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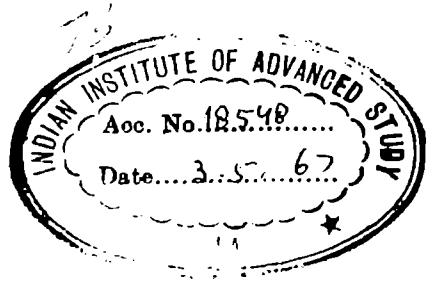

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This report was prepared at the request of the Department of Social Sciences of Unesco. The report aims to give a general view, mainly from the sociological standpoint, of the change in the position of Japanese women that has been taking place during the past 10 years.

An effort has been made to utilize a wide range of published and unpublished material, both official and unofficial, but a few subjects have had to be omitted because of the inadequacy of the data available.

The co-operation of women was indispensable in the preparation of this report. Women who take a particular interest in the matters with which it deals were asked to participate and, with their assistance, a team of collaborators was formed. Their names and the subjects treated by them are as follows:

Mrs. Kazuko Suehiro, Lecturer, Nihon Women's Athletic College: Family
Mrs. Kiyoko Segawa, Lecturer, Otsuma Women's University: Rural community
Mrs. Nobuko Himeura, Extension Worker, Women's and Minors' Bureau, Ministry of Labour: Labour
Mr. Tadashi Ueno, Graduate student, Tokyo Metropolitan University: Education
Miss Masako Hiramatsu, Graduate student, Tokyo Metropolitan University: Civic activities
Mr. Masahiko Tanaka, Staff-researcher, Central Opinion Research Agency: Public opinion
Mrs. Ruri Tanaka: Public opinion

These collaborators, according to the subject assigned to each of them, wrote provisional drafts. These drafts, together with the data collected, were passed to the present author, whose task was, thanks to their excellent work, chiefly one of co-ordination with minor modification and supplementation. Their findings were thus brought together

in the present form in order to comply with the request of Unesco. The author is happy to acknowledge the unselfish co-operation of these collaborators. The translation into English was undertaken by Mr. Hachiro Nakamura, Assistant, International Christian University, and the final revision of the English text was carried out by Professor Jitsuichi Masuoka, now a Fulbright professor in Japan, to whom the present author owes a special debt of gratitude. Dr. Masuoka gave helpful advice which contributed greatly to the value of the report. In the collection and listing of relevant sources amongst works published in the past 10 years, co-operation was given by Mr. Yoshihiro Sawanishi, Librarian, the National Diet Library. Thanks are due to Mrs. Setsu Tanino, Director of the Women's and Minors' Bureau, Ministry of Labour, and to Professor Shūhei Yamamuro, National Yokohama University, who gave very useful advice at all stages in the preparation of the report.

Since the present author accepted the invitation of Unesco, those named above have held many meetings for discussion and consultation with one another. We wish also to express our sincere gratitude to the Japanese National Commission for Unesco which, on such occasions, provided all possible facilities for the promotion of our work.

This report is the product of the kindness and co-operation of all those named above, but responsibility for the writing of it rests with the present author who made the final selection of data and rewrote the provisional reports in the present form.

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Contents

I. Introduction

For a period of 300 years, the policy of seclusion of the Tokugawa shogunate functioned surprisingly well in keeping Japan in a state of nearly complete isolation. This long period of lack of contact with alien cultures, peoples and nations provided favourable conditions for the full development of Japan's feudal system. It was within this fully developed feudal system that those patterns of life peculiar to the Tokugawa era, the *hōken bunka*, became completely crystallized and came to fashion all aspects of the life—economic, political, social, and religious—of the people. Thus, it was in this era of the history of the Japanese nation that a rigid and inflexible class system was established.

Within this hierarchical system, *samurai* (warriors) occupied the highest rank; *hyakushō* (farmers) the second rank; *shokunin* (artisans) the third; and *shōnin* (merchants) the lowest rank. As the line separating one group from another was manifestly rigid—though the separation in actual practice was not always clear-cut—each class developed its own more or less distinct way of life, and reflected a particular mode of living. Consequently, as the common people were expected in a measure to pattern their lives after the *samurai* culture, the *samurai*-centred norms—particularly the one having to do with the conduct of men and women—came to govern—in varying degrees, to be sure—the conduct of all people in the society. In fact, the common people were expected, in a measure, to adopt the *samurai*-centred norms; the commoners were not merely willing to accept them; they were eager to follow them in their day-to-day lives.

Of particular interest to us is the fact that, of all the characteristic features of the life of the *samurai* class, it was the norms that governed

and regulated the relationships between men and women in general, and between husband and wife in particular, that had come to prevail among the common people. The degree to which this norm was adopted varied from one class to another and, within a single class, from one section of it to another. Broadly speaking, there was a marked tendency for the members of the upper layers of all classes to embrace the sex norms more thoroughly and more readily than members of the lower strata. So widespread and pervasive had this sex norm become throughout Japanese society in the Tokugawa era that, in the family, the position of *kacho* (head of the *iye* or family grouping) became predominant or superior, with all the rights and privileges associated with the office, and the *shufu* (wife) and all other members of the *iye* occupied subordinate positions. Outside the family, women's activities were either rigidly limited or virtually non-existent. Indeed, beyond the circle of family life there was no place, that is to say, no recognized position for women in the Tokugawa feudal order. To this lowly status, both Buddhism and Confucianism gave strong spiritual and moral backing. Confucianism, in particular, was accepted by the *samurai* class as providing an adequate basis for both ideal and practical norms; its teachings were thus highly valued by all the *samurai*. It was the norm requiring the segregation of boys from girls, with the idea of the superiority of men and the inferiority of women, that was elaborated into a doctrine and a philosophy of life. It was this norm, and not Confucianism as a whole, that found its way among people of non-*samurai* classes. This norm was diffused either directly or indirectly through the institution of *terakoya* (private temple schools).

Not many men were able to attend *terakoya*, but all those who came under the direct influence of *terakoya* education observed strictly the distinction between men and women in the family and in society at large. Others who were either unable to attend *terakoya* or were not influenced by Confucian teachings, such as persons of the lower classes or those living in the remote countryside, observed the norm of distinction between male and female with less strictness. Particularly in their work-a-day life, the common people drew no sharp line of separation between men and women in the matter of their activities or their status. However, among these people as they were introduced to elementary education after the Meiji era, there were numerous instances of the growing distinction made in activities and ideas, and

in ideals taught along the line of boy-girl differences. (This point will be discussed in detail in a later section.)

The Meiji Restoration of 1868 came on the eve of the final collapse of Tokugawa feudalism. The collapse of the feudal system was brought about by the increased strain within the system itself: internal contradictions and maladjustments became pronounced towards the middle of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, the Meiji Restoration was itself a significant historic event; it was the culmination of internal causes as much as of external stimulations. In other words, this political revolution was stimulated, precipitated, and accelerated by foreign powers. As is stated in the 'Five Articles of the Imperial Oath', issued by the Emperor Meiji, it was the aim of the Restoration to bring about democratic reform in Japan, and to form a government resting on public opinion. The practical realization of these broad objectives was to be achieved through the termination of the feudal system and its institutions. Accordingly, the Restoration abolished, at least in form, the traditional hierarchy of status and established parliamentarianism. In addition, it laid the foundation for a nation-wide educational system. There was, however, no effort made to define the position of women in the new order. The only mention made of women was to the effect that they should be 'wise mothers'. In view of the lowly position of the Japanese woman in political and family life in the days of feudalism, the question of her position, it seems, could hardly be regarded as a major problem.

Even after the crisis of the Restoration was over and the 'Enlightened Peace' or Meiji reign was well advanced, all attempts to redefine the position of women in Japan proved unsuccessful, since the attitude of the people was lukewarm. It was true that educational authorities of the Meiji era spoke of 'equality between men and women' along with the 'equality of all classes'. It was equally true that, in the absence of any major transformation of the social structure of Japan, other than the formal political change, no concrete measures of any sort were undertaken in order to bring about sorely needed substantial changes in those antiquated family ways and other legal and customary practices that had for so long placed women far below men in matters of social status. Thus, the traditional position of women in Japan remained unchanged. Even in the matter of providing women with educational opportunities equal to those of men, education beyond the sixth grade was not given serious consideration. In

practice, only in the first six grades was there provision for anything approaching equal education for boys and girls; beyond that level the education given to boys was vastly superior to that provided for girls and this state of affairs persisted until 1947.

The Civil Code was first drafted by the Meiji government. At that time an attempt was made to give the family a conjugal basis, that is to say, to make its centre the husband and wife. Such a radical departure from the conventional definition of the family met with very strong opposition. Its opponents insisted that, in view of the conditions which then existed in Japan, the new code was unsuitable and unworkable. Thus, the first attempt to reform the traditional patriarchal family laws failed. Only with the promulgation of the New Constitution in November 1946 was the conjugal unit made the basis of the family system in Japan. (This will be discussed in Chapters II and III.)

However, we should not fail to recognize that, even in this early period of the Meiji era, there were a few courageous persons who advocated 'the equality of the sexes' and a still smaller number who urged women to take practical steps to realize their own 'rights'. Theirs were 'voices crying in the wilderness', for the situation was not ripe for changes in the traditional and *iye*-bound position of the women of Japan. (See Chapter III.)

A general election based on 'universal suffrage' was held in 1925; this election was clearly significant in that women were excluded and the 'universal suffrage' was for men only. The exclusion of women from voting gave rise to an active feminist movement in Japan. Thus, in opposition to such a clearly one-sided election, the movement to secure woman's suffrage was launched and pursued vigorously for a decade by its leaders. However, the movement came to an unexpected end. As early as 1937, Japan was already organizing her effort to become a war State, and the government took steps to suppress any large-scale social movement. In face of the impending national crisis, the feminist movement could take no other course than to dissolve itself. (See Chapter VI for a detailed discussion.)

