

MANUFACTURING MEN: WORKING CLASS MASCULINITIES IN JAPAN¹

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I. Introduction

In her discussion of feminism and anthropology written in the late 1980s, British anthropologist Henrietta Moore pointed to the “crucial problem of analysing the intersections of class and gender differences” and noted that

The recognition of class and gender as mutually determining systems, and of the fact that gender differences find very different expression within different class levels, has...helped anthropology’s understanding of the changing nature of gender relations...(1988:80).

In this paper, I examine the intersection of class and gender in Japan as reflected in the importance of class differences among Japanese men. In particular, I draw on some of the recent literature on men and masculinities in order to examine the lives and identities of the working class men employed by the small manufacturing firm where I have conducted research (Roberson 1993, 1995a, 1995b, 1998). I first briefly discuss the problem(s) of/with the dominant representations of Japanese men. Next, I suggest an interpretive perspective that allows for diversified/diversifying and dynamic views of men’s experiences and identities.

Following this, I present an ethnographically based discussion of the construction of masculine identities among Japanese men working in small manufacturing firms. I discuss such identities in inter-relation with class contexted educational, employment and leisure experiences. In conclusion, I turn to a brief general discussion of class and masculinities in Japan.

A. Problem: Representing Japanese Men

In what has variously been viewed as social symbol (Takeuchi 1996), social-cultural construction (Kelly 1986), folk model (Miller 1995), state/corporate (Allison 1994) or gender (Hester 1988) ideology, and social-historical reality (Takeuchi 1996; Vogel 1971), the “new” middle class white-collar “salaryman”, (stereo-) typically employed in a large corporate or bureaucratic institution, has come to represent the ideal-typical Japanese man. As Laura Miller puts it:

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In popular media and books, and even in scholarly work, the general portrait of life and work in Japan inevitably entails an assumption that the “typical” Japanese person is an urban, middle class worker. This salaried worker, or *sarariman*, is characterized as having a life that includes college graduation, lifetime employment, group harmony and consensus, workplace hierarchy, and corporate paternalism (1995:20).

There are four dimensions of the salaryman image as representation and reality that I want to draw attention to here. First is that, as Miller points out, the focus on salarymen has been a dominant theme of not just Japanese but also Western popular and academic representations. While the normative and ideological aspects of Japanese images of and discourses on the salaryman may be pointed to by certain authors, their focus, and so ours, remains on Japanese men as salarymen.

Secondly, in various of these discussions of (and for) Japanese men as salarymen, there are underlying tendencies to assume the generalizability across both social space and cultural time of the salaryman identity as either ideology, ideal, or reality. Though claiming to be looking for historical roots and connections, this kind of ahistorical reductionism may be seen, for example, in David Plath’s statement, “scratch a salaryman, find a samurai” (1964:35).

Thirdly, I would like to suggest that whatever the interest or insightfulness of many such discussions, they bear witness to a rather pervasive bias towards research on and representation of the urban Japanese middle class and/or of the employees of large enterprises. Until very recently (see Kondo 1990; Turner 1995), this large enterprise, middle class bias has been especially apparent in discussions of Japanese companies and employees.² Indeed, there are those in Japan who would have us believe that Japan is a class-less, “new middle-mass” society (see Ishida 1993).

This middle-class focus and representational bias in portrayals of men in Japan is found also in other (not necessarily ethnographic) English language texts which purport to introduce different dimensions of modern Japan. Representations of men as salarymen may be found in discussions of the Japanese education system (Rohlen 1983; White 1987), and, perhaps somewhat more obliquely, in discussions of women and their families, where middle-class housewives have been most typically represented (Allison 1996; Imamura 1987; Vogel 1978; Hendry 1993; Iwao 1993).

The fourth issue that I want to raise is that, as either representation or reality, Japanese men have been portrayed almost exclusively in the contexts of or in connection to work and company. This is true not only of descriptions of men employed in white-collar but also in blue-collar jobs, and has also been true of discussions of the employees of smaller as well as larger companies (see Cole 1971; Clark 1979; Dore 1973; Kondo 1990; Nakane 1970; Rohlen 1974). Furthermore, discussions such as Allison’s (1994) description of “nightwork” or Atsumi’s (1979, 1980, 1989) various descriptions of *tsukiai*, locate male leisure firmly within company and work related contexts. We rarely see the men as *individuals or as men*.

