

Chadisitic Japanesy Stuff

Dads

Japan is currently in the middle of a comedy boom led by the entertainment agency 'Yoshimoto'. Perth's Chad Mullane is Yoshimoto's first non-Japanese *Manzaishi* (comedian), performing on TV and stages across the nation. His efforts at providing unique insight into cultural differences for each edition of 'I Japan' quite often amount to little more than half-baked random thoughts.

A common saying in Japan is that the four most fearful things in the world are 'Earthquakes', 'Lightning', 'Fires', and 'Fathers'. Centuries of living in wooden houses on top of seismic faults would tend to explain the first three. The fourth is actually a play on an old word for 'Typhoons', another type of natural disaster that frequents Japan. Few Japanese people even know that bit of trivia, so I guess the joke must have caught on like, well, fire, a long way back. Nevertheless, Japanese fathers are fierce, or were once upon a time. They'd always get to be first in the bath – that's some serious respect. They'd get to up-end the dining table whenever something rubbed them the wrong way – not such a hard feat when you realise the average Japanese dining table is pretty much a wooden card table sized job with 20cm high legs, but scary I guess, and certainly messy. In all, they were mean buggers not to be reckoned with, especially if you were after their daughter. Another interesting point to note is they did this all with a very limited vocabulary – "Food", "Bath", or "Not over my dead body". That's your stereotypical Japanese father.

A decade or two ago, the women, who were supposed to be adult about all those things and supported the little egos, basically quit doing their jobs. They'd been conniving behind the scenes, telling their warriors what to bark about in privacy, saving face and all that, for



Aussie Dad in Japan (left) and Perth (right).



Australian dad (left) and Japanese dad (right: Chad's master, Mr. Osamu Bonchi).

centuries, and everything worked smoothly. Then for some reason, they apparently all decided to 'stuff it'. That's when the Salaryman Senryu began to gain popularity, a kind of *Haiku* – Japanese poetry that portrays the melancholy the modern man faces (a.k.a. whingeing).
 'She's still asleep I come home She's already asleep'
 'Dinner's ready She calls, and I go to find She was talking to the cat'
 'Leaving the office now She texts me back Not so fast'

Monkey see, monkey do. And of course, children grow up knowing their father is the weaker one, the poor guy so smelly he has to be last in the bath. No one is at the table when he gets there any more. Everyone knows that the most fearsome thing one will ever encounter in one's life is in fact the beast known as The Mother-In-Law. The Father is most certainly a pitiable being.

So how do Aussie fathers fare? Dad was always good at both setting and wiping the table, and great at washing the dishes too. As for stereotypes, I've never seen him with a belt in his hand ready to whip manners into me. In fact, mum's wooden spoon was always the source of nightmares, until it snapped and was replaced with a more durable and hence even more dreaded plastic one. We had separate showers, so I guess a difference in bathing customs and Australian-sized housing allowed him to fare better than his Japanese counterparts in that department. I'm sure that mum would have greeted him with a smile and had dinner waiting on the table whenever he came home from work, if only she hadn't been so darn busy with her crosswords.

This is a terrifying epidemic that is spreading across the globe at a horrific speed, and must be placed higher than Terrorism, Global warming, or any other threat to mankind on 'To Fix' lists everywhere. I urge anyone out there looking for something to do to create some kind of business that will cater to these lonely beings, who are going to start dying like bunnies everywhere! Yes, let's make money from lonely middle-aged men!

Profile



Chad Mullane was born in Perth in 1979. He went to Japan for 6 months on a student exchange programme, and after finishing high school he went back there to become a Japanese comedian. 11 years later, he's one of the most famous Aussies you've never heard of.
Website: <http://chad.laff.jp/>