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Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives

Benjamin O. Davis Jr. Collection - Official Duties, Visit to Pacific Stars and Stripes

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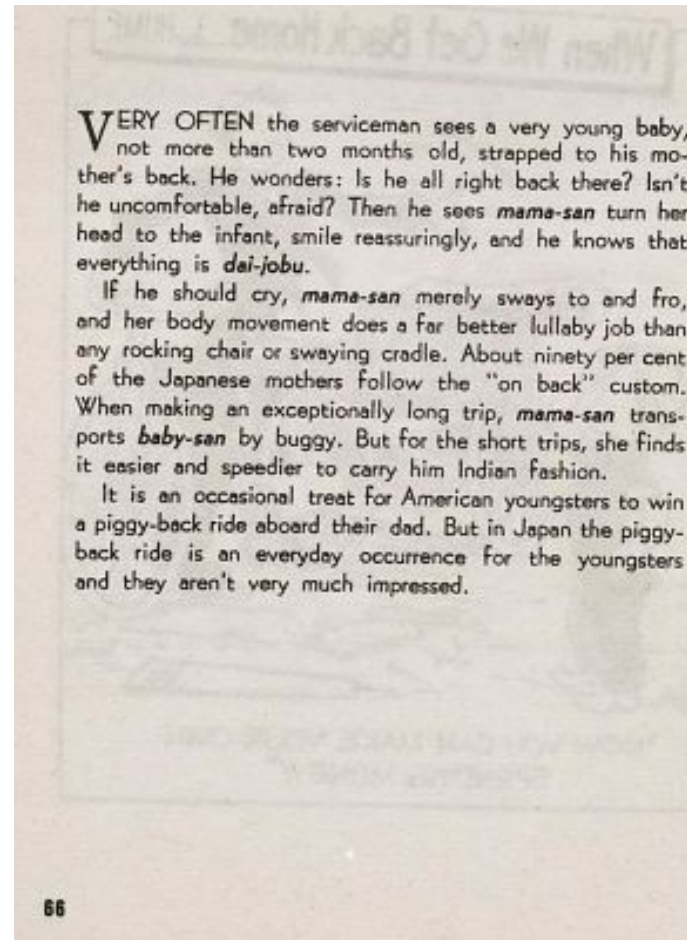
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VERY OFTEN the serviceman sees a very young baby, not more than two months old, strapped to his mother's back. He wonders: Is he all right back there? Isn't he uncomfortable, afraid? Then he sees *mama-san* turn her head to the infant, smile reassuringly, and he knows that everything is *dai-jobu*.

If he should cry, *mama-san* merely sways to and fro, and her body movement does a far better lullaby job than any rocking chair or swaying cradle. About ninety per cent of the Japanese mothers follow the "on back" custom. When making an exceptionally long trip, *mama-san* transports *baby-san* by buggy. But for the short trips, she finds it easier and speedier to carry him Indian fashion.

It is an occasional treat for American youngsters to win a piggy-back ride aboard their dad. But in Japan the piggy-back ride is an everyday occurrence for the youngsters and they aren't very much impressed.

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