The effort on the part of women to secure recognition as an important sector of the nation's economy also had a rough road before it. As we have noted in passing, the transition of Japan from the old order to the new was chiefly political. Clearly the process was not accompanied by the necessary transformation of her economy and of her educational, religious and family institutions. The 'new Japan' was

still rooted solidly in an economy that was feudalistic, in family life that was patriarchal, and in religious behaviour that was unchanged. At that time, that is to say around 1866, a majority of the population of Japan was still unaffected by industrialization and urbanization. In fact, about 80 per cent of the working population in those days were farmers and nearly all the working women were family-farm workers. Only with the advent of the textile industry—a forerunner of truly modern industries in Japan—did there emerge for the first time a new group of women labourers. According to official statistics of 1900, women in the textile industry numbered 260,000 and men 160,000; the former outnumbered the latter 1.6 times. However, the appearance on the industrial scene of this group of female factory workers had very little, if any, effect on the traditional position of women in Japan. As these female workers were recruited from already overcrowded rural areas where wages were extremely low, and as they were largely ignorant, they were satisfied with poor pay and remained unorganized. They lived in factory dormitories, and worked for a period of a year or two. Their immediate object in working in the factory was to earn enough money either to buy their own wedding gowns or to support their own families in the country. Any notion such as that of improving the position of womanhood was entirely alien to them.

Another factor which kept the prestige of women's labour at its lowest ebb was the existence of prostitution. The institution of prostitution had a long history extending back to feudal Japan; it was recognized as a business and was supervised by officials. In the Meiji era, efforts were renewed to regulate and supervise prostitution as a business. The increase in industrialization, urbanization, and universal military conscription were the significant factors which helped to expand the business. This official recognition of the institution of prostitution gave to those engaged in the business a strong incentive to extend their activities and, in turn, greater inducement was given to young women to become prostitutes. This occupation, sanctioned and recognized as a business by public officials, depressed the position of working women in general. Of course, there was strong opposition to prostitution and a call for closer public supervision. In some areas of Japan the local provisional prohibition was still opposed or opposition to prostitution had not been sufficiently mobilized to eradicate this long-standing evil practice until just a year ago (1958).

We must not overlook several important factors that have affected, and are now affecting with greater force, the position of women in Japanese society. In the first place, both industrialization and urbanization are making their impact felt on the traditional position of women. These powerful impersonal forces are changing the balance between rural and urban population; urban dwellers are on the increase and rural dwellers are decreasing in proportion. In 1940, the census showed that only 42 per cent of the total working population of Japan were farm workers. This dislocation of the rural population has brought about the gradual disorganization of the patriarchal and extended family system in rural villages; and with this process there has come a new pattern of male and female relationships unknown to the traditional family system.

A survey of the history of Japan from the end of the Tokugawa feudalism to the end of World War II, a span of 80 years, shows clearly that Japan underwent a wide range of political, economic and social changes. This fact notwithstanding, the social position of the women of Japan has, comparatively speaking, changed little and the process has been slow. The forces that operate to free women from the bondage of feudalistic traditions have not had their full impact. In the past, all efforts to assert the rights of womanhood encountered strong opposition from the conservative elements of Japanese society; but at present the strength of these conservative elements is waning as women are gaining a voice in the major institutions of society—in schools, industry, commerce, and government.

II. Institutional changes and redefinition of the position of women

The position of Japanese women was so deeply entrenched in custom and so intimately intertwined and enmeshed in the patriarchal family system that it could not be readily uprooted from its cultural environment. Major social changes were, indeed, necessary before there could be any critical change or any substantial modification in their social position. The recurrent impact of new and alien ideas and ideals through the media of mass communication and through the processes of industrialization, urbanization, and modernization which are the effective mechanism of social change, a series of wars with foreign powers, and the imposition of democratic principles and ideas were the kinds of forces that brought about changes in women's position in Japanese society. In this chapter we shall focus our attention chiefly on the changes that were made in laws and in educational systems.

As we have indicated in Chapter I, women's efforts to secure their right to vote, to improve their status within and without the family, and to better working conditions in shops and industries were concerned with problems of long standing. However, attempts to solve these problems were defeated time after time by the overwhelming opposition of the conservative elements of Japanese society who were successful in manipulating events leading to national crises. The strength of such conservative forces could not be successfully overridden by a gradual process of social evolution. It took such a tragic national crisis as the last world war to bring about a sweeping social change. Thus, the emancipation of women in Japan was attained institutionally through the unexpected reformation after the second world war. In so far as the change in the position of women was brought about directly by the new law and the new constitution and

by the democratization of the educational system, the liberation of Japanese women can be attributed in large measure to compulsion from without.

The process of the modernization of Japan was in fact not uniform throughout all sections of society. In the matter of social attitudes and ways of life or culture, Japanese society was, and still is, far from being homogeneous. There was a significant difference in attitude between people in the cities and those in the country, between workers in large-scale industries and those in small workshops, between intellectuals and manual labourers, and between men and women. Thus, the pattern of acceptance of innovation and the degree of adaptation to it as reflected in the improvement of the position of women in society showed considerable variation from one group to another. Because of these variations from group to group, legal and other institutional changes and the efforts made to implement them uniformly throughout the nation gave rise to serious problems. The contradiction between the old social order and the new made itself felt. It is, indeed, such disharmonies and maladjustments that, in a sense, constitute one phase of the contemporary social problems of Japan. Some of these social problems will be considered in later chapters in relation to the changing position of women in Japan today.

New laws

The New Constitution of Japan, promulgated on 3 November 1946, guaranteed to all Japanese subjects equality under the law. Article 14 states:

> All people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin.

According to this article, all Japanese women are to be treated without discrimination from men in all phases of life—political, economic and social. Again, Article 24 explicitly states that:

> Marriage shall be based only on the mutual consent of both sexes and it shall be maintained through mutual co-operation, with the equal rights of husband and wife as a basis.

Such a definition of marriage as is contained in Article 24 definitely

implies that the conjugal family, centred on the husband and wife, replaces the patriarchal family. At the same time, such a definition of marriage clearly indicates the need for a complete change in those national ideas which are closely tied up with the tendency to preserve traditional values.

On the basis of the provisions of the New Constitution, there were many critical changes in the family, industrial, educational, and political life of the people. In particular, the status of women, at least in its formal aspects, was affected significantly by the provisions of the New Constitution. We shall touch only upon the main points in each of these spheres of life in order to make clear the important changes in the laws that have immediate effects on the traditional position of Japanese women today.

First to be considered is women's suffrage. As has been pointed out briefly in the 'Introduction', the first constitution was promulgated in 1889 and the following year the National Diet under the Meiji government met for the first time. However, owing to the insistence of the tradition-bound conservative force, all political activities of women were prohibited and the right of women to vote was not recognized. Thus, women were still left out of political life, and in consequence of this there arose, in various quarters, a movement demanding the emancipation of womanhood. This movement was championed by some of the more progressive women of the time but the general public either remained indifferent or showed outright disapproval. Lobbying in the Diet for women's suffrage was begun but it never came to the point of success and the issue was laid aside in the Diet. But, as the nation moved towards military preparation for World War II, the movement for women's suffrage, like all other social movements, was suppressed by the government. All women were given the responsibility of home-front activities through women's associations and *tonarigumi* (neighbourhood associations). Single women, in particular, were mobilized to work in armament and garment factories; mothers were so busy emphasizing the national significance of the war that they had no time for any other activity. Only after the end of the last war were women able to bring about the final achievement of the movement for the emancipation of women which had met with such difficulties.

Article 44 of the New Constitution states:

> The qualification of members of both Houses (the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors) and their electors

> shall be fixed by law. However, there shall be no discrimination because of race, creed, sex, social status, family origin, education, property, or income.

These qualifications are fixed in detail in the Public Official Election Law and they apply equally to both sexes. At this point we shall postpone our discussion on the consequences that the 'no discrimination' qualification might have had on the political status and activities of women in Japan. (See Chapter VI.)

Next, reference is made to education. In the reformation of the New Constitution, a great deal of attention was paid to the democratization of education. Ultimately, it is through education that the idea of sex equality can be diffused throughout society. Inasmuch as learning is the prerequisite to this diffusion, the fundamental reorganization of the educational system was regarded as the first and the most important task. The Fundamental Law of Education was put into effect in 1947 and, in Article 3, the principle of equal education is set forth. It reads as follows:

> All people shall be given equal opportunities of receiving education according to their ability, and they shall not be subject to educational discrimination on account of race, creed, sex, social status, economic position, or family origin.

Article 5 recognized co-education:

> Man and woman shall respect and co-operate with each other. Co-education shall be recognized.

As has been mentioned in the 'Introduction' the Ordinance of Education of 1872 embodied the principle of the equal rights of women in education. However, the forces of conservatism and traditionalism in education began to dominate the educational policies of the Meiji. In 1891, the policy of the separation of boys from girls in classes for pupils above the third grade was put into effect. The instructions of the Ministry of Education stated: '. . . Recognizing the necessity of *sex segregation in education as our national custom demands*, the policy of separating boys from girls in class is hereby adopted . . .'. This policy was clearly the revival of the teaching of Confucius that was emphasized in the days of feudalism. His teaching stressed the point that a boy and a girl should not sit together at 7 years of age. Inasmuch as the need to set girls apart from boys after the third grade existed in the

elementary school, co-education in the middle and higher levels of education was definitely contrary to the spirit of the time: that women should be given a different kind of education was the accepted view of the day. Around 1910 and thereafter, a few universities admitted female students. These women were few in number and were regarded as exceptional and queer. In keeping with the rise in the level of Japanese culture, the number of high schools for girls increased rapidly and, for girls in the middle grade, education became nation-wide. And yet schools for higher education, public or private, for girls were practically neglected. Such was the status of female education prior to the end of the last world war. In the light of this, one of the major tasks of post-war educational reorganization was to establish the kind of educational system which was in accord with the spirit of democracy. Thus, co-education was instituted at all levels and was designed to promote mutual understanding and fuller co-operation between male and female and to further the notion of the equality of the sexes. To attain these goals through education was the purpose of the Fundamental Law of Education.

No less important than the democratization of education was the problem of the revision of family laws. Formerly, in Japan, great emphasis was placed on the intimate connexion between the State and the family. 'The family is the buttress of the State' was the moral principle inculcated in all subjects. As an ethical principle and value, devotion to the Emperor *(chu)* and loyalty and devotion to one's own parents *(kō)* were taught as expressions of one and the same principle. It was on this principle that, in the past, the institution of the family was founded, and educational institutions played a critical role in reinforcing the principle. There were some arguments in favour of replacing the patriarchal family system by the conjugal unit, as corresponding to capitalistic development. These arguments served no other purpose than to provide targets for a mighty counter-attack on such a change as being a violation of the 'good morals and manners' of the Japanese people. The traditional family system, stubborn as it was in its resistance to change, was given its final death-blow by the post-war democratization. At least in form, if not in fact, the collectivity-oriented traditional patriarchal family system was abolished. In its place, the conjugal family system, which emphasizes the respect due to the rights of individuals together with the essential equality of men and women, was set up.

