

Part One

Chapter 2 Summary of the Survey Results

1. Parental Situations and Characteristics of the Children

(1) Parents as Survey Subject

Ages of the Sample Subject Parents:

Among the parents who participated in the survey, the highest average age of fathers is Thailand with 39.5 years old, and the lowest is the United States averaged at 37.1 years old. For the mothers' average age, Thailand again is the highest with 36.5 years old, and the lowest average age is Korea at 35.2 years old.

Spouse/Partner of the Parents:

Since we selected sample subjects who had fulfilled a role of parent regardless of legal marital status, we use the term "spouse/partner" instead of "spouse." The highest rate of parents with a spouse/partner is 99% in Korea, followed by 95% in Japan. The percentage of "single parent families" without spouses/partners is the highest in the U.S. at 13%, followed by Sweden at 10%.

Educational Attainment Levels of Parents:

In Korea and the United States, the educational backgrounds of parents who have "more than 14 years" of schooling is about 50% and the highest among the countries. On the other hand, Thailand and France show high proportions of less than 10 years of schooling.

In terms of the difference in educational levels between mother and father, the highest rate observed in all the countries is the category where there is no difference in educational background levels; in other words, they have the same or equal levels of education. High percentages of fathers who have a higher education background level than that of the mother are observed in Japan, Korea, Thailand, and the United States. The highest of all is Japan. In Sweden, the rate of the mother's educational background level being higher than the father's is greater than the rate of the father's educational background level being higher than the mother's.

The Employment Situation of Parents:

The highest rate of "families with both parents working" is observed in Thailand

(66%), and the next highest is Sweden (58%). The lowest rate of “families with both parents working” is Korea (37%), followed by Japan (42%). On the other hand, Korea also has the highest rate of “families with full-time housewives” (61%), while Japan is the second highest with 51%. The lowest rate of “families with full-time housewives” is 16% by Sweden.

As for the father’s employment status, except Thailand, the rate of “employed by someone else” has the highest percentage. The self-employed rate is high in Korea. In Thailand, the rate of “work at home” is higher than the other countries.

Regarding the employment status of mothers, there are more than 40% of “full-time” workers in both the United States and France, these being the highest rates compared to other countries. In Sweden “full-time” workers (36%) and “part-time/temporary” workers (33%) are almost at the same rates. The rate of “part-time/temporary” workers is relatively high in Japan with 28%.

Looking at the mother’s employment rate, it is the highest in Sweden (74.2%), followed in descending order by the United States (68.2%), France (67.4%), Thailand (65.9%), Japan (46.9), and Korea (36.0%). There are more than 50% of “full-time housewives” in Japan and Korea. Sweden has a lower rate of “full-time housewives” compared to other countries with 7%.

Working Hours of Parents:

For the average weekly working hours of parents, fathers in Japan and Korea have the longest working hours with 51 hours, and the percentage of more than 49 hours per week is over 50% in each of those countries. The fathers’ average working hours of the United States is 45.2 hours and that of Thailand is 45.4 hours. For France (39.1 hours) and Sweden (37.5 hours), less than 10% of fathers work more than 49 hours per week.

The average weekly working hours of mothers are long in Korea (44.2 hours) and Thailand (39.5 hours). The average weekly working hours of less than 35 hours is highest in Japan with 56%, Sweden with 51%, and France with 49%.

(2) Children of the Subject Parents

Relationship of Parent to the Child:

In terms of the relationship between parent and child, “biological child with the current spouse” account for the largest proportion in all the countries. In the United States and Sweden, about 10% of the children are stepchildren or adopted. In Thailand, the rate of “other” is 12%.

Schools or Institutions Attended by the Children:

In terms of institution or school attended by the children, infants up to 3 years old who are going to such institutes as nursery schools is only around 20 % in Japan, Korea, Thailand, and the United States, whereas the rate is about 50% in France and Sweden. The percentages of children “not attending any form of school” and “always stays at home” are 70% in Japan, Korea, and Thailand.

(3) Household Characteristics

Household Size:

In terms of household size, Thailand has the highest average number of people living together in a household with 4.8 persons, followed by Japan with 4.5 persons. The smallest is 3.9 persons by Sweden. The percentage of six or more people living together in a household unit is relatively high in Japan and Thailand.

The Number of Children:

For the number of children, including both living together and not, the U.S. and Sweden have the highest average number of children in total with 2.7 persons, followed by France with 2.24 persons. On the other hand, Korea has the smallest number of children in total with 1.82 persons, Thailand with 1.98 persons, and Japan with 2.11 persons. The rate of the number of households without children living together is around 10%, except in Japan and Korea.

Composition of Households:

Nearly all households are two-generation households (“nuclear families”) in France and Sweden. Moreover, two-generation households are also make up more than 90% in the United States and Korea. In Japan and Thailand, there are relatively high numbers of “lineal three-generation households,” and there are also a large number of “collateral extended family households” in Thailand.

Household Income Breakdown by Father and Mother:

As to the ratios of father’s and mother’s income within the total household income, fathers of Japan and Korea have the highest ratios with an average of approximately 85% of the total household income, while the average percentages of mothers’ income are low with 14% in Japan and 16% in Korea. In the United States, France, and Sweden, there are no

significant differences in percentages of the fathers' income in total household income within 60~70%, while percentages of the mothers' income are 39% in the United States, 47% in France, and 52% in Sweden – the latter being the highest for mothers among all the countries. In Thailand, the mean of percentages of fathers' income within households is 57%, the lowest compared to the other countries, and it is 34% for mothers, which is not as high as Sweden and France.

(Takashi Fujimoto)

2. The Everyday Life of Parents and Children

(1) Time Spent Together with Children

We asked parents what sort of things they do when spending time with children by having them choose from 15 answer options. The answer options that resulted in high percentages are “we have meals together,” “we talk,” “we go places together,” and “we play together”, and these are ranked within the top 6 in each country. “We watch TV together” ranks low only in France, in the 10th place with 30%. “We sleep in the same room” is common in the three Asian countries that ranked in between 5th~8th with more than 50%, but in the three Western countries it is ranked in the last place with less than 30%. “I teach about housework/we do housework together” ranked below 12th place with less than 30% in Japan, Korea, and France. Korea Especially has a low ranking of 15th place with about 20%, while America, Thailand, and Sweden are at a high with 40-50%.

Compared with the research results from 1994, although there are no significant changes for the items ranked higher, we see some increase of “I drop off and pick her/him up at the childcare center/school” in Japan and especially in Sweden. Moreover, the number of “I help with school work/ I help her/him study” has increased outstandingly in the United States and Thailand.

Looking at the results by gender of parents, for items like “I teach sports/we play sports together,” “we play together,” and “we watch TV together”, there are small differences between fathers and mothers in each country, and the numbers for fathers are slightly greater than those for mothers in most of the countries. When observing the number of items that percentages of fathers are higher than mothers, Thailand shows the most with 6 items, and the lowest number of items is marked by Korea and the United States with 1 item. Furthermore, for the number of items with more than a 20% difference between fathers and mothers, Japan is the highest with four items, Korea has three items, and the lowest is France with zero items.