The goal of this paper is thus to present a view of working-class men which emphasizes class related distinctions in the construction(s) of masculine identity/ies. This paper attempts

² There is a massive amount of literature on the Japanese economy, companies, and workers of potential relevance here (see Roberson 1998 for a brief review).

to see Japanese men as gendered beings constructing their self-identities, everyday experiences, and the courses of their lives within differing--and differentiating--class related contexts. In part, I see this as important because of the overly class biased nature of the representation, in general, of Japan and of the people living there. In part, I see this as important because of the dominance of salaryman biased representation(s) of Japanese men in, as Miller (1995) suggests, both popular and academic writing.

B. Perspective: A Gendered Theory of Practice

Above, I have suggested that class- and work(er)-biased representations have been dominant in Western as in Japanese discussions of Japanese men. To avoid reproducing these problems, I will be focusing on working-class men, and I will be emphasizing the inter-connections between class and gender. To do this means, of course, to have some inter-related notions of both of these latter terms. Moreover, I wish to avoid constructing a static conceptual category such as "the working-class man," to be contrasted with "the middle-class salaryman" (Connell 1987). This requires that we have a theoretical/interpretive perspective which allows us not only to break through class- or work-related contextual confines, but to simultaneously consider the diversity of experiences and identities among Japanese and to see these as dynamically inter-related with broader institutional and cultural structures.

In discussing these various dynamics, connections and contradictions, I employ "practice theory" (Bourdieu 1977, 1990; Giddens 1979, 1984) based views of class, gender, identity/agency, and context/structure. Here, socio-cultural structural reproduction and change are the on-goingly constructed outcomes (if also often unintended consequences) of knowledgeable individual action, which itself is not unilaterally or simplistically determined but is structured by and constructed within the contexts of broader social- cultural-historical structures and systems.

In thinking about class, I prefer to use Bourdieu's (1984) notion of "objective class" in which a class (or "fraction" thereof) is composed of "agents" whose lives are characterized by similar sets of both economic and cultural conditions of existence, or, sets of economic and cultural "capital". These shared conditions in turn produce "homogenous systems of dispositions capable of generating similar practices" (ibid.:101).

Practice theory approaches to the study of gender have been advocated and employed most notably by Sherry Ortner (1996) and R. W. Connell (1987, 1995). Both Ortner and Connell emphasize the "making of gender" in individual agency and practice and as simultaneously contexted within and inter- related with various broader social, economic, historical and cultural structures. Connell thus writes:

To understand gender, then, we must constantly go beyond gender. The same applies in reverse. We cannot understand class, race or global inequality without constantly moving towards gender (1995:76).

II. Japanese Working Class Men: Practice(s) and (Re) Production

From the perspective suggested above, class and gender are inter-related structures that

are also reflexively connected with individual agency and social practice. Connell has pointed out that "*Multiple* femininities and masculinities are...a central fact about gender and the way its structures are lived" (1987:63-4; emphasis added). Dorrine Kondo has noted that "when one is delineating the various cleavages among women, class differences are replayed in a powerful, distilled form" (1990:284).

If one accepts the theoretical proposition that variations in class (as materially and culturally conceived) should result in/from variations in gendered practice (and, as Connell suggests, gender as practice), then working-class men in Japan should manifest relative, not absolute, differences from salaryman members of the middle-class. In the rest of this section, I first briefly introduce certain of the economic conditions defining the working class in Japan, and then present ethnographic information on the education, employment and leisure contexted experiences, identities and practices among the men working at the small manufacturing firm where I conducted fieldwork in 1989-90. I will argue that in these we may see significant class related variations from the salaryman representational theme of masculinity in Japan.

A. Working Class in Japan

Various discussions of the class structure of contemporary Japan recognize some occupational, blue-collar vs. white-collar, basis for distinguishing working- from other classes (see Hashimoto 1990; Ishida 1993; Sugimoto 1997). While not consistently so in all dimensions, Japanese blue-collar working class men and women are generally recognized as having lower educations, incomes, home ownership, investment, luxury possessions, and so forth. Ishida also points out that "Firm size appears to be a powerful factor differentiating employees within classes" (1993:224). The class structure of Japan, he concludes, "is characterized by a combination of polarization and inconsistency of status characteristics with a further differentiation among employees by firm size" (ibid.:259).