In 1947, following the announcement of Article 24 of the New Constitution, kinship and inheritance laws were revised almost in their entirety. The important points in this revision with regard to the position of women may be summarized as follows:

1. Stipulations concerning the wife's disqualifications are eliminated; the wife is now from the legal standpoint no less qualified than the husband.
2. The adult man and woman, or husband and wife, need no other consent for marriage or divorce than their own.
3. Judicial causes for divorce apply equally to husband and wife.
4. Equal right to the inheritance of property is recognized, with no discrimination on the basis of sex.

In addition to these provisions, the principle of sex equality runs throughout the specific details of the new family law: this is indeed its most remarkable feature. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that the power and authority once possessed by the patriarch, by parents, or by the husband will disappear at one stroke of the law. There are substantial reasons to expect that, in view of differences in living conditions according to region, occupational classification, age and family status, all Japanese people can as yet hardly be expected to conform to the new laws and regulations in a uniform manner throughout the nation. Cases, not altogether few in number, that have been brought before the domestic court reveal the differences in the understanding of the old and new institutions, and in the attitude towards them. The new institution was, indeed, a product of an attempt to solve problems which have been pending for many years and it was devised as a hasty solution in a period of post-war turmoil. It left some details to be examined more carefully in the light of the overall social change and social conditions. At present the re-examination of such details is in progress.

Finally, in the field of labour, the Labour Standards Law of 1947 embodied detailed provisions. Article 4 is especially important as it bears on the position of women. It reads:

> The employer shall not discriminate as between women and men in the matter of wages.

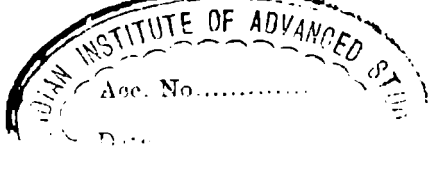
Moreover, the Labour Standards Law took into consideration the physical conditions that are peculiar to women. Further stipulations

were provided to protect female workers. Menstruation holidays (Article 67 of the Labour Standards Law), the prohibition of night work (Article 62), the restriction of perilous or poisonous work (Article 63), the prohibition of work in pits (Article 64), etc.; and, to protect motherhood, a period of leave before and after child-birth (Article 65), free hours for nursing a child (Article 66), etc., were the subjects of significant provisions of the law. Thus, so far as the laws and regulations are concerned, women are given consideration equal to that given to men in their work; women are given an equal opportunity to work; and they are given special consideration in order to meet their particular needs. However, in actual life, the situations which women workers encounter vary considerably. Depending on their family and social conditions, they face in their working life a situation which is far from the ideal specified in the laws and regulations.

It must be stated here that the sex distinction of former days is now mostly eradicated, at least in law. With this new institution the changes in women's traditional status are taking on a new shape. To be sure, tradition still exerts its power, and the retention of the old way of life is not restricted to a limited area of Japanese society. However, the changes in legal norms, as has been pointed out, together with the renewal of moral norms, are bringing about a far-reaching change in the national life. The pressing problem in Japan today is how best to adjust individuals and groups to these enforced institutional changes. In other words, the question of how to widen the sphere of woman's activities in order to improve her position in accordance with the spirit of equality between men and women which is embodied in the new laws and in the new educational programmes still remains a crucial problem.

Improvement of education for women

The Ordinance of Education of 1872 referred to above stated: 'throughout the nation—peers, *shizoku*, farmers, craftsmen, merchants, women and children—it is expected that there shall henceforward be no uneducated families in a community and no uneducated members in a family'. Within a brief space of less than fifty years, that is to say, by 1910, this stated objective of complete literacy in Japan was virtually attained. In that year, nearly all of the population of primary school age were attending school. For boys, the percentage



of those attending school was nearly 99 per cent, and for girls, it was slightly over 97 per cent, showing a slight difference between boys and girls. But by 1920 this gap was almost closed, and 10 years later, there was in fact no difference between the percentages for boys and girls. Since then, girls have surpassed boys in their attendances at primary schools—for 1950 the percentage for boys was 99.62 and for girls it was 99.65. (For details, see Table 1.)

TABLE 1. Percentage of primary school age population attending school (1873 to 1950)

Year	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Year*	*Boys*	*Girls*
	%	%		%	%
1873	39.90	15.14	1920	99.20	98.84
1880	58.72	21.91	1930	99.52	99.50
1890	65.14	31.13	1940	99.64	99.65
1900	90.55	71.73	1950	99.62	99.65
1910	98.83	97.38			

Women's need of education beyond the primary school was recognized as early as 1899. In that year the Girls' High School Ordinance was promulgated. This formally established middle-grade education for girls, something akin to middle-grade education for boys. The objective, however, was not to provide girls with education comparable to that of boys; rather the aim was to make 'good wives and wise mothers' for people of middle- and upper-class families.

It is interesting to note that, prior to the promulgation of the ordinance of 1899, there were already a small number of girls attending middle schools for girls. In 1873, out of the total of 1,779 students receiving middle-grade education, female students numbered only 36 or 2 per cent. Roughly two decades later, that is to say, in 1890, the total number of students receiving middle-grade education had increased by tenfold and was 17,175, and of this total 18 per cent were girls. Just around the turn of the century, the total number of boys and girls in middle schools was 105,532, and the proportion of girls for some reason dropped to 11 per cent. Since then, the percentages of girls increased from 26 per cent of the total of boys and girls receiving middle education in 1910, to 37 per cent in 1920, 43 per cent in 1930, and 45 per cent in 1940 and 1946, a year before the reorganization of the Japanese educational system. (See Table 2.)

TABLE 2. Total number and percentage of boy and girl students receiving middle education (1873 to 1946)

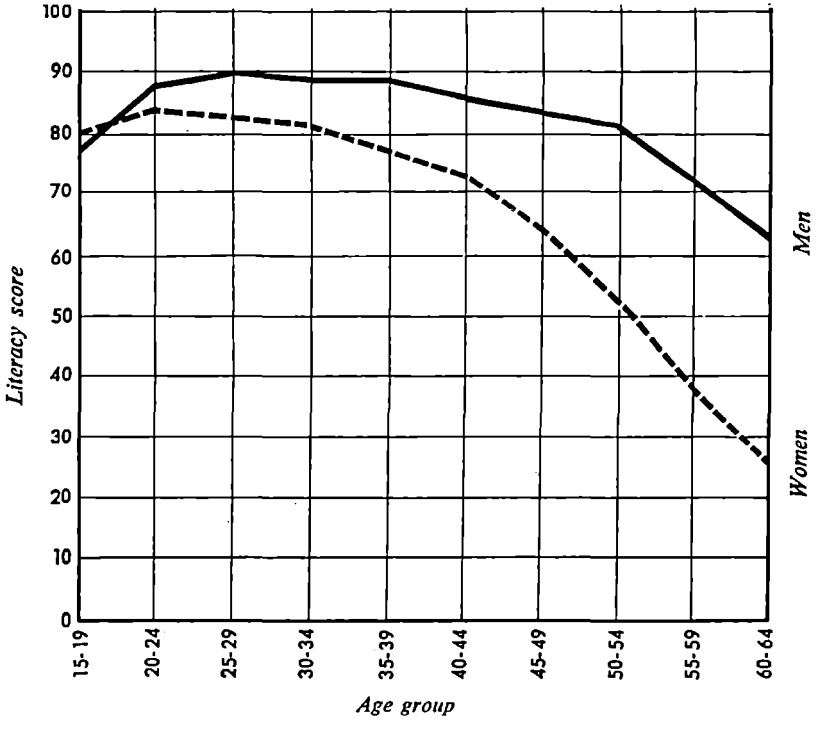
Year	*No.*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Year*	*No.*	*Boys*	*Girls*
		%	%			%	%
1873	1 779	98	2	1920	412 929	63	37
1880	13 364	97	3	1930	967 655	57	43
1890	17 175	82	18	1940	1 524 706	55	45
1900	105 532	89	11	1946	2 532 364	55	45
1910	219 203	74	26				

The decrease in the discrepancy in educational training as between men and women is making the intellectual level of women not so different from that of men. One of the findings of a survey conducted on the literacy of the Japanese people showed striking facts. For the age group 15 to 19 there was hardly any difference between boys and girls in regard to literacy. The difference between men and women began to appear in the succeeding age groups, and it became highly significant as the age rose. For example, men in the age category 40 to 44 exceeded women of the same age group by about 12 points; men in the 50 to 54-year-old age group exceeded women of the same ages by nearly 25 points; and men in the 60 to 64-year-old age group exceeded women of the same age group by as many as 50 points.

As shown in Diagram 1, for both men and women there was a general tendency for literacy scores to decrease after the age of 30, and this trend became more noticeable for persons of 40 and older. However, the decline was far shorter for women than for men, reflecting clearly the full effect of differences in educational opportunity as between men and women. When this difference in literacy was compared with the differential ratio for newspaper reading as between men and women in their respective age groups, we found a close resemblance between literacy scores and newspaper reading. In the case of newspaper reading, there was no notable difference by sex in the youngest age group, 15 to 19, while, in people of 60 to 64 years of age, 48 per cent more of men than women read newspapers, as shown in Diagram 2.