Looking at the results by age of children, for the items “I bathe her/him /we bathe together,” “we sleep in the same room,” “I help her/him get changed/I get her/his clothes ready for changing,” and “we play together,” the younger the child, the higher the percentage in every country. For the item of “I help with school work/I help her/him study,” distributions of the highest percentage are the ages of 10~12 in Sweden, 7~9 in Japan, the United States, and France, and 4~6 in Korea and Thailand. When compared with the research results from 1994, “I help with school work / I help her/him study” in Thailand is the item of the most significant change; there is an overall increase, but it is highest at 20% for children ages 0~3.

To look at the average number of items selected by an individual, the average number selected by mothers is greater than the average number selected by fathers in each country. Thailand has the highest averages for both mothers and fathers among the countries, while France shows the lowest averages for both mothers and fathers. In Japan and Korea, there are large differences between mothers and fathers in the number of items selected. In comparison with the research results from 1994, the average number of items has increased in every country. The increase of the average number of items in Thailand stands out especially since Thailand showed the lowest average during the previous research in 1994. The large difference between fathers and mothers in terms of the number of items selected in Japan and Korea remains the same.

(2) Time Spent Together with Children

For the amount of time the parents spent together with their children on weekdays, fathers in Thailand spent between 5 and 6 hours, fathers in the United States and Sweden spent between 4 and 5 hours, fathers in Japan and France between 3 and 4 hours, and fathers in Korea between 2 and 3 hours. Mothers in Japan, Korea, the United States, and Thailand spent time with their children for 7 to 8 hours, and mothers in France and Sweden spent 5 to 6 hours with their children. As for the difference between fathers and mothers, mothers tend to spend more time with their children than fathers do in all the countries, and the difference is largest with more than four hours in Japan and Korea.

Compared with the previous research results from 1994, the average time Japanese fathers are spending with their children has somewhat decreased, but the mothers’ average has increased. In Korea, the averages for both fathers and mothers have decreased by more than 1 hour. In Thailand, the fathers’ average has increased slightly and the average of mothers increased by 1 hour. In the United States, the average of time decreased slightly for both fathers and mothers. In Sweden, the fathers’ average has increased by 1 hour and

mothers' average has decreased slightly. Based on these results, the changes in differences between fathers and mothers in the last 10 years for each country are as follows: the difference has reduced by more than one hour in Thailand and Sweden, the difference between fathers and mothers has also reduced in Korea, there has been no significant change in the United States, and the difference between fathers and mothers has become greater in Japan.

To see the results by age of child, there is a tendency in all the countries that the amount of time fathers and mothers spend together with their children gets shorter as children get older, and the tendency is more distinct for mothers than for fathers. In case of fathers, this tendency is weak in Japan, Korea, the United States and France, but is strong in Thailand and Sweden. Compared with the research results from 1994, there is no significant change observed as a whole. Fathers in Japan, however, show a stronger tendency to spend less time with a child the older the child gets. Looking at the research in 1994, fathers in Japan spent more than three hours together with their children for all age groups, but this time, they spent more than three hours with children until the age of 6, and the amount of time was reduced to between two and three hours when their children are seven or older. Although a similar tendency is observed for fathers in Sweden, they spent more than six hours of the increased amount of time together with their children when their children are 0~3 years old.

To look at the results based on whether a mother has a job or not, you can see that mothers without jobs spend more time with their children than working mothers do in all the countries, and the difference is largest with more than three hours in Japan and Korea. Compared with the research results from 1994, the difference between mothers with and without jobs in their time spent together with their children has reduced in Japan, Thailand, the United States and Sweden. Especially in Thailand, the amount of time reduced is significant and more than one hour. Only in Korea the difference has become wider. In Japan and Korea, the difference between mothers with and without jobs is large.

(3) Shared Family Activities

We asked the parents how many times a week they have done the following recently with all members of the family who live with them: (a) ate evening meal together, and/or (b) spent free time together. The average number of times a week families ate an evening meal together in each country are between 6 and 7 times in France and Thailand, between 5 and 6 times in Sweden and the United States, and between 4 and 5 times in Japan and Korea. As for spending free time together, the average number of times a week in each country are between

5 and 6 times in Thailand, the United States and Sweden, 4 and 5 times in France, between 2 and 3 times in Japan, and between 1 and 2 times in Korea. The result shows a rather wide distribution and large differences among the countries. Japan and Korea show the lowest average numbers for both questions.

(4) Parental Roles in Child Rearing

We asked the parents four questions as to how the mother and father share and divide the roles in raising their child. In all countries, the role of “providing a meal/feeding” is being fulfilled mainly by mothers (more than 50%). Japan is the highest of all the six countries with between 80% and 90% of mothers providing meals. Sweden marks the lowest with between 50% and 60%. Comparing with the research results from 1994, there has been no significant change overall in all the countries. The percentage of “mainly the mother,” in Sweden, however, has decreased by more than 10% and “mainly the father” has increased by 10% instead.

To look at the percentages of fathers contributing to the parental role of “providing a meal/feeding”, whether both parents are working or not and combining “mainly the father” and “both,” the percentage shared by fathers whose spouses are also working is higher than the percentage of fathers in a family with a full-time housewife/house husband (homemakers) in Korea, Thailand, the United States, and France. There is no difference in percentages whether both parents are working or not in Japan and Sweden, however, the differences are significant when observing Japan with 10.1% and Sweden with 45.6%. When compared with the research results from 1994, except for Japan and Sweden, the tendency for fathers to share responsibilities has become stronger in families where both are full-time workers.

The parental role of disciplining is fulfilled by both parents as it is more than 40% in all the countries. However, in Japan and Thailand, the percentage of “mainly the mother” is higher than “both,” while the percentage of “both” is higher in Korea, the United States, France and Sweden. Compared with the research results from 1994, “both” in Korea has increased by approximately 20% and “mainly the mother” has decreased instead. Other than Korea, there has been no significant change.

To see the percentages of fathers contributing to the parental role of discipline by whether both parents are working or not, no difference is observed in Sweden, while the contribution by fathers whose spouses are working is higher in Japan, Korea, Thailand, the United States, and France. The trend is especially strong in Thailand. In Sweden, fathers whose spouses had jobs showed a higher percentage than fathers whose spouses were fulltime homemakers during the research in 1994; however, the same trend can not be observed in the

results this time.

In all the countries, 10~30% of parents responded that “going to parents association or teacher meetings at school” is something they “don’t do / is not necessary”. The percentage of responses that it is the responsibility of “mainly the mother” are: more than 60% in Japan and Korea, 50% in France, more than 40% in Thailand, and more than 30% in the United States and Sweden. To look at the percentage of fathers contributing to the parental role of “going to parents association or teacher meetings at school” by whether both the mother and father are working or not, the percentage of fathers whose spouses have jobs is higher than that of fathers whose spouses do not have jobs in all the countries. This question item is new and did not exist in the research in 1994.

