

The Housekeeper and the Professor  
by Yoko Ogawa  
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Study Questions

1. Why did the professor encourage “correct miscalculation”?
2. Why did the Akebono Housekeeping Agency send this housekeeper to work for the professor?
3. What were the housekeeper’s duties?
4. What was unusual/special about the professor?
5. How did a new day start out for the housekeeper and the professor?
6. What was curious about the professor’s appearance?
7. What was the inside of the professor’s cottage like?
8. What did the housekeeper do to upset the professor the first day she went to work?
9. What kind of silence was there in the professor’s cottage?
10. What did the professor have the housekeeper mail for him?
11. How is a mathematical proof elegant?
12. What special kind of numbers are the pair of numbers 220 and 284?
13. How did the professor make mathematics easy to talk about with the housekeeper?
14. For how long have there been numbers according to the professor? Do you agree?
15. What causes the professor to be concerned about the housekeeper’s son?
16. Why does the professor call the housekeeper’s son Root?
17. Why do you think that the professor’s table manners changed?
18. Why did the professor think that Root should eat more?
19. How did the housekeeper get her profession?

20. Who was Root's father? What kind of home life did Root have?
21. How did the professor make it easy for Root to do his math homework?
22. What common interest do the professor and Root discover?