Beyond middle education, education for women was not encouraged either by people in general or by educational authorities. A report of the Special Council of Education of 1918 stated that in respect of the higher education of women, the establishment of a women's

DIAGRAM 1. Comparison of literacy score by sex and by age [1]



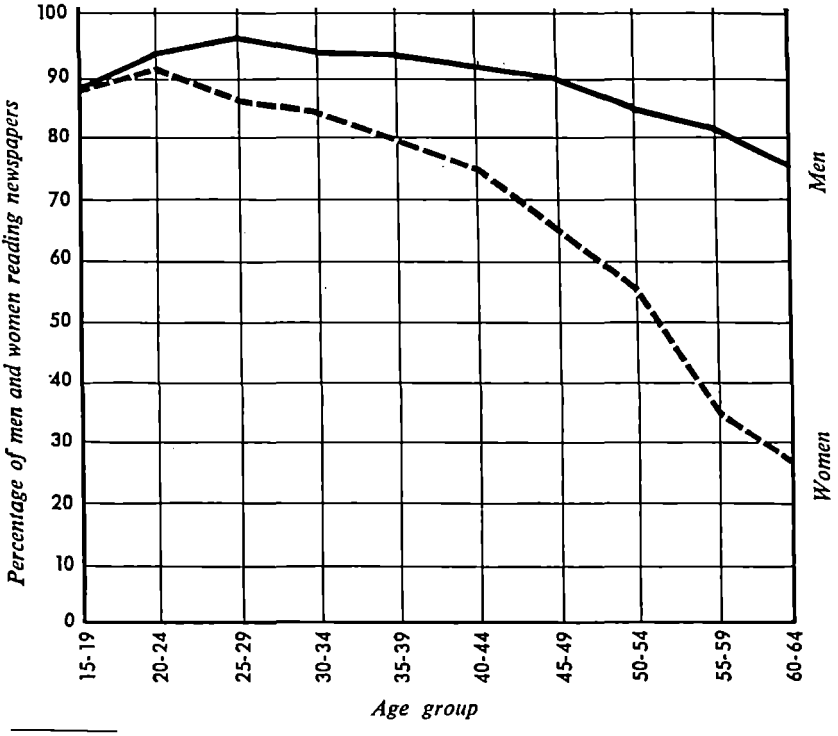
1. Committee of Research on Literacy (ed.), *Literacy of Japanese People*, Tokyo University Press, 1951.

university system was as yet premature. An alternative plan, recommended by the council, was to establish an extra higher course in the girls' high school.

In 1940, a report of the Council of Education recommended for the first time that 'the women's university should be founded in compliance with the university ordinance in order to open the way for women to receive university education'. This recommendation was not put into effect, because it was regarded as less urgent in face of the wartime emergency.

Since co-education was not approved by custom, nowhere did women find opportunities to receive higher education. By way of

DIAGRAM 2. Percentage of newspaper readers; comparison of men with women by age [1]



1. Committee of Research on Literacy (ed.), op. cit.

exception, there were three women students who were first admitted to the Tohoku Imperial University. Later a few were admitted to the Kyushu Imperial University, and to the Tokyo and Hiroshima Universities of Science and Literature. These women were merely tolerated and were left much to themselves; at least in one case the woman was left completely alone. In reminiscence of those days, she remarked:

> With not a soul to talk to all day long, I sat and listened to a series of lectures in complete quietness until I went home. As I remained silent in school day after day, I often wondered if I had forgotten how to speak. I often whispered to myself just to see if I had not lost my ability to utter a sound.

Although her remark is partially attributable to her personality, it was an undeniable fact that in those days men students avoided any association with women students.

Immediately after the end of the last world war, in December 1945, the 'Outline for the Reform of Women's Education' was announced by the government. The educational policy stated therein was 'to reform the education of women for the purpose of promoting equal opportunity of education, equal level of teaching and mutual respect between both sexes'. Subsequently, measures were taken to open the lectures of universities and colleges to women, to establish women's universities, to make the period of education of women equal to that of men, etc.

Enforcement of the measures in question was expedited in 1946 by the report of the United States education mission to Japan. The report set forth the new fundamental policy to be followed in post-war education in Japan and was therefore significant in regard to the higher education of women. The following is an excerpt from the report concerning the education of women:

> . . . Women must see that to be 'good' wives, they must be good; and to be 'wise' mothers, they must be wise. . . . We recommend that there be established for the next three years beyond the primary school, a 'lower secondary school' for all boys and girls, providing fundamentally the same type of curriculum for all . . . , and that attendance in the 'lower secondary school' be compulsory for three years, or until the age of sixteen. . . . Beyond the 'lower secondary school', we recommend the establishment of a three-year 'upper secondary school', free from tuition fees and open to all who desire to attend. Here again, co-education . . . would help to establish equality between the sexes. . . . The young men and women of Japan should have freedom of access, on the basis of merit, to all levels of higher studies.

The military administration during the period of the occupation of Japan put into effect, very forcibly and in a very short time, the recommendation of the commission. As a result, by December 1947, 99.6 per cent of junior high schools and 57.9 per cent of senior high schools were ready to begin co-education. Universities, with a few exceptions, also followed suit.

Inasmuch as the above-mentioned new ideal and new form of administration of education were not the outcome of the 'will' of

the majority of the people, but were largely forced upon them from above and from outside politically, there were some who claimed that the new education was in contradiction to the traditional national virtues. In the course of the discussion of the bill on school education in 1947, there was one, among the members of the committee, who voiced his sentiment. He said: 'Above anything else, is not co-education, as prescribed in Article 5 of the Fundamental Law of Education, premature? In view of the actual condition of our country, is not co-education a superficial imitation of the West? I would suggest that the committee should be more thoughtful and deliberate in the matter of women's education.'

In September 1954, the Ministry of Education conducted a systematic survey on the attitudes of students, teachers, and parents in regard to co-education. In this study, 201 junior high schools, 207 full-time senior high schools and 90 part-time senior high schools, i.e. 498 schools in all, were covered. The findings of this study are given in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3. Attitudes of students, teachers and parents towards co-education

Category	*Agree*	*Disagree*	*Don't know*
Junior high school			
Pupils	22	70	8
Teachers	93	4	3
Parents	51	18	31
Full-time senior high school			
Students	42	51	7
Teachers	83	10	7
Parents	41	35	24
Part-time senior high school			
Students	72	17	11
Teachers	89	6	5
Parents	43	21	36

As shown in this table, it was the teachers who favoured co-education. The role that the teachers played in effecting the democratization of the educational system has been vital and it was no less so in the matter of co-education. Especially significant is the fact that as many as 93 per cent of the total number of teachers of junior high schools were in favour of co-education, and a slightly lower measure of agreement (83 per cent) was found among teachers of full-time

senior high schools. With reference to students' attitudes, junior high school students were least (22 per cent) in agreement with co-education, but the part-time senior high school students showed the highest measure (72 per cent) of agreement. The lowest percentage of agreement in regard to co-education that was found among the junior high school pupils may be interpreted to mean that they have not as yet formed their own opinion, and thus they were, it seems, influenced by the traditions of the family and the community. This interpretation is suggested by the rather low percentage of agreement expressed by the parents—only 51 per cent in the group of junior high school parents, and only 41 per cent and 43 per cent of parents of full-time and part-time senior high schools respectively showed their agreement. Thanks to the presence of a large number of supporters of co-education among the teachers, a firm foundation was laid for the promotion of the spirit and practice of the new education.

At present, there is no longer any problem of co-education in junior high schools or primary schools. However, in senior high schools there are still educational problems connected with co-education. In the *Guide to prepare the Practical Operation of the New School System*, a pamphlet disseminated by the Ministry of Education in 1947, we find an indication that the Ministry of Education did not take positive action to enforce co-education in senior high schools. It should be remembered that the ministry approved co-education on the principle of equal educational opportunities for men and women. In the report of the educational commission of the United States of America, too, the expression or enunciation of this problem lacked definiteness. It was rather moderate as shown in the quotation below:

> Here again, co-education would make possible many financial savings and would help to establish equality between the sexes. However, separate schools might be used at this level during the transition stage, provided equal educational opportunity could be guaranteed.

Consequently, in senior high schools there are today considerable local differences in the extent to which co-education is put into practice. According to the 'Research on the Curriculum of the Senior High School', carried out by the Ministry of Education in 1957,

private senior high schools are less disposed to adopt co-education (only 15 per cent); whereas public senior high schools (85.8 per cent) are more disposed to adopt the practice of co-education. More than half (58.7 per cent) of the private senior high schools admit girls only, and 26.3 per cent of the private senior high schools admit boys only. (See Table 4.)

TABLE 4. Distribution of senior high schools according to mixed or unmixed education

Type of education	*Public*		*Private*	
		%		%
Co-education	1 280	85.8	85	15.0
Boys only	53	3.6	149	26.3
Girls only	158	10.6	333	58.7
TOTAL	1 491	100.0	567	100.0

So far as public senior high schools are concerned, co-education is now a common practice. This fact notwithstanding, recently some educationists have been advocating separate education for girls on the ground that the content of education must necessarily take account of the difference in sex. Indeed, there are real problems to be solved—for example, what to do with those girl students who have no prospect of going to universities but are attending senior high schools that are virtually preparatory for the university matriculation; and how best to balance quantitative and qualitative differences found among boys and girls in some of the senior high schools.

Although co-education still raises some problems, it has remarkably improved the education of women. Co-education, together with prolongation of the compulsory education period to nine years—six years of primary school education followed by three years of senior school education, has, for the first time, guaranteed a basic culture of a universal character to all the Japanese people without sex discrimination. Naturally enough, all girls who have acquired basic culture are, through the equal opportunity for education, showing their ability to advance to higher education.

Table 5 shows the yearly increase in the numbers of boys and girls attending senior high schools and colleges and universities.

In 1950, male students outnumbered female students by roughly 794,000. However, the rate of increase since then has been noticeably

TABLE 5. Number of boy and girl students in senior high school, college and university shown in indices (1950 to 1957)

Year	*Senior high school students*		*College and university students*	
	Boys	*Girls*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1950 [1]	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1951	111.6	115.8	102.3	119.1
1952	117.3	126.9	119.1	166.4
1953	124.6	140.0	124.0	205.9
1954	123.8	143.7	132.6	240.1
1955	124.3	149.3	137.7	264.6
1956	127.9	158.5	141.6	279.1
1957	134.7	173.9	144.3	284.7

1. In 1950 there were 1,203,749 boy and 733,766 girl students at senior high schools; there were 364,642 boy and 40,668 girl students at colleges and universities.

high for girl students—though the numbers have been increasing for both sexes as the indices show—whereas for a period of eight years, i.e. from 1950 to 1957, male students increased their number relatively slowly as the indices of 134.7 for senior high school students and 144.3 for university and college students indicate. For the corresponding period the relative increase for female students was rapid—the index is 173.9 for senior high school and 284.7 for university and college students. This rapid increase in the number of female students in senior high schools and in colleges seems to suggest that the barrier in the way of education for women has been removed and the way is now open for them, equally with men, to pursue the highest studies. The high educational achievements of women, which were once looked at askance, are beginning to be properly appreciated.