The role of “earning for living expenses” is mainly fulfilled by fathers in Japan and Korea as the percentages are greater than 70%. In Thailand and the United States, “mainly the father” and “both” are competing with close percentages of over 40%. The percentage of “both” in France is more than 50%, and in Sweden is more than 60%. Comparing with the research from 1994, Thailand shows a dramatic change in which “mainly the father” and “both” have increased by 20% each, while “mainly the mother” and “don’t do / not necessary” have decreased by 20% each.

There are almost no differences among the countries in terms of the fathers’ percentages for the role of “earning for living expenses” by whether their spouses have jobs or not. When it is compared with the research results from 1994, you can see the percentage of fathers in Thailand has become the same level as in other countries.

How much fathers share parental roles of child rearing is summarized by each question item as follows. For “(a) providing a meal/feeding”, Sweden is the highest with more than 40% and Japan is the lowest with just more than 10%. For “(b) disciplining”, Sweden is the highest with more than 80%, while Korea is the lowest with more than 40%. As for “(c) going to parents association or teacher meetings at school”, Sweden again is the highest with more than 50%, while Japan is merely more than 10% and Korea is less than 10%. Lastly, for “(d) earning for living expenses”, both Korea and Japan are more than 90% and the rest of the four countries is more than 80%. Compared to the research results in 1994, the percentage of providing a meal/feeding has increased in Sweden, the percentage of disciplining has increased in Korea, and the percentage of earning for living expense has increased dramatically in Thailand. There are no significant changes observed for Japan and the United States.

3. Child Discipline and Expectations for the Child

(1) Child Discipline

① What the Child Is Able To Do Alone at the Age of 5

We asked parents four questions about what basic manners and practices their children were able to perform alone by the age of 6. In all the countries, more than 80% of parents think that children are able to “greet people properly” by the age of five. Between 70% and 80% of parents in Japan and Korea expect their children to be able to “eat with good manners,” while more than 90% of parents in all the other countries expect their children to do the same. Japan and Korea show relatively lower percentages for this item. As for “be able to keep herself/himself clean”, Thailand shows the highest percentage with over 90%, followed by the United States and Sweden, both more than 80%. Japan is 78%. As for “able to clean up after playing”, Thailand and the United States are the highest with more than 80%, and Japan, Korea, France, and Sweden are between 60% and 70%. Compared with the previous research results from 1994, although there has been no significant change overall, there are some remarkable changes which can be seen when observing the details. The percentage of children able to “greet people properly” has increased by about 10% in Thailand, and the percentage of “keep herself/himself clean” has increased about 10% in Japan and almost 20% in Korea.

Overall, parents in Thailand answered with the most choices under the category of things “a child could do alone at the age of 5”. The percentages of answers for the same category made by Japan and Korea are relatively low. Comparing the results by the child’s gender, in Japan, more expectations are placed on girls than on boys in all the items. This difference is not evident in the other five countries. This result is also similar to the previous research results from 1994.

Comparing the age of children, all five countries except Thailand show lower percentages of children who can actually “clean up after playing” than their parents’ expectations. Thailand’s trend is different from trends of the other five countries in all the items of the questionnaire. There are large differences between the 0~5 and 6~12 age groups for every item in the United States, therefore also indicating that children are not actually able to do things by themselves when compared to what the parents expect. Korea shows a small gap between parents’ expectations and reality.

② What the Child Should Be Able To Do Alone at the Age of 15

With regard to disciplining children, we asked what the child would be capable of doing alone at the age of 15, divided into four questions. The percentage of parents who thought that their children would “be able to keep surroundings clean and tidy” and could “observe rules appropriate for the time, place, and occasion” is more than 85% in all six countries. Around 80% of parents expect their children to be able to “prepare meals for the family” in Thailand, Sweden, and the United States, while the expectation is a low 40%~50% in France, Japan, and Korea. The expectation for children to “earn money by doing a part-time job” is 80% in the United States and is by far the highest among the countries. The percentages for Sweden and Thailand are 40%, 30% in France, 10% in Japan, and less than 10% in Korea.

For this questionnaire, the only item that can be compared with the previous research from 1994 is “prepare meals for the family.” Although there has been no significant change, the percentages of Japan and the United States have slightly decreased, Korea remains the same, and there are slight increases observed in Thailand and Sweden.

Overall, Japan and Korea show relatively low percentages for what a child can do alone at the age of 15. Comparing by gender of children, there is almost no difference for the items “is able to keep surroundings clean and tidy” and “observes rules appropriate for the time, place, and occasion.” While a greater expectation is placed on girls than boys for the ability to “prepare meals for the family” in all the countries, Japan shows the largest difference by far between girls and boys for this question item, and Thailand shows the smallest difference. Focusing on the expectation for boys to be able to “prepare meals for the family,” the highest are Thailand and Sweden with over 80%, followed by the United States with over 70%, for Japan and France with over 40%, and Korea with over 30%.

Comparing with the previous research, the percentage of children who can “prepare meals for the family” have decreased about 10% for girls in Japan and Korea, and increased by about 15% for boys in Thailand.

(2) Expectations for the Child

We asked parents 9 questions as to what they expect their children to be like when they reach the age of 15. The highest rated items that parents have “strong expectations” for their children in each country include: “clearly state his/her own opinions” is the highest in Japan, “have his/her own goals in life” in Korea, “be masculine (male) or feminine (female)” in Thailand, “be concerned about others and will help a person in need” in the United States and Sweden, and “be obedient to his/her parents” in France.

The items that parents have “strong expectations” for their children in Japan are “be able to work harmoniously with others” (2nd) and “be concerned about others and will help a person in need” (3rd). The things that are less expected by Japanese parents for their children are “gets good marks at school” (8th), and “be successful when competing against others” (9th). In Japan, there is a higher expectation of parents for boys to “be masculine” than for girls to “be feminine”. Moreover, there is a stronger tendency for Japanese fathers to expect their children to be “masculine or feminine” than mothers do. Among the six countries, this trend is the strongest in Japan.

In Korea, similar to Japan, parents’ expectations for children to “be successful when competing against others” (8th) and “get good marks at school” (9th) are relatively low. With regards to “very strongly” expecting their children to “be masculine or feminine,” fathers tend to have higher expectations than mothers do, and there is a stronger expectation placed on boys than girls.

In Thailand, while the highest percentage item with “strong expectations” is to “be masculine (male) or feminine (female)”, there is also a tendency to place stronger expectations on boys than girls for all the items except “get good marks school.”

In the United States, parents tend to have high expectations for children in all the items. A strong expectation for children to “be masculine or feminine” is 60% as a whole and is the highest among the 6 countries, but in American, there are no significant differences by gender of parents or by gender of children. In addition, parents in the United States expect their children to “get good marks at school” as the third highest percentage with over 70%, whereas the percentages/expectations of the same item are low in Japan and Korea.

