (p.9)

General Impressions:
Time 1:
- Mom attends a bakery class with other moms and occasionally meets friends she met through her work with the PTA (p.13B).
- Has a good friend whom she met through her son with whom she talks on the phone about parenting issues. Both have daughters, too. They talk almost every day. (p.15B)

Time 2**
- Mom laments that teachers are becoming more like "salarimen" who aren't as invested in the children as they used to be. (p.12)
- Overall, seems content with her life and family. Also seems confident in her own abilities to raise her kids and juggle numerous activities. Sees herself as outgoing and well-liked by others (p.19). Liked being in positions of leadership and was often involved as a leader in activities. Ran for offices. Says she was picked on a lot in preschool and her mom would yell at the offenders. She remembers changing in elementary school and becoming a leader (p.20) Consciously worked to overcome her fears of public speaking.
- Self-motivated student and ambitious when it came to her education (p.2A-3A). Attended an all-girls college. Wants X to go to a co-ed college if she can because she thinks it's better for girls to be around boys. She'll also experience more. She became a nutritionist after college. Considered going on to grad school.
- She would like to work when X is a first grader (p.12A) She's still ambitious and imagines running for political office, but knows that husband and kids wouldn't support it.
- Mom has strategies for dealing with discipline and parenting issues – doesn't seem low efficacy at all. (p.19A) Seems self-confident as a woman and seems like she knows herself well. Outgoing and extroverted. Likes to think of herself as being experienced as a mother so she gives advice and comforts other moms.

Time 3***
- Likes being positions of leadership. Describes herself as having a "pretty positive-thinking personality…I've always tried to take everything positively. I didn't have any

particular difficulty or hardships." (p.11) Seems quite sure of herself and her parenting decisions.

- She didn't like the atmosphere at her women's college. Women were "sly" and had "underhand behavior." (p.11) Thinks all-female environments are competitive and brings out the worst in women.
- When she's stressed, she chats with her friends or goes out, but doesn't share her stress with them. (p.17) Admits that the area in which she lives is "an environment where people compare each other. Sometimes it's stressful living in this area. People in this area are relatively high-education and high-income…a lot of parents are serious about the education."(p.19)
- After the kids are older, she wants to do something for herself, as a hobby or a job. She admires women who are managing both being a mother and having a job (p.21).

Time 4****
- Mom works part-time from 11am to 5pm (or earlier sometimes) (p.13) She organizes ads for a newspaper Monday through Sat. She's not a PTA board member this year b/c she was one last year. She'll do it again next year. Mom has also been doing calligraphy (p.14) at the community center. She likes meeting people there and writing for exhibitions.
- Stays in touch with some school friends, but doesn't seem them as often as she'd like. They correspond about major events (births, moving) and holidays (p.16) She and a couple other families vacation together occasionally. They golf, go to hot springs, swim. Harder to coordinate now that the kids are all older with sports and activities.
- She and her family are not religious (p.17) Pessimistic world view. Makes generalizing comments about gender even though she's highly educated.