A conspicuous improvement in women's education in Japan is expected to bring about changes in other directions. The occupational advancement of women, which is of particular importance from the standpoint of this status, will be dealt with in detail later. Here it will suffice to note the statistics for women graduates of 1957[1], with reference to their occupational advancement (Table 6) and their distribution by major occupations (Table 7).

According to Table 6, the proportion of all female graduates of junior high schools, senior high schools, and colleges and universities who entered occupational life was 39.7 per cent, 51.2 per cent and

1. Computed from: Ministry of Education, *Reports of Fundamental Research on Schools, 1957.*

TABLE 6. Graduates by sex and later career (1957) [1]

Career	Junior high school		Senior high school		College and university	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Studying	49.4	46.6	17.0	13.0	6.8	4.8
Working	40.2	39.7	62.3	51.2	76.9	50.4
Studying part-time	4.9	1.8	1.3	0.3	3.7	1.0
Neither studying nor working	4.4	10.5	15.9	31.1	5.1	35.4
Other	1.1	1.4	3.5	4.4	7.5	8.4

1. Total number of graduates: 1,016,000 male, 982,000 female at junior high schools; 415,000 male, 316,000 female at senior high schools; 112,000 male, 36,000 female at colleges and universities.

50.4 per cent respectively. Slightly more than a half of the graduates of senior high schools and about a half of the college graduates hold occupations. In former days, the women who entered the arena of gainful occupation were predominantly the daughters of poor families, and they were therefore, for the most part, either factory workers or in service. Today, as shown in Table 7, the overwhelming majority of women university and college graduates are engaged in professional and clerical work—63.6 per cent of them are in professional work and 27.7 per cent in clerical work and together they

TABLE 7. Graduates by occupation (1957) [1]

Occupation	Junior high school		Senior high school		College and university	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	23.1	20.4	14.9	7.4	0.9	0.1
Mining, transport	55.5	47.8	32.3	7.5	2.2	1.1
Professions	—	—	6.2	1.2	38.1	63.6
Administration	—	—	0.6	0.3	1.3	0.4
Clerks	1.1	3.8	23.6	54.2	45.2	27.9
Trade	12.2	9.8	15.4	19.6	7.2	1.9
Service	3.7	13.4	3.3	6.1	2.1	1.7
Other	4.4	4.8	3.7	3.7	3.0	3.3

1. Total number of graduates: 457,000 male, 407,000 female at junior high schools; 264,000 male, 163,000 female at senior high schools; 86,000 male, 18,000 female at colleges and universities.

make up 91.3 per cent. Morally speaking, all legitimate trades are equally honourable but, from the point of view of social evaluation, professional and clerical work is held in higher esteem.[1] Therefore, the fact that highly educated women are now engaged in either professional or clerical work will be likely to modify considerably the past tendency to belittle working women and will contribute towards the enhancement of women's position. Furthermore, since education is highly valued in Japan, women with higher education are beginning to hold high positions not only in various occupations but also in all other fields.

1. See: Japan Sociological Society (ed.), *Modern Japanese Society : Its Class Structure*, Tokyo, 1958.

III. The changing position of women in the family

The position of women in the patriarchal family

In discussing the social position of women in Japan we now turn our attention to the family. The status which women hold and the roles which they play in the family will be described and analysed with reference to social change in general and to the change in the structure and function of the Japanese family in particular. The family is the first group of which any individual has experience, and the status given to women in the family is closely related to the status given to them in society at large.

The position of women in the traditional family in Japan was a lowly one under the patriarchal system. In Japan the patriarchal family has a long history going back to ancient times. The patriarchal family became widespread 400 years ago when Japan was unified under the feudal system. The relationship between lords and vassals—that is to say, the submission of the vassal to his lord and his control by the latter—was viewed as analogous to the relationship between the patriarch and the members of his family, and both relationships were regarded as based on the same ethical principle. This principle was carried over into modern Japan even after the collapse of feudalism; loyalty to the Emperor was regarded as identical with the virtue of filial piety towards one's own parents.

Under the system of the patriarchal family what counted most was the *iye* as a group. *Iye* was more than a group of individuals sharing a common roof. It was conceived of as a spiritual entity capable of perpetuating itself through generations. Within the *iye* the patriarch was the commander who derived his power and authority from his

office. Since the position of patriarch in *iye* was, as a rule, transmissible only to the eldest son, the latter, as a legitimate successor to the office of patriarch, was entitled to the deference of others both within and without the family. The degree of honour given to the eldest son varied according to the status of his own family in the community. The second and subsequent sons were treated differently and were called *hiyameshikui* (cold-meal eater) or hangers-on because they were not the ones who were to succeed to the office of the patriarch. In rare cases they inherited the family property. Under the patriarchal system, the position of the woman was definitely inferior to the *kacho*, oldest son, and other sons and her role was clearly that of submission. This role was justified and sanctioned by the ethics of Buddhism and Confucianism.

Side by side with the authority of the patriarch, his wife had an authority conferred upon her by the patriarch and this was referred to as 'housewife's authority'. However, unlike the patriarch's authority which had the firm backing of the law, the 'housewife's authority' had no legal sanction; her authority was based on custom and on the power exercised in her management of family consumption. Especially in *samurai* society, her husband's authority completely overshadowed hers and thus there was no problem whatever because the question of her 'rights' was never given any serious thought. Among the common people, however, the wife's role was recognized generally not only in respect of family consumption but also in regard to its production. Therefore her authority counted somewhat and constituted a kind of social convention. In consequence, it may be said that common people became more deferent to the authoritative patriarchal concept of the family in the Meiji era when education spread and when moral and legal norms penetrated all parts of Japanese society.

A conjugal family—a nuclear family—of modern times begins with the marital union of a man and a woman, but a patriarchal extended family is perpetuated through successive generations. Except for a newly established branch family, it has neither beginning nor ending in principle. A daughter who marries out is incorporated into the husband's family. She is a wife to her husband but at the same time she is a bride of the family, belonging to the patriarch, the father of her husband. The social norm bids her to be a bride to the father-in-law, rather than a wife to her husband. The service she renders to her parents-in-law is more important than the love of the young couple.

Therefore if she fails to gain the favour of her husband's parents, she is very often divorced by them regardless of the love or will of her husband.

In the research conducted by the Ministry of Labour in 1955 samples drawn from women above 20 years of age in all parts of Japan were found to consist of 7.9 per cent of family heads, 59.7 per cent of wives of family heads, 7.5 per cent of brides (i.e. wives of sons of family heads), 13.1 per cent of daughters, 8.3 per cent of mothers of family heads, 2.2 per cent of sisters and 1.3 per cent of others.[1] From the fact that 7.5 per cent of all Japanese women above 20 years of age are living with the parents of the husband and that the period of the research is relatively short, we can infer that a considerably larger number of Japanese women must be placed in a similar family status at the beginning of married life.

To give more precise data, the forms of the Japanese family are classified in Table 8 below which is compiled from the census of 1920.[2]

TABLE 8. Classification of families by form and composition and by rural and urban status

Form of family	*All Japan*	*Rural*	*Urban*
	%	%	%
A. One person household	6.0	5.2	9.1
B. Families of husband and wife only	10.3	9.4	14.3
C. Families of husband, wife and unmarried child	43.7	42.3	49.7
D. Families of husband, wife, married child and/or grandchild	2.3	2.6	1.1
E. Families of husband, wife, parents and/or grandparents	2.8	2.5	3.6
F. Families of husband, wife, child, and parents	25.1	27.9	13.6
G. Families including collateral kindred	9.8	10.1	8.6

Forms A, B and C in this table are variations of the modern nuclear family. Added together, the families of these three forms constitute 60 per cent of all families in Japan, 56.9 per cent of rural and 73.1 per cent of urban families, indicating that the trend toward the nuclear family is stronger in the urban area. Forms D, E and F, fundamental to the Japanese family in the past, include two or more nuclear families in a linear family. Form G is one that is constituted by adding collateral

1. Women's and Minors' Bureau, Ministry of Labour, *On the Status of Women*, 1955.
2. Takashi Koyama, 'Classification of Family Forms', in: *The Problem and Method of Sociology*, Tokyo, Yuhikaku, 1959.

kindred, such as brothers or sisters, to the above forms, cases which often occur when the family head is young. Four forms, from D to G, each of which is a kind of extended family, constitute altogether 40 per cent of all families, 43.1 per cent of rural and 26.9 per cent of urban families, indicating that a far larger number of extended families are found in rural areas than in urban areas.

However, the fact that both in rural and in urban areas nuclear families constitute more than half the total shows that other forms of family cannot be regarded as the inherent type. These forms are mostly transient ones that take shape in the course of the cyclic change in the extended family. Even if the forms at present are like the nuclear family, they will possibly turn into the form of extended family, although it is very likely that the proportion of nuclear families will increase with further modernistic developments in Japanese culture, as may be anticipated from urban and rural differences at present.