The importance of firm size in the constitution of class and class fraction distinctions in Japan is suggested by a number of economic indicators. First, let me point out that contrary to dominant domestic ideals and foreign representations, most Japanese people (white- and blue-collar) are not employed by larger corporations but by medium-small enterprises.³ In fact, some 70 percent of all Japanese employees are employed by firms with fewer than 100 workers, 50 percent by firms with 30 or fewer employees.

Firm size, as Norma Chalmers (1989) and others have noted, is generally correlated with wages and benefits: the smaller the company, the less received. Bonus payments (based on monthly salaries) and rates of unionization also decline with firm size (Eccleston 1989; Koike 1995; see also MOL 1990; Sugimoto 1997; TCKK 1996). Smaller companies also provide less corporate sponsorship than do larger enterprises of dormitories and apartments, recreational and leisure facilities and activities, loans and so forth (see Steven 1983:166-7).

Rates of intra- and inter-firm mobility also differ among employees of large and small enterprises (Seiyama 1994). The higher inter-firm mobility of employees of smaller firms must

³ Medium-small enterprises are legally defined, in terms of numbers of employees, as firms in manufacturing with 300 or fewer workers, as firms in the wholesale trades with 100 or fewer employees, and as companies in the retail and service industries with 50 or fewer employees.

also be viewed in relationship with the higher rates of failure found among smaller enterprises (Anthony 1983). Finally, let me suggest that, as John Lie points out, "The gulf between white-collar employees in large corporations and blue-collar workers in small firms remains striking not just in terms of income [and other material conditions] but in terms of class culture" (1996:37--8; see also Kondo 1990).

Given all the above, I believe that it is indeed possible to talk about a working class, and of a working class fraction associated with smaller enterprises, in Japan. In the rest of this paper, I explore the difference(s) that class (fraction) makes for the construction of working class masculinities in Japan. I will be basing my discussion on anthropological fieldwork which I conducted in 1989 and 1990 in a small manufacturing enterprise in the Tokyo area (see also Roberson 1995a, 1995b, 1998, forthcoming). This firm, which I call the Shintani Metals Company, employed around 50 to 55 people during this time (more at the beginning, less at the end), including some 35 to 40 men. I have elsewhere suggested that, generally speaking, the lives of working class men and women are characterized by greater class enabled and necessitated diversity and flexibility than are those of middle class people. We will encounter this diversity in a more gendered form here.

B. Education: Tracks and Paths

Popular and academic representations of educational careers in Japan have come to portray Japan as a country with a highly structured educational system producing a highly, and in general uniformly, educated populace whose members are singularly motivated for (their children's, and especially their sons'--White 1987; Allison 1996; Brinton 1993) advancement through compulsory, secondary and post-secondary college levels.

However, the majority of Japanese students do not even now enter into either junior colleges or four-year colleges or universities. The class nature of education, in particular the role of education in class reproduction, has been discussed by a number of authors in- and out-side of Japan (MacLeod 1995; Willis 1977; Kariya 1988; Okano 1993). A consideration of gender needs to be added to such analyses to mark not just the educational reproduction of class but the construction of class contexted gender identities, male and female (on the latter, see Brinton 1993).

Among the men employed at the Shintani Metals Company in 1989-90, a set of reflexivities may be seen in the educations of these boys-becoming-working class men. In talking with many of these men about their educational backgrounds and school experiences, it was fairly common to hear them say that they didn't get into higher ranked institutions or go on to higher levels of education because they were stupid, their heads were no good, or similar such things. This, of course, reproduces the middle class based discourse of the meritocratic nature of the educational system. Talking in more detail, however, most of the men provided other, more contextual or circumstantial, and more positive and proactive, explanations. Among both the older men (then in their late forties to early fifties) and the younger men (in their twenties and early to mid-thirties), the inter-relationships among class context (material and cultural), family influences and personal preferences, in addition to (and inter-relation with) the educational system itself, must be considered to understand the educational production of these manufacturing men.

