

Japanese gender roles

[People](#)



Why and how is Gender affected in Japan's modern day society? These questions I sought out to answer. I chose Japanese gender roles because I felt it would be a topic of interest, and one I would do my best in to research.

It is a subject I have held some value in, and always wanted to learn more about. I had established rapport long ago with interviewee, when I became friends with Tomo Mizaki. This also helped me obtain consent from Mizaki to do this project with ease and be able to interview him. I had an extensive and productive interview with Mizaki, summing up a total of three hours. This paper will explain the Japanese families' gender roles. I conducted extensive ethnographic study with Mizaki with several interviews and backing up what he said with my own research of outside resources. This methodology of mine helped my research to be more solid and resourceful.

With the interviews and research I conducted, this helps me understand why and how the typical nuclear Japanese family acts and behaves a certain way, and how gender roles are affected upon the mother and father of the relationship. The traditional gender roles place men as breadwinners and women as homemakers. Among younger couples, more flexible gender roles are becoming popular, although attitudes are changing, actual behaviors are not: Japanese men do only twenty to thirty minutes' worth of domestic work per day, while women spend three and a half hours in household chores. Throughout Tomo's Mizaki's life, he was brought to do very well in school and get a great job after, not to clean up after himself. Unlike Tomo, his sister was only asked to do the house chores and never given much attention too, even though she too does well in school. Traditional gender roles in Japan are characterized by a strong sense of patriarchy in society,

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which account for the bifurcation of the productive and reproductive spheres, with a distinct separation of gender roles. In the family, this refers to the idea of the man as the primary breadwinner of the family, and the woman as the primary caregiver in the family, an idea that is described by Tomo Mizaki in his life.

Mizaki's mother had no "special duties" in her job, and her main roles were as a housewife, a mother, and in taking care of her ill mother-in-law. Even though she was a college graduate, and knew three languages fluently. In examining the nature of gender roles and inequality in Japan, it is important to consider the major traditional patterns, understanding how these patterns have changed today, and how the changes have affected society in general. This has resulted in a tension between the status and economic security of marriage and the freedom of remaining single, where many women find themselves trapped in marriages that deny them personal freedom. In addition, women in rural communities do not enjoy equal rights and status as their husbands, being expected to serve the families as "workers", while at the same time not rewarded in terms of inheritance. Gender roles in the family bear a close relationship to the situation in the workforce, where there is a strong male dominance in the company hierarchy. Resultantly, males possess increased career opportunities, unlike females, who are marginalized in the workforce and are considered to be temporary labor, expected to resign upon marriage or childbirth.

In the workplace, the idea that women play a temporary labor role has resulted in their limited career advancement. As can be seen, there is an intimate family-work relationship in Japanese society and this hinges on the <https://assignbuster.com/japanese-gender-roles/>

traditional gender roles within society. For example, Mizaki's mother is a graduate from the University of Washington but as soon as she had Kondo and his sister she retired to stay as the housewife. This shows the pattern of the patriarchy lifestyle. Show in the Annual edition article 20 in "Who needs Love! In Japan, Many couples Don't" by Nicolas D. Kristof. I don't interfere with my husband's business, not with my mouth, hands or legs.

" This statement, made by Kumiko Hashimoto, the wife of former Japanese Prime Minister Ryutario Hashimoto, underlines the traditional role of women in Japan. Husbands and wives report very little communication and conversation, as little as ten to fifteen minutes per day. For most part most husbands have a second home closer to work, rarely do they go back home with children and wife. There is no conversation, communication, and sexual relations between a husband and wife, but they do not divorce. This is because there is an unseen code for women and men. Because the traditional gender patterns in Japanese society have however not been without their tensions and problems. For instance, traditional patterns in the family require women to be put their husbands before their jobs, for example Tomo's mother.

Roles for mothers and fathers are segregated. Childcare is regarded as the mother's responsibility; the father's domestic role is limited to small household repairs and paying for household needs and the child's care, like school supplies. Mizaki explained how his father was rarely seen and if Mizaki was fortunate, he might see his father twice a week. Full-time working wives (which is not so common) also have the burden of housekeeping without help. Domestic help is not popular in Japan, when women need help in <https://assignbuster.com/japanese-gender-roles/>

housekeeping work and childcare, their mothers help the woman (according to Mizaki). Mothers prefer living close to their mothers' house for this reason. Husbands and wives call each other father and mother, even when children are not around.

Japanese couples regard parental roles as more important than couple roles when they have children. As can be seen, the patterns of gender roles in Japan are still deeply rooted in the Japanese psyche. In conclusion Japanese lifestyle and gender roles will not alter until specific life changing laws are made and enforced in today's modern day Japan. Even though Japan has low divorce rate, we do not fully understand if the women and men are happy the way they live, but they accept it and deal with it. Work cited Quoted in Mary Jordan, "A First Lady's Secondary Role; Premier's Wife stands behind her man, typifying gender roles in modern Japan", The Washington Post, 15 April 1996, Online, Lexis-NexisAcademicUniverse, 11 Mar 2000. Annual Editions, Article 20, "" Who needs Love! In Japan, Many couples Don't" by Nicolas D. Kristof.