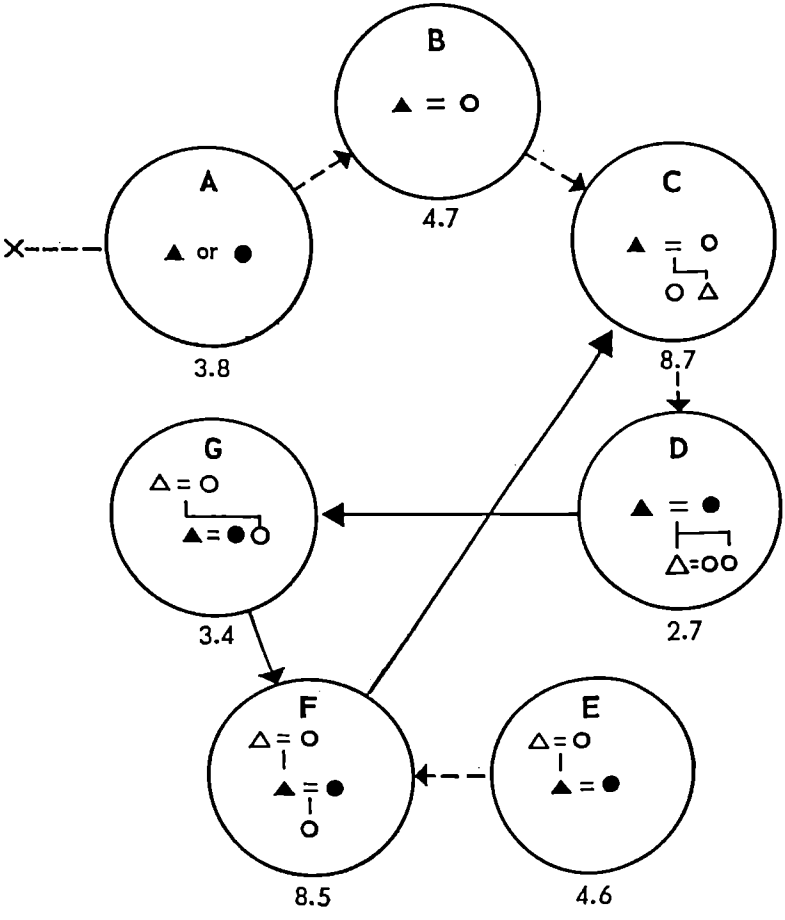
Among the varieties that take shape in the course of the cyclic change in the family, forms C, F, B and G are predominant throughout both urban and rural areas. Families of form B are likely to be mostly branch families established by second and subsequent sons. Unlike Western families, these are not dissolved in one generation but last through many generations and undergo cyclic change. In order to show the general tendency of cyclic change in the unilineal family, the changing forms assumed over a period of 60 years, from 1802 to 1861, by all the families in a village of the feudal days are indicated in Diagram 3.[1] This historical picture of the first half of the last century shows a cyclic change very similar to that still seen in the traditional family of Japan.

Form B in the diagram represents what takes place when a branch family is established or a son dies. Formally it is the same as the basic form of the contemporary Western family, but it is very different in its nature. The basic forms of the extended family are shown in C, D, F and G, and the average age of the family head increases as the form passes through G→F→C→D in this order. This is a cyclic course in which the change in the basic form of the extended family is repeated.

In the modern nuclear family, the original form is B, composed of a husband and wife only, and it moves then to C when their children are

1. Takashi Koyama, 'Cyclic Change of Family', *'Iye'—Analysis of its Structure*, Tokyo, Sobunsha, 1959.

DIAGRAM 3. Main courses of change in the form of the extended family



▲ Family head
● Wife of family head
△ Man not family head
O Woman not wife of family head

= Marriage
× Death
→ Main courses of cyclic change of basic family form
⇢ Main courses of cyclic change of derived family form.

Figures below each circle show average years of duration of respective form.

added and it subsequently turns back to B when the children become independent of their parents. In the case of the extended family, however, the married life of a couple very often starts in the family, which includes lineal ascendants, collateral members such as brothers and sisters of the husband. In the course of a few years, the collateral kin leave the group by marrying out or establishing a branch family, but the parents still remain in the family to live with their eldest son and his wife. This state lasts on an average for nearly ten years. The couple now have no family members other than their children, but this is the preparatory stage for the next cycle since very soon they take in a bride for their son.

All of the forms of family life and its cyclic change, as described in Diagram 3, are naturally derived from the patriarchal extended family system. The position of a woman is affected by the forms which a family assumes in the course of its cyclic change.

First, when a woman enters her husband's family by marriage, there already exists a socially sanctioned power structure headed by either her father-in-law or her husband. As a new member of the group, she is expected to be subservient to the family head, to abide by family ways and to labour for the family. Second, as parents, brothers and sisters of her husband live together in the same household, she is expected to be devoted and obedient to them. 'Be filial to parents and friendly to brothers' was an injunction embodied in the Emperor Meiji's 'Imperial Rescript on Education'. Formerly, this injunction constituted the foundation of national morality and was the essential norm to be observed by a wife in her relationship with members of her husband's family. Third, for a wife in the extended family there are two periods—the period of a bride and that of a housewife. During the period following the marriage what counts most is her duty alone and she can claim no rights. After she bears one or more children and becomes acquainted with the family customs, and the mother-in-law attains an advanced age, she can at last take over the position of the housewife. She now acquires the right to manage the household. This right is accompanied by heavy duties and responsibilities; she is burdened with the management of the household and the rearing of the children as well as with maintaining friendly and harmonious relations with relatives and neighbours. Furthermore, in families of farmers and traditional traders or small-scale manufacturers, the housewife is called upon to contribute her labour. As this was the case

with the wife in the firmly established family system of former days, one could hardly imagine a housewife being engaged in an occupation or in any social activity outside her family.

Thus, with the bride having no power and the housewife's power being confined to the household, the social position of women outside the family rarely called for consideration in the past. More recently, there has arisen, chiefly in urban society, a tendency to dissolve the extended family. But the process has not acquired sufficient force to effect a fundamental reform in the traditional conventions. The post-war family code was intended to establish a conjugal family system, but this legal reform, it seems, has not been fully adopted by the people. In not a few instances, contradictions between the new and the old way of family living and between the new and the old conception of the family are giving rise to complex family problems. Because of basic differences between the situation of a couple married according to the old system and that of a couple married and beginning their married life under the new system—which is founded upon the principle of respect for the individuality and equality of both sexes—there is discordance in the attitudes adopted towards the newly established norms. Conflict of this type is found among couples with one member from a rural background and another from an urban background.

An attempt will now be made in the following sections to set forth existing problems which relate particularly to women and their social position. These are problems involving legal actions such as marriage, divorce and inheritance; problems related to the question of fundamental human rights, such as one's right to make decisions on how to spend one's time and one's family income, how to manage one's health, and how to obtain and maintain individual freedom and expression; and, finally, problems related to the traditional values and practices of Japanese society.

The New Constitution, as we have already mentioned, set forth the principle of the equality of both sexes. It specifically recognized marriage as the basis of the family. Thus, the long-standing traditional notion of marriage as collectivity oriented and patricentric, has been replaced, at least in form, by the new conception of marriage, namely, as the union of man and woman based on the mutual consent of both sexes. The inherent differences between the old and the new marriage can best be seen when the ideal pattern of each is compared diagrammatically. This contrast is shown in Table 9.

TABLE 9. Comparison of the ideal patterns of marriage, new and old [1]

Item of ideal patterns	*Old conception of marriage*	*New conception of marriage*
1. Marriage and establishment of a family group.	Marriage is not the basic condition for establishment of *iye*.	Marriage is the basic condition of the family.
2. Divorce and dissolution of the family group.	Divorce does not disturb the continuity of *iye*.	Divorce means the dissolution of the family.
3. Importance of marriage.	Marriage for the sake of *iye* is far more important than marriage itself.	Marriage in itself is important.
4. Stress in married life.	Stress is laid on the stability of the *iye* grouping.	Stress is laid on the stability of the husband and wife union.
5. Meaning of marital union.	Marital union serves as a junction between the two *iyes* concerned.	Marital union is the union of two individuals—husband and wife.
6. Selection of a spouse.	The selection is made by parents or a go-between.	It is made by oneself.
7. Decision on the choice of a spouse.	The decision is made at the will of parents.	It is made at one's own will.
8. Association before marriage.	It is not necessarily a prerequisite to marriage.	It is an indispensable prerequisite to marriage.
9. Marriage and love.	In principle love is denied.	In principle love is a requisite to marriage.
10. Rites concerning marriage.	Customs are abided by.	Customs are not necessarily binding.
11. General characteristics.	Familial, authoritarian, compulsory.	Individualistic, equalitarian, liberal.

1. Family Research Group, 'Actual Conditions of the Family in the Post-War Period', *Japan Sociological Review*, No. 27-8, 1957, p. 127.

How far and in what ways do existing behaviour and practices deviate from these ideal marriage patterns as outlined above? Concerning the choice of one's spouse, we observe frequently that persons who agree that marriage should be based on the mutual consent of both sexes are confronted by others who still support the old notion that 'for marriage,

a son or a daughter should obtain the consent of the parents with whom he or she lives'. During the public opinion research on the family system of the Prime Minister's Office [1] (1956) the question was asked: 'In regard to the choice of a spouse, which of the two is to be preferred —choice made by parents or by oneself?' The replies are shown in Table 10 below.

TABLE 10. Opinions on the choice of a spouse

Respondent	*Reply*[1]		
	A	B	C
	%	%	%
By sex and age			
Male			
20-29	9	79	12
30-39	19	70	11
40-49	24	65	11
50-59	35	61	4
60 and over	49	35	16
Female			
20-29	16	74	10
30-39	21	68	11
40-49	35	55	10
50-59	39	50	11
60 and over	41	37	22
By place of residence			
Large cities	14	77	9
Middle-size and small cities	25	62	13
Country district	30	59	11
All Japan	26	63	11

1. A=Parents' choice is better; B=One's own choice is better; C=Don't know.

Numerous surveys of a similar nature have been made and their results all show much the same pattern of replies. In all Japan, there are roughly 26 out of 100 persons who are tradition-bound and think that the 'parents' choice' of their spouses would be better than 'one's own choice', whereas 63 out of 100 persons think their own choice of spouse would be better than their parents' choice. In terms of districts, country dwellers are more traditionally oriented (30 per cent) than persons living in middle-size and small cities (25 per cent), but the people in

1. Prime Minister's Office, *Research Report on the Family System*, 1957.

large cities are the least tradition-bound (only 14 per cent) in regard to their choice of spouses. Conversely, as large a proportion as 77 per cent of the people of large cities think and feel that 'one's own choice' is better than the 'parents' choice', but 62 per cent of persons living in middle-size and small cities and 59 per cent of those in the country feel the same way in regard to 'one's own choice' of spouse. A comparison by sex shows not too significant a difference, although there is good reason to assume that females are more influenced by tradition; the larger number of 'don't know' replies in this group seem to support this assumption. A comparison by age and sex also leads one to believe that women are, on the whole, more bound by tradition than men.

At present a conflict of opinion does exist between the young and the old and between urban and rural folk, causing serious family discords. What, then, is the course of action that a young person would be most likely to take should his attitude be found to conflict with that of his parents? According to the study of the Women's and Minors' Bureau, Ministry of Labour, made on women's position in 1955, it was found that 42 per cent of all female respondents replied, 'I accept my parents' opinion', 27 per cent indicated agreement with the reply which read 'Dare to marry disregarding them (parents) as marriage is left to one's own free will', 21 per cent replied, 'I don't know', and 10 per cent gave no reply.[1] From this survey one may infer how powerful is our national tradition in exerting its influence in the choice of one's spouse.