Class, as noted previously, may be understood to consist of both material and cultural

conditions or dimensions. Among the men at Shintani Metals, the class backgrounds of their families (here based on fathers' educations and occupations) may generally, though not uniformly, be considered to have been working class in nature (see Roberson 1995a, 1998).

In some cases, especially among the older men, many of whom had moved from rural provinces to Tokyo, family poverty or other circumstances such as the deaths of parents had made continuation beyond compulsory education a practical impossibility.

In other cases, however, families as the mediators of class context acted in more culturally constituted/ing ways. For some men, parents seem not to have placed great importance on educational achievement as such or entry into a university in particular. Other men talked of the influences of older male family members in going to industrial high schools or in pursuing the acquisition of practical, manual skills. Reflected in the comments of several of the men, both old and young, were also more personal preferences to acquire such skills or to work with machines in deciding on their educational courses--whether this meant ending their educations or, especially among the younger men, entering industrial rather than academic high schools.

Among the men with high school level educations were many who described a combination of factors and actors leading them to particular high schools or diverting them from other high schools or from entry into college. In addition to family influences and personal preferences these men also recognized the relative levels of their grades and the roles of their teachers in deciding the range of options open to them. I would like to caution, however, against being co-opted by the meritocracy ideology and assuming that grades are simple reflections of intelligence or academic ability and not necessarily of interest. I find it both theoretically and personally more appropriate to consider the relatively low grades reported by some of the men at Shintani Metals to be related to a significant degree to class culture, family influence and personal preferences.

C. Employment: Experiences, Careers and Courses

Having graduated from one level or rank of educational institution or another, the men at Shintani Metals all began and continue to work. Work, of course, is one of the central contexts of everyday experience and practice in the construction of masculine identities in Japan (Mathews 1996) as in many other modern societies (Morgan 1992; Connell 1995). One must, however, be wary of directly associating different masculinities with different occupations (Morgan 1992:80); and I will argue below that one must be cautious about assuming the singular centrality or primacy of work in the construction of male identities. However, the perceptions and experiences of work and the inter-relationships among personal identities, lifecourse and work as seen among the men at Shintani Metals suggest that there are work related class distinctions among men and masculinities in Japan.

1. Careers and (Life) Course

The typical description of male work careers in Japan represents these, like education, as rather linear, structured, secure and predictable, bound after graduation from school to and within one institution of employment and progressing through a standard set of lifecourse correlated stages (see Nakane 1970; Vogel 1971; Plath 1980, 1983). For some working class men a similarly constructed life trajectory is achieved, for other men such is at least desired.

However, for many other working class men, the construction of work career and lifecourse paths are more diverse, complicated and contingent than this, to some extent resembling the “fragmentary” and “contingent” work histories Dorinne Kondo has noted of the women working part-time in the small factory where she conducted research (1990:260).

Among the men working at Shintani Metals, there were several men who had remained at the company for (nearly) the entirety of their work careers, after having graduated from junior high or (industrial) high schools. However, the working class and small company contexts of the work and lives of these men must not be forgotten. As Robert Cole noted some time ago: smaller firms may (attempt to) offer “employment security *as long as the company lasts*” (1979:21; emphasis added).

The reasons that these and other of the men working at Shintani Metals gave for having entered that firm suggest less corporately structured or paternalistically tied themes. For many of both the older and younger men, employment at Shintani Metals was related to or based on personal preferences. These included the enjoyment of making things, of working with one’s hands, and/or of working with machines. Some of the men said they felt more suited to such work than to doing sales and working with people.

During the course of my fieldwork, some six men quit the Shintani Metals Company in search of better, or at least different, employment. Contrary to the skill oriented pursuit of employment among many working class Japanese men, including those at Shintani Metals, several of the men who left the company did so with the knowledge that their new jobs might or would necessitate that they do work requiring the use of different, possibly totally unrelated skills to those that they had acquired up to leaving. This nonchalance towards the specifics of the kind of work to be done was also reflected in the comments of many men in describing how they had entered Shintani Metals. While proximity to place of employment has been noted as important among part-time women (Shirahase 1995:271), this was also given as a reason for deciding to apply to Shintani Metals by several of the men there.