In France, the most expectation placed on children is to “be obedient to his/her parents” with the highest percentage, and to “get good marks at school” is ranked in third place with 70%. Overall, there are no significant differences by fathers and mothers as well as by gender of children, however, fathers more than mothers strongly tend to expect their children to “be willing to accept responsibility and be a leader” and “be successful when competing against others”.

In Sweden, the parents’ most “strong expectations” for children is to “be concerned about others and help a person in need” with the highest rate. Furthermore, the expectation seems to be higher for boys than girls, although the parents’ expectations for children to “be masculine (male) / feminine (female)” is only the eighth highest percentage with 10%, thus being the most negative among the six countries. For the other items, differences in expectations for boys and girls are quite insignificant. Mothers in Sweden tend to “very

strongly” expect more than fathers do for their children, and this trend is the strongest in Sweden among the six countries.

(3) Expectations for the Child’s Future

We asked parents what they wish for their children’s lives in the future by asking six question items. In all the countries, parents “very strongly” expect their children to make “a happy home” as indicated by the highest percentages. For the second highest, parents expect their children to be “willing to help others“ in Japan, Korea, the United States, and Sweden, while parents in Thailand and France expect their children to “attain high earnings”. The least expected by parents for their child’s future is “fame or celebrity”, and ranked as sixth in Japan, Korea, the United States, France, and Sweden. It is listed as the fifth highest in Thailand.

Even though the percentages are different, the order of what parents hope for their children’s future is exactly the same in Japan, Korea, and Sweden. Parents’ expectations are different by gender of children in Thailand; parents’ expectations for their children to obtain “high earnings”, “fame or celebrity”, “high status”, and for them to have a “willingness to help others” were higher for boys than girls. Similarly in Sweden, parents expect more from boys than girls for “willingness to help others” and to make “a happy home”. In Japan, parents’ expectation is higher for girls than boys to make “a happy home”.

(4) Future Lifestyles that Parents Do Not Wish for Their Children

We prepared a questionnaire related to future family lifestyles and asked parents to choose from 11 items they do not wish for their children.

In Japan, the highest rate of items that “parent do not want their child to do” are: “to live with a same-sex partner as a homosexual couple”, “to remain single for life”, “to divorce while raising a child”, “to have a child out of wedlock”, and “to have no children”. The items are in the order from the highest to lower rates, and all of these items are more than 60%.

In Korea, there are 5 items that “parent do not want their child to do“ with percentages over 90%; From the highest to lowest they include “to live with a same-sex partner as a homosexual couple”, “to have a child out of wedlock”, “to divorce while raising a child”, “to live with a member of the opposite sex without formally marrying”, and “to remain single for life”.

In Thailand, the top five items that “parent do not want their child to do” are: “to live with a same-sex partner as a homosexual couple” with over 80%, “to remain single for life”, “to divorce while raising a child”, “to live with a member of the opposite sex without formally

marrying”, and “to raise an adopted child, stepchild or child otherwise not related by blood” with over 70 %.

In the United States, there are five items that are more than 60%: “to remain single for life”, “to live with a same-sex partner as a homosexual couple”, “to have a child out of wedlock”, “to divorce while raising a child”, and “to live apart from her/his spouse because of her/his career”.

In France, the items with more than 50% are “to remain single for life” and “to have no children”, followed by items with over 40% “to live with the parents of her/his spouse” and “to live with me and her/his spouse”. Items with very low rates around 5% included “to have a child out of wedlock”, “to live with a member of the opposite sex without formally marrying”, “to raise an adopted child, stepchild or child otherwise not related blood”, and “to remarry while raising a child from a previous marriage”.

In Sweden, the proportion of parents who do not want their children “to remain single for life” is very high with more than 80%. In addition, the percentages for items like “to live with me and her/his spouse” and “to live with the parents of her/his spouse” are around 70% and this is extremely strong among the six countries. The fourth highest item in Sweden is “to have no children” with over 60%. This percentage is the third highest among the countries, following Korea and Thailand. The percentages of other items are very low as can also be seen in France.

As for France and Sweden, the future lifestyles parents consider as undesirable for their children are clear and distinctive. Unlike Korea and Thailand showing almost all lifestyles as undesirable, only limited types of lifestyle are considered as highly undesirable and the rates for other lifestyles are very low. In France and Sweden, the percentages of parents who do not want their children “to live with a same-sex partner as a homosexual couple” are quite low at a 30+ percent level, whereas the same item is perceived as the number one undesired lifestyle in the three Asian countries. Moreover, the three Western countries have a low percentage with less than 10% of parents who do not want their children “to raise an adopted child, stepchild or child otherwise not related by blood”. On the other hand, the three Western countries have a high percentage of parents who do not want their children “to live with the parents of her/his spouse” and “to live with me and her/his spouse”.

Compared with the previous research in 1994, there has been no significant change in Japan and Korea. In Thailand, the overall rate of undesirable future lifestyles for children has become higher. For both the United States and Sweden, there were few significant changes, except for the category “to live with a same-sex partner as a homosexual couple”. The

percentage of parents in Sweden who do not want their child “to live with a same-sex partner as a homosexual couple” has dropped by half from 68% to 32%. In the U.S. it has fallen from 76% to 65%.

Looking at the difference depending on the child’s gender, parents do not wish their daughters “to have a child out of wedlock” in Japan, Thailand, and the United States. There are also many parents who do not want their daughters “to live with a member of the opposite sex without formally marrying” in Japan and Thailand. In France and Sweden, there are no differences by gender of a child observed in any item of the result. Compared with the previous research in 1994, in Korea, there were many responses from parents who did not want either their sons “to live with the parents of his spouse” or their daughters “to live with me and her/his spouse,” however it seems such a trend has become weak.

(5) Expectation for A Child’s Educational Attainment

We asked parents about expectations for their children’s educational attainment level. Many parents in Japan wish their children to go to “university/college” as shown by the highest rate of over 40%. More than 20% of parents in Japan wish their children to go up to “high school”. 20% of parents responded “junior college” for girls, showing there is a difference in parents’ expectation depending on the gender of children. Compared with the research in 1994, the expectation for “high school” has increased from about 10% to 20%. Especially for boys, parents’ expectations for their sons to go to “university/college” have decreased from 66% to 52%.

Parents in Korea expect their children to go to graduate school, showing that their expectations for children’s educational attainment are especially high. When compared to the results from 1994, educational expectation has somewhat decreased because parents’ expectations for their children to go up to graduate schools has decreased while “university/college” increased.

In Thailand, “completion of bachelor’s degree” is high with 52%. Although it is difficult to see changes from the research in 1994 due to the different answer options used in the research this time, the percentage of “any level is fine” has decreased from 26%, thus it may indicate that the parents’ expectations for education have become clear and substantial. There is no difference by the child’s gender.

In the United States, the combined percentage of “4 year college” and “graduate school” is over 80%. There is no difference by the child’s gender. There has been no significant difference from 10 years ago.

In France, most parents want their children to have a “qualified entry into university” level or beyond. It is notable that 30% answered “any level is fine.” There is no difference by the child’s gender.

