

# Critically discuss the changing of family values in contemporary japan as represe...

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Traditional male status in family  
In the traditional family value, male status was very high and the father was usually the head of the family, has the greatest power in the home.

This kind of family value could be traced back to Edo period or even earlier. But these kinds of family values were kept until 1970s-1990s. There are two reasons: Japan had a serious slump after the failure of the axis in WWII. The production was stopped. About 40% of the nations industrial plants and infrastructure were destroyed, and production was reverted to levels about fifteen years earlier. The Japanese government announced the preferential policy of coal which is based on the global political and environmental factors.

It focused on coal mining, refining, and distribution abroad again. As a result, there was a great demand for male workers, so the male social status rose. After that, the Japanese government required the companies to adopt the system of life tenure, so the companies trained their employees when they are still adolescents, and to be their own assets. The companies arranged a blind date for their employees as to avoid their resign for commission.

Women stayed at home as they are the main role to have a child to have a successor and take care of the family members, including father and their children, and further establish the status of the men home. Sasaki's family is a traditional family in the Tokyo Sonata, Sasaki was born in the 1960s and he was full of traditional concepts. Sasaki thought being a Daikokubashira have

responsibility to pay money for the daily life to his wife, Megumi, and also their children.

It is the same as other families at that time. Usually the fathers in most of the Japan families were used to order the other family members to do something he would like to see because he used to do that in the company when he was still the head of a department. It may cause a big gap between the father and the other family members especially the children. Male Status decline Unfortunately, because of the mixture of foreign cultures and globalization, the economic center has dispersed around the world. The mainland China has also become one of the most important transfer targets. As the labor cost in mainland China is cheaper than Japan, the whole department moved to the Mainland China.

It makes many workers who live in idleness, and the system of lifetime employment was totally collapsed. It caused a increase in unemployment rate in Japan. A lot of workers and salaryman in big company became jobless. For instant, the case in Tokyo Sonata, the company which Sasaki worked for at the beginning of the movie could employ three postgraduate students with the cost of a Japanese worker in Mainland China. And the company decided to move the whole department to there and fired all the original workers. The main reason of the male status was higher than women is that they are the most supportive person in the family which is the only economic strength, so they thought that they will loss their value if they loss their job.

This is one of the reasons that Sasaki did not tell Megumi that he was fired. On the other hand, because of the social trend, the women expected their husbands have a well-paid and important post in the company because they will compare with their friends. The fathers knew that their wife do mind if they became jobless. Also, following by the globalization, the new generation received different kinds of values, including family value. No one can talk freely and closely in that serious mode including Sasaki and his sons. We can see that two sons talked to their parents with two definitely different attitudes. They could not talk peacefully with their father because Sasaki always used an ordering attitude. Although two sons were born in a traditional family, they received a lot of information from another culture which made them resisted their father's attitude.

Result of Male Status declining Males want to keep their self-esteem and status in their family and different decisions lead to different results. Such as Kurosuo, after he lost his job, he started to hide this news from his family and set alarms to pretend that he still had to work. He knew that he and his family could not accept this fact. However, he found satisfaction in pretending still have a job. But when his wife tried to talk with him about his true situation, he still could not face it, finally he was found commit suicide with his wife which were died of gas poisoning. In fact, there are a lot of solutions in this kind of situation.

For example, his wife could find a job to solve the financial problem. It was unnecessary to stay at home and look after their daughter because she was already a year two student in high school. The thing they really could not

accept is the subversion of the traditional concept. Sasaki's family went to another way. When he was just fired, he also could not face it, same as Kurosu.

He knew that he was losing value in the family because of the joblessness. He tried to keep his status at home with scolding Takashi and hurting Kenji. But different with Kurosu, Sasaki started to find a new job actively. Although he did not want to lower his salary and post at first, he knew he had to find another kind of job which was being a dustman. At the same time, he started to put down his self-esteem, trying hard to be a good dustman. Actually his wife also could not accept this fact after she met Sasaki in the shopping mall. But she understood nothing could do with it afterwards so she tried to accept a new husband who was a dustman. There is a scene that representing the changing of Megumi which is after night sleeping in the house beside the shore. The sun rose up and she looked like considering about something.

Then the music which appeared at the very beginning is played again. It means Megumi changed the mindset and this family was full of hope and seems that nothing bad happen before. In the movie, it describes the mental changing of Sasaki and his wife, from resistance to acceptance.

Most of the families in Japan are experiencing this change same as Sasaki. Changing relationship between members Every coin has two sides. Lowering the status of males has also advantages.

The relationship between members becomes closer because the father may have better communication with them. Nowadays being a father becomes harder and harder, because except earning money for daily expenses, they have to start to really take care about the family members??™ feeling.

Putting the position lower may make the families have better relationship. At the end of Tokyo Sonata, Sasaki went back home with his dustman uniform. Kenji first time actively talked to Sasaki ??? you are strange by wearing this uniform???. Although it is not a position statement, it proof that the relationship between Kenji and his father became better because Kenji try to communicate with father. The change of father??™s status could let the father and son become friendlier.

Being a father in modern age, attitude should be friendlier rather than give order to the son. Foreign culture make the new generation think critically. So father usually explains why he asks for this to let them know how adult thinks. Actually their relationship seems like friends but not father and son. It can make the son feel that he is belonging to this family. In conclusion, the traditional family values were gone when the lifetime employment system collapsed.

Although it is bad for the economic of Japan and makes a lot of families turn into rupture, on the other hand it also makes a lot of family become closer and have better relationship. The traditional family value actually was built for the recovery of the economy. After rebuilding it, now the family concentration is going back into the kazoku, the nuclear family members.