For many working class men, having their own skills, and making their livings by making things is part of the construction both of identities and of courses of work and life which manifest distinctions from those of white-collar, middle-class salarymen. For other men, what is important is more simply to be working or to have a job, not the particulars thereof--as long as work and employment conditions are relatively satisfying. While for many men the acquisition or use of particular skills is of greatest importance in determining the course of their careers, for many other men, one kind of job is as good as another, one company as good as another.

I believe that especially among working class men we must make a distinction between “work(ing)” and “job.” Work has many potential meanings and meaningful inter-connections in the lives and identities of working class as of other men. While I would agree that work and working are important for the men at Shintani Metals, I would argue that for many men, having a job at a particular company is of much less significance. Among the men at Shintani Metals, personally desired or embodied skills, personalistic obligations, or the more straight-forward need to make a living were of more importance than “company affiliation” or “company identity”.

2. Work (and) Experience

Among the men at Shintani Metals, there were several who explained that while working

in a larger company might provide better wages and greater prestige and security, they thought it would also subject them to stricter routinization of work and restriction of job range. These men suggested that they preferred the opportunities available in smaller firms to make use of a variety of skills; to receive more personalized recognition for their work; and to avoid getting stuck doing the same thing, as they felt would happen in larger and relatively anonymous organizations. Here, as elsewhere, there is a reflection of a sense of individual self-identity which differs from the (ideologically defined) group and company oriented salaryman. As Connell notes, "The making of working-class masculinity on the factory floor has different dynamics from the making of middle-class masculinity in the air-conditioned office" (1995:36).

For the men at Shintani Metals, the embodied, material and machine dependent nature of the manufacturing work which they did may more generally be seen to be part of the everyday practice which structures and gives expression to certain working class masculine identities (see Kondo 1990:241). While part of the manufacturing of masculine identities among working class men may be intimated in bodily practice, helping to differentiate these men from white-collar members of the middle class, this reflexivity of bodily practice may also create distinctions among "working class men" (see Fowler 1996). And, such bodily based differentiation may also, as Kondo (1990) has suggested in terms of the importance of embodied skills, separate the boys from the men.

C. Leisure: After and Outside of Work

David Morgan writes that "it is clear that in matters of gender as well as in other matters we cannot confine our analysis to the workplace...we are often dealing with the points of intersection between work and other relationships, particularly domestic and familial ones but also to do with class and community" (1992:98). In discussions of work, workers and workplaces in Japan, the intersections between work and domestic and family relationships have been commonly commented on only in regards to women (Brinton 1993; Kondo 1990; Roberts 1994). The failure to extend research about men beyond factory or office walls is gender based and biased, presuming that Japanese men's identities are essentially/essentialistically company (or, at most, co-worker) contexted. Japanese men, however, do indeed find meanings and construct identities at home and at play as well as at work.

Discussions of leisure in Japan, as is also still generally true of descriptions of work(ers), manifest and reproduce class biased views of play. This class bias can appear in various forms, including the essential erasure of class as a significant dimension in attempting to understand leisure (and consumption) related experiences and identities (Tobin 1992). More problematic from the perspective of this paper, however, are the continuing tendencies to view play only in company or co-worker related contexts and, related to this, to focus on after-hours leisure activities and relationships among white-collar middle-class Japanese men (Vogel 1971; Nakane 1970; Rohlen 1974; Atsumi 1979, 1980, 1989; Allison 1994; Dore 1973; Cole 1971; Kondo 1990).

Part of the problem here is a methodological restriction of the field of view within the company--company studies reproducing traditional anthropological village studies in drawing boundaries within which not just the research but the researched are held. However, there are also other serious interpretive and ideological assumptions at work in such descriptions of play. Most fundamentally, many of these authors seem to (have) presume(d), and not

necessarily to (have) demonstrate(d), that Japanese men's identities are forged only in/at work and with co-workers and are not significantly re-worked elsewhere nor embedded in other personal processes of identity construction.