In Sweden, over 50% of parents wish their children to go to “university/junior college”, and 20% for “high school”. There is no clear difference in parents’ expectations by the child’s gender.

(6) Child Rearing (What it means to have a Child)

We asked 5 questions regarding what having children and child rearing mean to the parents.

Parents think that “raising children is fun” as the proportion of <“I agree (total)” [= “I agree” and “I partly agree” combined] is very high (more than 90%) in each country, except for 57% in Thailand. Dividing the result by the parents’ gender, the percentage of fathers in Korea who answered “I agree” is higher than the percentage of mothers who answered the same.

The percentage of parents who answered “I agree (total)” to “children strengthen family bonds” is remarkably high in each country. It is more than 95%, except for France which shows a little less with 89%.

For “raising children costs money,” the percentages of parents who answered “I agree (total)” are quite high in the United States, Korea, and Japan. However in Sweden, the percentage of parents who answered “I agree (total)” is low with 67%, and the percentage of parents who answered “I don’t agree” is over 30%. There are also more than 10% of parents who answered “I don’t agree” in France and Thailand. Splitting by gender of parents, the percentages of “I agree” are high for mothers in Thailand and Japan.

For the question of “children will be an emotional support in old age,” 98% of parents in Thailand responded with “I agree”. The lowest percentages are around 80% in Japan and Korea. Splitting by gender of parents, the proportion of mothers in Thailand who responded “I agree” is very high with 87%. Although the differences are small in the other countries, the percentage of mothers who answered “I agree” is slightly higher than the percentage of fathers who answered the same

For the question “children will be an economic support in old age,” the percentage of parents who responded “I agree” in Thailand is far and away the highest with 80%. The percentage is just over 20% in Japan and Sweden, with Sweden the lowest.

(7) Ideas about Child Discipline

For the question item, “it’s okay to hit a child, as long as you do it with love,” there are clear trends that the proportion of parents who responded “I agree (total)” = (sum of “I agree” and “I partly agree”; the same applies below) is high in the three Asian countries with more than 70%, whereas the proportion tends to be low in Western countries with less than 40%. Especially in Sweden, more than 90% of parents responded with “I don’t agree at all”.

For the question, “it’s acceptable for a child to behave in a spoiled way,” the total number of “I agree” is more than 50% in the United States and Sweden. It is especially high in Sweden with more than 80%. Korea is 20% and is the lowest among 6 countries. Japan, Thailand, and France are all 30% and above.

Most parents in Korea, Thailand, and Sweden answered “I agree (total)” for the question “I want my child’s elementary school teacher to participate in teaching my child manners”. It is nearly 100% in Korea and Thailand, and about 90% in Sweden. Japan, the United States, and France are by and large 70-80%, and France is the lowest among the six countries.

As to the question “children aged 5 or under should not be left alone at home,” the proportion of parents who responded “I agree (total)” is more than 90% in all six countries. Taking a close look at “I agree”, the rates of “I agree” in Japan and Korea are relatively lower than that of other countries. Japan shows the lowest rate for “I agree (total)” as well as the highest rate for “I don’t agree (total)” among the six countries.

For the question “if I see a child doing something bad in the neighborhood, it’s acceptable to scold that child, even if the child is not my own,” the proportion of “I agree (total)” is more than 90% in Japan, Korea, and Sweden. The United States is the lowest among the six countries with about 60% of parents who answered “I agree (total)”. Sweden has the highest percentage among the six countries for the “I agree” answer at around 80%.

(8) Satisfaction Level Regarding the Child’s Development

More than 90% of parents in all six countries answered “satisfied (total)” with the development of their children. Although 97% of parents in Japan are “satisfied (total)” with the development of their children, the proportion of “satisfied” is the lowest in the six countries with 59%, and “somewhat satisfied” is the highest with 39%.

Compared with the research in 1994, the proportion of “satisfied” parents is higher in all five countries. Thailand especially shows the most significant change of more than a 10% increase of “satisfied” among the 5 countries.

To compare by the children's age, there appears to be a trend in all countries except Thailand that the younger the child, the greater the number of parents who are "satisfied", and as the children get older, the less number of parents feel "satisfied". Japan and Korea especially show the strongest trend among the 6 countries.

(9) The Ideal Number of Children

Most parents in each country answered 2 children as their ideal number of children. For "3" children, Japan is the most with around 40% among the six countries. Compared with the research in 1994, Japan shows the most significant change among the six countries. The number of parents who desired 3 children or more has decreased, and the number who answered "1 child only" and "2 children" has increased. As for "1 child only", the highest is 14% in Thailand. There seem to be slightly more parents in the three Western countries who indicated 4 or more as the ideal number of children than the three Asian countries.

4. Balance between Family Life and Work

(1) The Burden and Restrained Feeling Related to Parenting and Work

We asked parents four questions about how often they have experienced a burdened or restrained feeling while raising their children in the past month. The result is based on combining persons who felt burdened "many times" and "sometimes" during the past one month as the indicator of a significant "burdened feeling."

For the item of "(a) burdened by your housework and childcare duties, etc." the results show that over 60% of mothers have experienced a burdened feeling in Korea, the United States, and France. The percentages of other countries are Sweden more than 50%, Thailand more than 40%, and Japan more than 30%. In case of fathers for the same item, over 40% of fathers have experienced a burdened feeling in Sweden.. The percentages of other countries are more than 30% for the United States, Korea, France and Thailand, and more than 10% in Japan, the lowest among the six countries. Looking at the difference between mothers and fathers, the differences in Korea, the United States, and France is approximately 30%. Japan is at 20%, and Thailand and Sweden are at approximately 10%.

For the item of "(b) burdened feeling in the workplace", many fathers have experienced this burden in the three Western countries: the percentages are more than 50% in the United States and France, and more than 40% in Sweden. The percentages for the same item are relatively lower in the Asian countries: more than 30% in Korea, and more than 20% in Japan and Thailand. The percentage of mothers having experienced this feeling in the workplace is

over 40% in Sweden and more than 30% in the United States and France. The percentages are relatively lower in the Asian countries and all less than 20% (10%ですね?) in Thailand, Korea and Japan. Looking at only the employed mothers, more than 50% of mothers experienced this burdened feeling in the United States and Sweden. The percentages for the other countries are more than 40% in Korea and France, more than 30% in Japan, and more than 20% in Thailand.

The difference between mothers and fathers (regardless of employment situation) in having experienced a burdened feeling by duties on the job is that fathers in France, the United States and Korea more frequently experience burden in the workplace than the mothers do with more than a 10% difference. The differences are less than 10% in Japan, Thailand, and Sweden, but it can be seen that fathers experience burden more than the mothers.

The difference diminishes when observing only the subjects with jobs. The burden on fathers still remains higher than that of mothers in France and the United States with a difference of less than 10%. In Korea, the number of mothers who experienced burden is greater than that of fathers – a complete reversal when comparing all subjects with and without jobs. Korea shows the most intense difference among the six countries. This trend is similar in Japan. Although Thailand and Sweden also show a similar trend, the difference between genders in having experienced such burden is essentially quite small.