When one's spouse is chosen by one's own parents, it is very likely that the first step toward marriage is, in general, taken through an introduction by an intermediary. In this case, what is called '*miai*' (literally, this means seeing each other) is usually prearranged to let both parties interested in the marriage see each other formally for the first time. For them the *miai* is the first chance to see each other in the presence of parents and the go-between. When this *miai* ends favourably, the engagement is announced. At present, what is the ratio of *miai* marriages to love marriages? According to *The Life and Opinions of Housewives*, a study made by the Ministry of Labour in 1955, even in large cities, love marriages constitute only about 25 per cent and *miai* marriages as much as 73 per cent of total marriages; and in farming and fishing districts love marriages were only 13 per cent and 12 per cent respectively of the total. (See Table 11.)

1. Women's and Minors' Bureau, Ministry of Labour, *Research on the Position of Women*, Tokyo, 1955.

TABLE 11. Distribution of marriage by kind and by district [1]

Kind of marriage	*Large cities*	*Farming district*	*Fishing district*
	%	%	%
Love marriage	25	13	12
Miai marriage	73	86	84
Other	2	1	4

1. Women's and Minors' Bureau, Ministry of Labour, *The Life and Opinions of Housewives*, 1957.

In all districts the overwhelming majority of marriages are initiated through *miai*, but a relatively higher ratio of love marriages is seen in large cities. This indicates that the modernistic tendency is, in the case of marriage also, beginning to develop in urban districts in the post-war period, as other sources prove.

Regarding the desire of a prospective bridegroom to have his own wish observed in the choice of a bride-to-be, a study made by the Family Problems Study Group revealed that men who manifested their will constituted 60 per cent and 80 per cent in urban and rural areas respectively, whereas, in the case of women, only 7 per cent in urban areas considered that the will of the prospective bride should be taken into account in the choice of a bridegroom, and 11 per cent in rural areas. The woman's will was usually not made known directly to the other party to the marriage but was revealed indirectly through the go-between.[1]

Broadly speaking, marriages have been initiated chiefly by the wish and design of the parents or the husband. The union between a man and a woman based on the mutual love and will of both has been slow in coming. This state of affairs is what one might expect in view of the fact that an association between an adolescent boy and girl was socially disapproved. Even now this tendency survives in the formal procedure of marriage, and it is still supported generally. Among young people, however, the old procedure is rapidly succumbing to the new notion of marriage which regards a man and a woman as constituting the basis of marriage. In conjunction with the change in legal and moral norms, reform of actual marriage practices is expected to take place in the near future. As marriage is sanctioned socially at the

1. Takashi Koyama (ed.), *Study of the Contemporary Family*, Tokyo, Kobundo, 1959.

wedding ceremony, it is recognized and protected legally upon its registration, as provided by law. An actual marriage, if it is not legally registered, cannot provide legal protection for a child or for the position of the wife. Nevertheless, there have been many marriages which were not registered during the first period, legal procedures being complied with only after a considerable lapse of time.

In order to show the period elapsing between the wedding ceremony and the registration of the marriage, and the trend in this respect, the cumulative percentages of marriages according to the period between the ceremony and the registration are quoted from the *Population Mobility Statistics* of the Ministry of Health and Welfare. (See Table 12.)

TABLE 12. Marriages distributed according to the period from the wedding ceremony to the legal registration (1947 to 1957)

Period from ceremony to registration	*Year*										
	1947	*1948*	*1949*	*1950*	*1951*	*1952*	*1953*	*1954*	*1955*	*1956*	*1957*
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1 month	9.6	9.8	10.1	10.3	12.9	13.2	14.6	15.3	16.5	16.0	17.8
1 year	77.0	71.7	73.0	72.4	75.3	77.0	78.7	79.9	80.8	81.4	82.7
2 years	93.9	91.8	90.8	91.0	89.5	91.1	92.1	92.6	93.1	93.5	93.7
3 years	96.2	95.1	94.6	94.6	94.8	94.2	94.9	95.3	95.7	95.9	96.1

The period is growing shorter, as the table indicates, as a result of the effort recently made to promote earlier registration, but only 18 per cent complete registration within one month. Registration within one year was about 80 per cent in 1957, but this does not show much improvement when compared with the percentage of 10 years ago. Therefore, about 20 per cent of wives who actually entered upon married life were left without legal protection. This is more marked in rural areas than in urban areas. People of farming families generally think that the ability to give birth to children, to labour, to become adapted to life as a member of the family, and so on should be tested before the marriage is registered. At least, they are still inclined to postpone registration until 'a new wife is delivered of a child'. In the research of the Family Problems Study Group conducted in a fringe area of Tokyo in 1957, 30 per cent of non-farming families were found to have completed registration within 10 days; whereas farming families in the

same area that had done so were only 10 per cent. The proportion of these delays based on past institutions and customs is not mentioned in the statistics cited above, and we have no other sources from which to ascertain it. But, as subsidiary data, facts ascertained in the research on unregistered marriages carried out in Nishijin, a part of Kyoto, are reproduced in Table 13.

TABLE 13. Unregistered marriages in Nishijin, Kyoto, according to the reason for not registering (1923 and 1948)

Reason for not registering	*1923*[1]	*1948*[2]
1. Because neither husband nor wife is the head of or heir to the original family.	29	19
2. Because consent of parent or of the head of the original family cannot be obtained.	13	4
3. Because wife is not yet sure to fit into the family customs.	1	1
4. Because wife is not yet delivered of a child.	8	5
5. Others (including custom and general negligence).	49	71

1. Tamakichi Nakajima, 'Concerning Unregistered Husband and Wife', *Hogaku Ronso* (The Journal of Law), Vol. X, No. 3, 1923.
2. Toshiro Iio, 'Actual Conditions of Unregistered Marriage', op. cit., Vol. LVII, No. 3, 1951.

No strict comparison can be made between the two research findings shown in Table 13 because the time and the method of research were different. But we can still observe in the table the difference in tendencies within the period covered. The proportion of delay due to idleness or ignorance is now relatively greater, while the proportion of delay due to conventions has gradually lessened.

What has been said up to this point shows that, in spite of a fundamental reform of the marriage laws, the actual condition of marriage is still bound by old customs. In many cases of marriage, the position of married women remains relatively unchanged. However, there is growing evidence that the new generation is now following the principles embodied in the new marriage laws.

Divorce

In the collectivity oriented and patricentric traditional family system, divorce was relatively easy and its consequence was far more tragic for women than for men. As marriage was regarded in the past as a means

for obtaining a successor to the *iye*, a wife who, because of her own or her husband's sterility, found herself unable to bear a child or children commonly faced the fate of having to leave the *iye* and to return to her original house. Marriage was also a socially recognized way of procuring and strengthening the family labour force, and therefore a wife who for reasons of ill-health or unhappiness or both could not work as hard as was expected of her by members of her husband's family had to face the consequence of being sent back. Furthermore, a wife who for psychological reasons or because of her personality failed to gain the personal favour of her in-laws was sent back to her original *iye*. In considering divorce, the mutual affection of the husband and wife and their love for each other were given hardly any weight. Reasons for divorce in the past were buttressed with Confucian ethics, and even today the reasons are taken for granted as just. To be sure, these reasons are not recognized in law but, in the analysis of the trend in divorce, they must be taken into account. A high rate of divorce in the past was attributable to the nature of relationships characteristic of the patriarchal family system and to the prevailing moral norms surrounding the male-female relationship. Under these conditions, the relationship between husband and wife was subject to control by many other individuals, particularly by the patriarch. In view of this fact, the decline in divorce rates over the years implies, first, the waning of the power of the patriarch and, second, the fact that divorce, as a solution to difficulties of the *iye*, is less resorted to at present.

Before 1900, divorce rates were evidently high, but they steadily declined up to the time of the last world war. The divorce rate for the year 1885 was 3 per 1,000 persons, and in 1940 the rate was 0.7 per 1,000 persons (Table 14).

TABLE 14. Divorce rate per 1,000 persons (1885 to 1955)

Year	*Divorce rate*	*Year*	*Divorce rate*	*Year*	*Divorce rate*
1885	3.0	1910	1.2	1935	0.7
1890	2.7	1915	1.1	1940	0.7
1895	2.6	1920	1.0	1945	—[1]
1900	1.4	1925	0.9	1950	1.0
1905	1.3	1930	0.8	1955	0.8

1. Not available.

There was a slight increase in the divorce rate (1 per 1,000) soon after the war—reflecting, on the one hand, the chaotic conditions of Japan during her recovery and, on the other hand, the beginning of a new trend whereby love and the happiness of individuals are being taken account of in divorce.

At present we find divorces which are forced upon the married couple from the standpoint of the group or *iye*, side by side with divorces of a different nature. In the latter, divorce is used as a means to resolve the marital difficulties of individuals, rather than of a group. Two typical cases, the first representing the former and the second the latter kind of divorce, are selected from a group of divorce hearings which have been brought to the domestic court for mediation.

In the first case, the family A is a typical extended rural family, consisting of six members—husband (age 24), his wife (22), his parents, father (65) and mother (64), his sister (29) and her child (7), all living under the same roof. The husband's sister, once married, has come back with her own child after her divorce. This family is that of an owner-farmer belonging to the middle class. The husband and wife have been married for two and a half years. What has been expected of the new wife by the other members of the family is that she should keep herself constantly busy doing housework and work out in the field, lighten the burden on her parents-in-law and perform innumerable other chores. Having been brought up in a town nearby, this young wife being inexperienced in farming and being somewhat delicate in her physique, finds herself unable to live up to the role expected of her. She is therefore regarded as lazy by the other members of the family. Understandably, she cannot satisfactorily play the part expected of her. In addition, her sister-in-law being *demodori* (a slightly contemptuous term applied to a divorced woman who has come back to her own parents' home), though somewhat reserved, is always critical of her brother's wife. On the other hand, her father-in-law, who is rather mild and enjoys his life of semi-retirement, does not wield the patriarch's power very effectively. However, her mother-in-law is the harshest in the treatment of her. Her mother-in-law fully expects her son's wife to take complete charge of all the housework and farm work in order that she, as an aged mother, can lead a carefree life. As her expectations are not fulfilled, she finds herself frustrated, and becomes critical of her son's wife and adopts a hostile attitude towards her. Under these conditions, in spite of A's love for his wife, he is irritated by his

mother's endless criticism and her dissatisfaction directed against his wife. And yet, A being the elder son, his sense of responsibility in the matter of family problems overrides his affection for his wife. He decides finally to apply for a divorce so as to appease the dissatisfaction of his mother and sister.