1. Ideology at Work in Play?

To return to the men at the Shintani Metals Company, I argue that among these working class men leisure is significantly (though not totally) different from masculine leisure as represented by Allison (1994) and others. First of all, I find there to be little effective corporate (- ideological) structuring of leisure. As I have discussed in more detail elsewhere (Roberson 1995b, 1998), neither the company as such, particular workgroups, or other (semi-) formal groups such as the workers' association (there is no union) organize frequent leisure events or outings. The company owns no recreational facilities, as is more common of smaller than of larger enterprises. Furthermore, presence at "sponsored" events is not as obligatory as has been suggested by some writers such as Atsumi (1979, 1980, 1989) discussing white-collar employees. For these reasons alone, I find it very difficult to view these sponsored leisure events as effective means of creating bonds of solidarity (Rohlen 1974, 1975) or as a means to embody a corporate ideology (of whatever sort).

In addition to sponsored leisure events, the men (and women) at Shintani Metals also participate in leisure events organized by informal groups of *nakama* co-worker friends. These *nakama* groups are characterized by their flexible, non-workgroup based, memberships, relatively infrequent outings, and the non-obligatory nature of presence of members (though there are certain social limits to frequent absence). These *nakama* groups, although no doubt of some significance in the enjoyable creation of bonds of "solidarity", are also at times contexts in which the men and women involved express work/company related dissatisfaction and criticism, and through which they occasionally enact resistance to the company and its attempts at control. And, in *nakama*--as in many sponsored events--much of the conversation, joking and play was of a much more purely ludic nature than many representations of leisure in Japan would allow for.

I want to emphasize that what I have just said necessitates a full recognition of the (knowledgeable) agency of the participants. Leisure is a kind of practice, which like labor may be seen as a context for and means of producing certain kinds of embodied identities. But as practice à la Bourdieu and Giddens, leisure activities and events also involve the reflexive knowledgeability of the individual agents involved.

2. Family, Friends, and Self

Not all male leisure, even in Japan, is company or co-worker contexted or related--in practice or ideology. And, not all leisure among men that does have inter-connections with work necessarily does so in ways that a corporate- hegemonic representation would suggest. Although I believe that more work on leisure among middle-class men remains to be done to investigate the extent of their co-optation by company contexts and corporate ideologies, there do appear to be differences in the degrees to which blue-and white-collar workers are (en) able (d) to spend time with family and friends or by/for themselves/their selves.

Among the men at the Shintani Metals Company, active involvement in leisure activities with family members appears to have been related to stage of family development. When children are young, more or less up to junior high school age, men appear to spend more time

at home with their families. For some men, being at home also seemed to be a consequence of not having the monetary freedom to spend time and money outside. For young men in their late twenties to early thirties, the combination of a new (and, sometimes, newly independent) family life and relatively low wages could necessitate their presence at home.

Men, much more so than women, seem to spend time at home in essentially passive fashion. These sorts of lazy passing of time are, of course, enabled by a general set of gender relations and a broadly held gender ideology, not necessarily class determined. For other men, apparently regardless of the economics involved, spending time at home and with their children was more positively, actively pursued. The more active involvement in home and family life of working class men has been commented on by a number of authors. Yoshio Sugimoto, for example, has recently noted that Japanese blue-collar workers

find more satisfaction at home and in community life than do white-collar employees. Generally, they value family life and take an active part in community affairs. In community baseball teams, after-hours children's soccer teams and other sports clubs, blue-collar workers are prominent (1997:87; see also Linhart 1988; Imamura 1987:68; Roberts 1994:167).

For many of the men at Shintani Metals, a significant amount of the meaning of their work is centered on their families--they are working in order to make a living, to support their families. Japanese men, and perhaps especially working class men whose career ladders are more restricted and career competition less heated, are not just workers or employees but, as husbands and fathers, are also family men.

In addition to such family contexted or oriented leisure practice, most of the men at Shintani Metals also spend at least some time in more individual or private pursuits. Going to sporting events and going fishing were two fairly common pastimes that could involve the men in taking occasional days off from work. Several of the men enjoyed engaging in at least occasional petty gambling at pachinko parlors or horse races.