There are high percentages of fathers who had the “(c) Feeling that work gets in the way of spending enough time with family”. Korea, Sweden, and the United States show more than 60%, followed by France and Japan with more than 40%. Thailand has the lowest rate of more than 20%. The highest for mothers in this category is Sweden with more than 50%. The second highest is more than 40% by the United States, and France is more than 30%. The mothers in Asian countries seem to have less of these restrained feelings with Korea around 20% and both Thailand and Japan at more than 10%. However, by excluding full-time housewives and keeping only mothers with jobs, mothers’ restrained feelings appear greatly different. The highest percentage of mothers who felt restrained by their jobs is Korea and Sweden with the percentage of over 60%, followed by the United States with more than 50%, France more than 40%, Japan more than 30%, and Thailand more than 20%. As for Korea and Japan, their percentage of mothers who felt that work got in the way of family time looks remarkably high when observing the percentages of working mothers.

Looking at the difference between fathers and mothers in feeling that their jobs prevent them from spending enough time with their families, including subjects without jobs,

the percentages with the largest difference include more than 40% in Korea, more than 20% in Japan, and more than 10% in the United States and France. The percentage differences are less than 10% in Sweden and Thailand. For the total sample subjects, the percentage of fathers becomes higher than that of mothers in every country. For the difference between working fathers and working mothers only, the percentages of difference are over 10% in Japan, and less than 10% in the United States, France, and Sweden. The percentage of fathers becomes higher than that of mothers, however, the difference between working fathers and working mothers diminishes when observing the total sample population (including subjects without job). Only in Korea does the percentage of mothers become higher than that of fathers. Among the working men and women of Korea, there is quite a strong feeling of work getting in the way of spending time with family. Although the same diminishing effect can be observed in Thailand and Sweden, the differences are very small.

As for the item of “(d) feeling that family life prevented spending enough time on one’s work”, only Sweden showed a high number of fathers with over 20%. The percentage for the other countries is more than 10%; in the order from the highest they are Korea, Thailand, the United States, Japan, and France. This is also true of mothers, with very little difference between fathers and mothers. However, when looking at the working subjects only, the percentage of mothers who felt the family life was a restraint on their jobs looks significantly different. More than 50% of working mothers in Korea having this feeling, followed by more than 20% in Sweden, and more than 10% in Japan, Thailand, France, and the United States. While differences by gender of parents are small in most of the countries, only the difference by gender of parents in Korea stands out with working females showing a strong feeling of family life as a restraint.

(2) Gender Role Stereotypes

We asked the parents if they were in agreement or opposed with the idea that “men should work outside the home, while women should look after the family”. The combined percentage of “I agree” and “I’m more in agreement than opposed” is high with between 50%~60% in Korea, Japan, Thailand, and the United States for both fathers and mothers. Both fathers and mothers in Sweden tend to be against the stereotypical gender roles with a percentage of less than 10%. France is relatively in the middle with more than 30% of fathers and more than 20% of mothers. When focused only on the “I agree” answer, Thailand is the highest among 6 countries with more than 40% of fathers and mothers who agree with the gender roles. The other countries following Thailand are Korea with about 20% for both

fathers and mothers, the United States with over 20% , Japan with around 10% , France with less than 10%, and Sweden with less than 3%. All percentages apply for both fathers and mothers.

(3) Balancing Parenthood and a Career: Analysis By Gender of the Parents”

① How would you manage the balance between child-raising and work?

We asked parents how they would wish to manage the balance between raising a child and work. Most fathers responded that they would want to prioritize child rearing and work equally, while the reality varies depending on the country. In Japan and Korea, most fathers give work a higher precedence over child rearing. Less than 10% of fathers give child-rearing precedence over their work in Japan, whereas about 25% of fathers in Korea give child-rearing precedence. The group of fathers in Thailand, the United States, and France show similar trends: around 5 percent of fathers give their work precedence, about 70% of fathers have the intention to balance both work and child-rearing, and 21% to 26% of fathers give child-rearing precedence. Sweden is unique in that approximately 1% of fathers give precedence to work, 52% of fathers have the intention to balance work and child rearing, and 47% of fathers give precedence to child rearing.

Quite a small number of mothers (less than 3%) give their work precedence in every country. The group of mothers which give child rearing a higher precedence over work were found in Korea (70%), the United States (64%), and Sweden (61%). The other group of mothers is characterized by either giving precedence to work, or intending to manage the balance between work and child rearing. Thailand (50% intend to balance both, 47% give child-rearing precedence) and France (54% intend to balance both, 44% give child-raising precedence) are typical of this group with a comparable number of mothers for each answer at around 50%.

② How a Parent Wants His/Her Spouse/Partner to Balance Parenthood and Their Career

We asked parents how they want their spouse/partner to manage the balance between raising a child and work. Comparing (1)” the father’s attitude towards balancing and the mother’s expectation for the father’s attitude towards balancing” , both figures appear to have almost similar patterns, and they show that the father’s attitude and mother’s expectations are basically not so far apart. Likewise, as also seen in (2) the mother’s attitude towards balancing and the father’s expectations for the mother’s attitude towards balancing, the mother’s attitude and father’s expectations are basically not so far apart. Furthermore, when looking at the data excluding those who do not have partners/spouses, there is a small gap

between the intention to balance work and child-rearing, and the intention to give child-rearing precedence over work, as observed in Thailand, the United States, and Sweden. As for the intention to manage the balance between both work and child rearing, the expectation of fathers for their partner is more than 10% higher than that of the partner's own expectations.

(4) Taking Time Off from Work for Childbirth or Childcare

① Experience in Taking Time off from Work for Childbirth or Childcare

We asked parents if they have ever taken time off from work for childbirth or childcare during the period until the child turned three years old. Many fathers have taken time off from work for childbirth or childcare. Sweden especially has by far the most number of fathers (over 70% of the entire sample subjects, and over 90% among the employed subjects). The countries following Sweden are the United States (49% of the total, 54% of the employed subjects), France (44% of the total, 46% of the employed subjects), and Japan (45% of the total, 46% of the employed subjects). These numbers are also close to the number of fathers who have not taken time off from work for childbirth or childcare. In Korea and Thailand, fathers who have taken time off from work for childbirth or childcare are the minority with over 10% of the total and around 10% of the employed subjects. Most mothers answered either "I did not have a job" or "I took time off from work". For the number of mothers with jobs whose responses were "I took time off from work", the largest is Sweden (95%) by far, followed by France and the United States (around 70%), then by Japan (52%), Korea (47%), and Thailand (37%). Moreover, mother's responses of "I gave up my job" stands out in Korea (39%) and Japan (32%), followed by the United States (21%), and the remaining countries at around 5%. As for the mother's answer of "I did not take time off from work", the percentages of Thailand (57%) and France (24%) stand out with relatively large proportions.

