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It's not that the Democratic Party is an enemy of Japan. I think this is spread by certain people who have a vested interest in saying that.

[View All / Discuss It \(13\)](#)**Pop Vox****What do you think about food safety?**

"We produce gyoza in Japan using ingredients made in Japan."

**Gyoza and family values**

Yone Sugita

February 13, 2008

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This misperception induces us to devalue family values. When a family has two breadwinners, the husband and the wife sometimes have two separate bank accounts, an unbelievable practice for someone who regards husband and wife as just one solid, solemn, and indivisible unit. They may also be "rational" in terms of division of household chores without considering placing the right people in the right jobs.

These "rational" people do not wish to waste time fixing meals. Low-priced calorie-rich frozen food is an excellent choice for them even if it contains unhealthy additives because it can be stocked in a freezer at home and all they have to do is to nuke it in a microwave. Instant meals are a must for a busy double-income family. Using frozen food can save time and money.

This is a "rational" choice; however, these "rational" people forget that home-prepared meals with love not only physically fill up the family's tummies but also satisfy their hearts and minds. I still remember how much I loved my grandmother's homemade "udon" (noodle soup) and my mother's curry and rice. Today's kids' first choice for dinner is pot noodles or frozen gyoza that we can easily find at nearby convenience stores.

When you come home very late at night, everybody at home is already asleep and you have to drag frozen fried chicken out of the freezer. Gradually, you get used to this way of life. However, just imagine that you find your spouse sitting up late, greeting you at the door, providing you with hot homemade miso soup and a bowl of rice when you come home after midnight. You will be moved and appreciate how wonderful your better half is. Nothing is more delicious than the miso soup fixed by your lifelong partner. This is the essence of family values that are intangible, warm, uncalculating, and seemingly irrational communication of heart with heart among family members. Neglecting these family values leads us to rely on frozen foods that may be hazardous to our health and may cause metabolic syndrome.

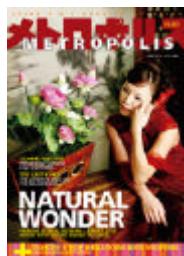
We now live in a very convenient world. Frozen food and factory-produced boxed meals can be found at any convenience store at any time. There are many family restaurants where you can enjoy meals at a reasonable price. They provide you with food and service, but they cannot give you the mental and spiritual satisfaction that all human beings need. According to recent newspaper reports, more and more Japanese people are beginning to cook meals for themselves without using frozen or processed food.

The gyoza incident is unfortunate. However, we may be able to gain something from this incident because it reminds us of the importance of family values. Home sweet home!

Yone Sugita is an associate professor of American history at Osaka University.

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