Class and work related leisure practices were also, more intimately, manifest in a range of other practices. There were a few men who claimed to enjoy using the skills that they also employed at work in order make things--for one man, jewelry; for another man, hunting knives.⁴ For other men, the connection of leisure to work was not quite as direct. Mr. Okakura, for example, painted, practiced calligraphy and has more recently begun making violins. These are all, as he himself once pointed out, like the work which he has done at Shintani Metals and elsewhere, things that one makes with one's own hands.

In seeing leisure and class as inter-connected, then, we must understand that the inter-relationships may be multiplex. Some leisure activities reflect economic constraints, while some reflect class cultural preferences or tastes. Other leisure practices make use of work based skills, and the skills used in some leisure practices in fact become the basis on which work careers are constructed. For the men working at the Shintani Metals Company, the facts that they are men who are members of the Japanese working class are revealed and reproduced in these, and other, leisure based as well as in their work based practices.

⁴ Note that this appears to differ from what Mouer (1995) reports. However, there may be interesting gender related dynamics at work in discouraging Mouer's informants from using their skills during their leisure hours, especially at home. Conversely, though still gender relative, I consider it possible that Mouer's research method may not have encouraged the men to admit that they cook at home.

III. *Conclusion(s): Masculinities and Class in Japan*

The lives, identities and masculinities being constructed by the men working at the Shintani Metals Company, while being recognizably "Japanese", were also in a diversity of ways very much of working class character and manufacture. It is the multiplicity of identities suggested here--born of the ongoing intercourse of class and gender--that I want to reflect on a bit further.

In his discussions of the inter-relations of "gender and power" (1987) and "masculinities" (1995), Connell makes use of distinctions and relations among "hegemonic", "subordinate", "complicit" and "marginalized" masculinities. Connell defines "hegemonic masculinity" as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (1995:77) and, furthermore, the dominant position of certain men over other men. As Morgan notes, "patriarchy is also about the dominance of men by men as well as the dominance of women by men" (1992:196), and "any society has a range of masculinities, historically shaped, which are hierarchically, if not always in an absolutely fixed fashion, arranged" (ibid.:203).

In this sense, the dominant salaryman images discussed earlier in this paper may be seen as representations of a hegemonic masculinity in Japan (see Hester 1988). The social, economic and political dominance of the salaryman and his lifestyle here become culturally valorized and (self-) legitimated, whether seen as folk model, gender ideology, or social reality. The social and ideological subordination of both women (in general) and other men becomes explained in terms of their sexual inferiority (for women), or in terms of their intellectual, psychological or other failures (for men).

The actual social, economic and political power of salarymen and their representatives over other men is in part a manifestation of differences in masculinities as "embedded" (di Leonardo 1991) in class differences. Connell uses the term "marginalization" to refer to "the relations between the masculinities in dominant and subordinated classes or ethnic groups" (1995:80-81). In this sense we may talk of the "marginalized masculinity" of working class Japanese men such as those at the Shintani Metals Company. These are men whose lives and identities, whose models of perception and of practice are, in fact, doubly marginalized. On the ideological or representational level, these men's identities and experiences, as men, are not given the same cultural legitimacy as is accorded to middle-class salarymen. On the social level, these men are excluded from positions of control and power.

Such exclusion or marginalization, however, must be seen in inter-relationship with the cultural practice of working class men themselves. The men at Shintani Metals are certainly aware of and to one degree or another influenced by images of the middle-class salaryman (and his family; see Kelly 1986; Roberts 1994). However, in many respects, the "marginalization" of the Shintani Metals men is a matter of class culture and practice which reject, resist or manifest preferences for the construction of lifecourses and identities other than those of the "hegemonic masculinity" of the salaryman. The educational, employment and leisure related or contexted practices, experiences and identities of the men working at the Shintani Metals Company suggest that these men (and working class women) hold

different, class related notions of what men should do, who men should be.

It is, I believe, possible to talk of a class related diversity of "masculinities" in Japan and that in this notions of "hegemonic", "marginalized" or other kinds of masculinities may be useful. Such diversity and difference among men in Japan may be found and analyzed at various levels. Connell suggests three levels of analysis: that of the individual life course; that of discourse, ideology, and culture; and that of institutions such as schools, companies and the state (1995:72-73). Whatever terms or levels of analysis we choose in attempting to discuss the construction of masculinities in contemporary Japan, we must also take into account the distinctions and differences of class.

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