② Duration of Time off from Work for Childbirth and Childcare

We also asked parents a question about the total amount of time they took off from work, which was asked only to the parents who answered "took time off from work" in the previous question. In Korea and Japan, the majority of fathers took time off from work for only 3 days or less (80% in Korea, 62% in Japan). In Thailand, the United States, and France, most fathers took from 3 days to 1 week (69% in Thailand, 50% in United States, 56% in France), though the distribution is also somewhat stretched to 1 month and 3 months. In Sweden, only 2% of fathers took time off for both less than 3 days and less than 1 week. Fathers in Sweden

took at least 2 weeks (35%), 1 month to 2 months (30%), or even 3 months to 6 months (25%). There are even a few fathers in Sweden who took less than 1 year (5%), this being the longest time off among the six countries.

As for mothers, the majority of mothers in Sweden take time off from work for up to 1 year (42%) or 2 years (46%). In France, the distribution is high for more than 2 years (40%), up to 3 months (18%), and up to 6 months (17%). In the United States, although there are a relatively large number of mothers taking time off from work for up to 2 months (18%) and up to 3 months (19%), it is spread over various periods. For Thailand, it is clear that the majority of mothers take time off for up to 3 months (49%), up to 2 months (23%), and up to 1 month (23%). The durations of time off from work taken by Thailand mothers are relatively short compared to the other countries. In Korea, it is nearly 60% with up to 3 months (25%), up to 2 months (20%), and up to 1 month (12%) combined, and 19% of mothers take more than 2 years off. Japan's distribution is similar to the United States by spreading over different periods of time, with up to 1 year being the most common.

③Types of Leave Used to Take Time off from Work for Childbirth or Childcare

We asked what type of leave parents took of those who answered “took time off from work” in the previous question. 60% of fathers in the United States and Japan made use of “paid leave, paid sick leave, paid summer vacation etc.” This was also the top answer for Thailand with 40%. In Japan and the United States, not many fathers utilize a system of leave for childbirth or childcare, but they are rather taking a general leave (unpaid) or time-off arranged by themselves. For Sweden and France, the paid paternity leave system seems to be utilized by over 80% of fathers. As for Korea and Thailand, although there are basically a small number of fathers taking a leave, the common types of leave are paternity leave (53%) and paid leave (23%) in Korea, and paid leave (41%) and paternity leave (20%) in Thailand.

As for mothers, the use of “maternity leave (paid)” is mostly common in all countries, except in Korea wherein “freelance / self-employed, so arranged work days to suit myself” shows the highest percentage. However, the percentage varies depending on each country; Sweden is over 90%, Thailand is over 60%, France is over 50%, and the United States and Japan are about 40%. In Korea, “maternity leave (paid)” is the 2nd highest percentage, while the percentage is the same as Japan and the United States. For Asian countries (Japan, Korea, and Thailand), the use of paid parental leave is less common (between 5th ~6th), but in France and Sweden, the use of paid parental leave appears to very common (between 2nd~3rd).

(5) Presence at Childbirth

We asked the parents if the biological father of the child was present at the birth of the child. The results show that answers from mothers and fathers are all consistent with each other. The number of fathers who were present at childbirth is the most in Sweden (average 91%) in both responses of fathers and mothers, followed by the United States (average 87%), France (average 73%), Thailand (average 65%), Japan (average 35%), and Korea father is more than 30% and mother is more than 20%.

5. Support in Child Rearing

(1) People Involved in Raising a Child

We asked parents what sorts of people have been involved in taking care of their children from birth to the present time by choosing from 11 answer options. Ranking at first place in all six countries, more than 80% of parents listed “spouse/partner” as the person who has taken care of their children. It is remarkable that over 40% of parents in the United States answered “babysitter or housekeeper” as the person involved in taking care of their children, ranking at third place, whereas the same rates are particularly low in the Asian countries. It is only 2% in ninth place in Japan, 3% in ninth place in Korea, and 4% in eighth place in Thailand. For “neighbors, friends who are also raising children (play group, etc.),” the rates are relatively high in the United States and in Japan with 31% (5th place) and 22% (7th place) respectively, whereas it is quite low in Thailand (4%) and Korea (7%). The percentage for “staff at an extended care facility or after-school program” is high in Sweden (36%), while it is very low at 1% in Korea and Thailand.

Looking at the average number of people involved in taking care of a child, Sweden has the most (3.61) followed by the United States (3.39), Japan (3.17), France (2.83) and Korea (2.32), while the lowest average is in Thailand (1.88). If we look at the people involved in taking care of a child by types of family whether both parents are working or not, “my/spouse’s parents, brothers and/or sisters who live separately from us” is much higher for families with both working parents in the United States, Korea, France, and Thailand, while it is less in Japan and Sweden where the percentage of “my/spouse’s parents, brothers and/or sisters who live with us” is more.

Compared with the survey results from 1994, all countries still show that the “spouse/partner” is the number one person involved in taking care of a child. The average number of items answered per person has increased in Japan, Korea, and the United States.

As observed in the increased number of associations with official childcare systems and organizations, children are being raised through relationships with various kinds of people in all countries.

(2) Concerns and Problems in Raising a Child

We asked parents to choose all applicable answers from 10 options whether they had worries or problems in raising their children. Parents worry about or have the most problems with “child’s safety” in Japan, Thailand, the United States, and France. Many parents in Korea worry the most about “education expenses”. The biggest concern or problem of parents in Sweden is that they are “not spending enough time with their child”. The item of “education expenses” ranks high in all the countries, except the percentage is only 2% in Sweden (10th place).

To see the results split by gender of the parents, mothers generally have more concerns and problems than fathers do in all six countries. The only exception is the item “I don’t spend enough time with my child”, which more fathers are concerned about than mothers are. Especially among the six countries, the most fathers who feel that “I don’t spend enough time with my child” are in Korea (49%), Sweden (45%), and Japan (41%). Japan shows the largest difference of 25% between fathers and mothers on this item: mothers 16% and fathers 41%. When observing the families with both parents working, “having a child and a job is difficult” is a profound concern in all six countries.

If we limit the age of children to between 10~12 years in Japan, parents’ concern regarding “problems related to entrance into/advancement in/graduation from school” comes in second place. This same problem never makes it to a rank higher than 5th place in the United States, France, and Sweden, even when the children get older.

During the research in 1994, only 28% of Japanese fathers were concerned about that “I don’t spend enough time with my child”, while the percentage has increased to 41% in this study.

(3) The People/Source for Advice When Worries or Problems Arise

We asked parents who they turn to for advice when worries and problems arise in the course of raising their children by choosing from 14 answer options. In all six countries, most parents answered that they go to their spouse/partner for advice. The second place in ranking, “parents, brothers, and/or sisters”, is also the same in all six countries. When comparing all countries’ average number of answers, the most is made by parents in the United States (3.85),

followed by Sweden (3.69). There are very few types of people to whom parents go for advice in Thailand (1.76).

To compare with the research from 1994, there are no changes in 1st and 2nd places in the rankings of all the countries; “spouse/partner” has been the 1st place and “my parents, brothers and/or sisters” have been the 2nd place for 10 years. The United States was also the most in the average number of answers, followed by Sweden, in the previous research. The country with the least average number of answers was Korea in the previous research, but it has changed to Thailand this time. In Japan, though there has been almost no change in the order of ranking in the past 10 years, parents seem to be seeking advice from a more open network of people, such as relatives and friends, rather than only from a limited family environment.

(4) The Ideal Environment for Raising a Child

We asked parents what sort of things they wish were available or were more readily available when raising a child, and to choose from up to 6 answer options. The items ranking first in each country are same as in the 1994 research results: parents wish for “places where their child and friends can play freely” in Japan, Korea, the United States, and France; parents in Thailand wish for “financial aid for raising and educating children”; and parents in Sweden wish for “a working environment that allows parents to spend ample time”.

Compared to the research results from 1994, the average number of answers per person has greatly increased in the three Asian countries of Japan, Korea and Thailand. In contrast, the average number of answers per person has decreased in the United States, and it could imply certain improvements made in the child-rearing environment over 10 years and the subsequent change in parents’ attitudes in demanding for an improvement.

To see the results for the ideal environment for raising children by gender of the parents, especially in Japan, there is a strong demand from mothers for “facilities where I can feel comfortable leaving my child”, as well as a large difference between mothers and fathers in their demands. Even for the other items, mothers show more fervent wishes and demands than fathers do, as Japanese fathers do not show much interest in the environment for raising children. This makes a sharp contrast with the other two Asian countries wherein both fathers and mothers have fervent wishes and demands for a better environment. For the answer option of “nothing in particular”, the percentage is higher for fathers than mothers in all six countries, while the large differences between fathers and mothers are observed in Japan and the United States.

Looking at the differences as to whether both parents are working or not, though the differences are small, parents of families with a fulltime housewife/househusband in Japan show slightly stronger wishes for such items as “places where child and friends can play freely”, “financial aid for raising and educating children”, “facilities where I can feel comfortable leaving my children”, “system of parental leave available to either parent”, and “places where I can get advice and learn about child-rearing”. Similar as in Japan, parents of a family with a fulltime housewife/househusband in Korea and Thailand tend to show stronger wishes for the ideal environment for raising children. In contrast, in the United States and France, the stronger wishes and demands for a better environment to raise a child are observed among the families of both working parents than the families with a fulltime housewife/househusband. As for Sweden, parents of a family with a fulltime housewife/househusband show a more fervent wish and demand for the ideal child-rearing environment than do parents of a family with both parents working; this can be seen on all six items, and same as in the research in 1994. Therefore, the trend remains basically the same for 10 years.

There is a common tendency observed in Japan, Korea, Thailand, and France that the younger the child, the stronger the demand of parents for “places where I can feel comfortable leaving my child”. Moreover, the same tendency is observed in the same countries for “a system of parental leave available to either parent” for which the demand is stronger among the parents of younger children. As to the parents’ need for “places where child and friends can play freely”, which was ranked 1st in several countries, there is no significant correlation observed with the age of a child. However, the need or demand is somewhat strong among parents of children between 4 and 6 years of age in Japan and Korea, among parents of children between 0 and 3 years of age in Thailand, France, and Sweden, as well as among parents of children between 7 and 9 years of age in the United States.

Basically, there has been no significant change since 1994 in the trends according to the age of children regarding the needs and demands for the ideal environment to raise children.

(5) Experiences and Training before Parenthood

We provided 8 answer options and asked parents to choose up to eight regarding if they had any experience or training in caring for children before becoming parents.

In Japan, in the descending order of percentage, the ways parents gain experience in caring for children before becoming parents are to “read books on child-rearing” (30%),

“learned from my own parents” (29%), “took care of the small children of relatives, friends or neighbors” (29%), “took care of a small/younger brother and/or sister” (18%), and “learned from TV and/or radio programs” (11%). As it is led by reading child-rearing books, Japanese parents tend to gain a very limited experience in caring for children.

In Korea, the highest percentage is to “read books on child-rearing” (25%), and the second highest is “learned from TV and/or radio programs” (15%). Korean parents have even less practical experience in caring for children before becoming parents than Japanese parents. Japan and Korea are common in that the experience of being a babysitter is barely 1%.

In Thailand, the highest percentage is “took care of the small children of relatives, friends or neighbors” (35%), followed by “took care of a small/younger brother and/or sister” (32%). Parents in Thailand do seem to have had much experience before becoming parents.

Most parents in the United States answered that they “learned from my own parents” (55%) as marked with the highest percentage. The second highest is “took care of the small children of relatives, friends or neighbors” (39%); therefore, these parents have much practical experience in taking care of children before becoming parents. It is a unique characteristic of parents in the United States that as many as 38% have been “a babysitter at other people’s homes”.

Parents in France answered that they had experience or training in taking care of children prior to becoming parents through “taking care of a small/younger brother and/or sister” (28%), “learned from own parents” (27%), and through “taking care of the small children of relatives, friends or neighbors” (19%). Although these percentages are not so high, it shows that parents have much more practical childcare experiences than indirect learning experiences. The average number of options chosen by a parent is 1.21 and is lower than Japan's average.

The highest three percentage items in Sweden are “took care of the small children of relatives, friends or neighbors” (39%), “learned from own parents” (39%), and “was a babysitter at another person’s home” (37%). The total number of answer options is the second most, following the United States. Parents have gained experience in caring for children via public services or facilities outside of the family environment as certain percentages are observed for “participated in a class offered locally” (20%) and “learned at school” (19%). The average number of answer options per parent is 2.27, the 2nd most next to the United States.

Compared with the research in 1994, in Japan, the ways of gaining prior experience in caring for children and their ranking order have not changed. However, the percentage of each way of gaining experience has decreased by approximately 10%. The average number of

answer options per parent has also decreased from 1.84 to 1.36. It appears to be that individuals who did not have enough experience or training in caring for children have now become parents with even less opportunities for the experiences than 10 years ago.

In Korea, “took care of the small children of relatives, friends or neighbors” was the second highest in 1994, down to sixth highest. The average number of answers (from 8 items) has decreased from 1.59 to 0.80. Learned from practical childcare experiences have decreased.

In Thailand, the average number of answers (from 8 items) has also decreased from 1.64 to 1.67.

The five highest percentages of items in the United States have not changed compared with the previous research of 1994. “Learned at school” has increased and “learned from TV and/or radio programs” has decreased. The average number of answer options per parent has decreased from 2.79 to 2.28; however the United States is the highest among 6 countries.

In Sweden, the average percentages of many items have decreased. “Experience of being a babysitter” has decreased from 45% to 37%.

Both fathers and mothers who did not have any experience in caring for children increased in Japan and Korea. In Sweden the fathers who had no experience have decreased and the average percentage of fathers with experience of being a babysitter is the highest in six countries.

Mothers have more experience than fathers in all six countries. The differences of average percentage between fathers and mothers are smaller in Sweden and Thailand than those in the other four countries.

(Kazufumi Sakai)