In this first case, if the family in question were separated into two nuclear families, the divorce would probably not be applied for. As it is, the family being an extended one, the love and will of the couple are overshadowed by the dissatisfaction of the mother and sister-in-law. In this case, the group pressure, emanating from *iye*, forces the younger couple into divorce.

In contrast, in case B, a divorce was applied for by the wife. The family now lives in the city and is a nuclear one consisting of five members in all—husband, wife and three children now in school. The husband, 45 years old, was the second son of a farming family. Except for the youngest, all his other brothers are now engaged in agriculture in the country. The wife, aged 40, was brought up in a large city, and in her girlhood she was the object of the affection of her family, being the youngest child. Even now she relies heavily on others, especially on her eldest brother who runs a big hospital. Other brothers and sisters are all engaged in occupations of the modern type. In the course of her 20 years of married life, she and her husband worked hard during the war and bore together the various hardships of life. Today, as their life becomes stable, she suffers continual anxiety because of her husband's violent behaviour and his inadequate income since the war. Unable to remain patient any longer, she has started proceedings for divorce in the domestic court. As to the husband, he desires the continuation of the marriage and is entering a plea and offering an explanation as an answer to any cause of divorce alleged by his wife in the court.

It is clear from the opinions of both parties and of their relatives that the underlying difficulties are principally due to the differences in their rural and urban background. An added difficulty seems to arise from the fact that the wife herself has a lower standard of living than her relatives. Her situation, which is needy in comparison with theirs, has become unbearable as the general standard of living in Japan has risen in recent years.

One of the special characteristics of post-war divorce is the rapidly growing number of suits instituted by women, and understandably the

causes of divorce today are different from those found in the framework of the extended family in the past. The percentage of divorce suits brought by the husband and by the wife respectively is shown below in Table 15.

TABLE 15. Divorce suits (1952 to 1957) [1]

	Year					
	1952	*1953*	*1954*	*1955*	*1956*	*1957*
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Suits brought by husband	22.8	24.4	24.1	24.8	26.8	26.8
Suits brought by wife	77.2	75.6	75.9	75.2	73.2	73.2

1. General Secretariat, Supreme Court, *Annual Report of Judicial Statistics*, 1952 to 1957.

That more divorce suits are brought by wives than by husbands is often interpreted as a sign of a general awakening of women to their own rights. But this interpretation seems to be premature and to reflect a hasty optimism in view of the fact that divorcees are as yet very often placed in socially and personally disadvantageous situations.

What, then, are the most prevalent causes of divorce today? There are two ways by which divorce may be legally obtained in Japan. On the one hand, there is divorce 'by consent' and, in this case, the divorce is registered with the mutual consent of the husband and wife and without any other legal procedure. On the other hand, there is judicial divorce. In this case, after failure to obtain divorce by mutual consent, one or both parties bring a suit before the Domestic Court. Under the first divorce procedure, there is no means of ascertaining the cause or causes of divorce in specific instances and therefore we cannot discover the trend in regard to causes of divorce. This being so, we can base inferences only on the causes alleged in court in divorce proceedings. These causes in 1952 as compared with those in 1957 are given in Table 16, which shows the percentage distribution of divorce suits by the alleged cause attributed to the husband or wife.

According to Table 16, 'unchastity' and 'cruel treatment' (49 per cent in 1952 and 48 per cent in 1957) are the main grounds upon which wives seek divorce from their husbands—these reasons for divorce constitute 49 per cent, whereas 'difference of character' and 'discord with parents' in the case of the wife are the chief grounds upon which husbands seek their divorce (37 per cent in 1952, 50 per cent in 1957).

TABLE 16. Distribution of divorce suits according to the cause attributed (1952 and 1957) [1]

Alleged cause	*1952*		*1957*	
	Attributed to		*Attributed to*	
	Husband[3]	*Wife*[2]	*Husband*[3]	*Wife*[2]
Total number	9 348	2 770	10 262	2 749
	%	%	%	%
Unchastity	27	16	29	20
Cruel treatment	22	3	19	2
Desertion	7	4	7	3
Wastefulness	8	2	10	3
Crime	2	1	2	1
Disease	2	9	3	11
Difference of character	12	32	15	30
Discord with parents	4	5	4	20
Economic disruption	7	1	7	2
Others	9	27	4	8

1. General Secretariat, Supreme Court, *Annual Report of Judicial Statistics*, 1952 and 1957.
2. Allegation made by wife.
3. Allegation made by husband.

These constitute the largest proportion of the causes alleged by the wife and by the husband respectively. Causes that increase in frequency with the passage of a few years are the husband's unchastity alleged by the wife and the wife's difference of character alleged by the husband. This implies, on the one hand, that the wife has become less resigned to unchastity on the part of her husband and, on the other hand, that when a wife makes a decisive claim the husband increasingly feels the difference of character. The rapid increase in the number of cases where discord with the parents-in-law is alleged by the husband might seem to suggest a contrary trend, but this increase is largely a reaction to the wife's greater insistence on her claims rather than the result of the one-sided demands made by parents-in-law, as was usually the case in the past. This must therefore be considered a transient trend due to the impact between the new and old attitudes. However, the fact that a considerable number of husbands allege their wife's disease as the cause of divorce suggests that many husbands are either selfish or are bound by the old family consciousness. As for discord with the parents-in-law, this occurs mostly between a bride and her husband's mother

and indicates the obstinate retention of the old family tradition, in which the bride's position is ranked low in the family.

In general the increase in the number of lawsuits brought by women seems to suggest that they have grown more active in manifesting their own will and wish to seek the solution of their problems through the use of the domestic court. However, the fact that the main causes of divorce alleged by husbands are still 'difference of character' and 'discord with parents' strongly suggests that wives still occupy a low position in the family.

Let us now examine what people say about the circumstances under which divorce is considered unavoidable. On this point, the Family Problems Study Group, already referred to, obtained the results shown in Table 17 from samples of those living in rural villages and others living in urban apartment-houses.[1]

TABLE 17. Opinions on just grounds for divorce which is regarded as unavoidable for specific reasons

Grounds	*Villagers*[1]				*Apartment dwellers*[2]			
	Men		*Women*		*Men*		*Women*	
	%	*Order*	%	*Order*	%	*Order*	%	*Order*
1. A spouse is licentious	43	*4*	41	*3*	58	*1*	65	*2*
2. A spouse loves someone else	59	*1*	46	*2*	49	*3*	45	*6*
3. One spouse treats the other cruelly	44	*3*	33	*7*	52	*2*	68	*1*
4. A spouse has a habit of idleness	45	*2*	51	*1*	39	*5*	62	*3*
5. Couple's characters differ markedly from each other	38	*6*	33	*7*	42	*4*	52	*4*
6. A spouse drinks too heavily	39	*5*	38	*6*	30	*6*	50	*5*
7. A spouse has a venereal disease	36	*8*	39	*4*	24	*7*	39	*7*
8. A spouse has a habit of wastefulness	37	*7*	39	*4*	21	*8*	25	*8*
9. Mother or other relatives of a spouse treats the wife (or husband) harshly	16	*9*	16	*9*	14	*9*	16	*9*
10. A spouse does not obtain enough income	5	*10*	6	*10*	5	*10*	5	*10*

1. Respondents in a rural village.
2. Respondents in an urban apartment-house area.

1. Takashi Koyama (ed.), op. cit., 1959.

The minimum requisite for the continuance of a marriage varies from person to person and the view of 'just cause or causes' for divorce likewise differs from one person to another. In spite of this fact, there is a consensus of opinion on the just causes for divorce. In the case of female apartment dwellers these are: (1) 'treats the other cruelly'; (2) 'a spouse is licentious'; (3) 'a spouse has a habit of idleness'; and (4) 'couple's characters differ markedly'. For the female apartment dweller the table indicates that the largest measure of approval of divorce is given in the case of four specific reasons. In the case of about 50 per cent of male apartment dwellers, the most frequently supported reasons are: (1) licentiousness; (2) cruelty; (3) love for someone else; and (4) character differences. As one might expect, village women differ from urban women in their opinions on just grounds for divorce. For the rural women, the order is as follows: (1) a habit of idleness; (2) love for someone else; (3) licentiousness; and (4 and 5—equal frequence) 'husband has a venereal disease' and 'he has a habit of wastefulness'. Similarly, the 'just grounds' approved by rural men differ significantly from those approved by apartment dwellers. They are: (1) loves someone else; (2) idleness; (3) cruelty; and (4) licentiousness. The least important 'just causes' are: 'does not obtain enough income', and 'harsh treatment'. In regard to these, there was no difference between the rural and the urban groups.

As a general trend, it is interesting to note that women in urban areas show a higher consensus of opinion on the various grounds for divorce than is found in any other group. This trend is in accord with the fact that more divorce suits are brought before the domestic court by urban women than by men. This may also imply a growing repulsion on the part of women towards their subordinate position. Here, we may point to the fact that such a comment as 'I shall be patient' is given more frequently by women with a rural background than by those with an urban background though exact figures for such replies are not cited here. In conclusion, we may say that urban and rural women represent the opposition between the modern and the traditional viewpoint on divorce and that this reveals the existing difference in the position of urban women and rural women of today.

Inheritance

According to the former inheritance law, inheritance meant the succession to *iye*, and only the successor to *iye* legitimately inherited the family property as well as the position or office of the patriarch. The need to maintain the *iye* group was the prime consideration. The new law, on the other hand, does not recognize the institution of *iye*, nor its headship. The new law does not recognize the need to hold together the family property, which was an essential condition for the succession and continuity of *iye*. Therefore, at present, the property left by the deceased family head has to be divided equally among the male and female children. As far as the provisions of the law on inheritance are concerned, the change as noted above has been made. We must examine what actual changes have been made in the practical application of the new inheritance law.

The new inheritance law, based on the principle of equal inheritance, embodied a provision recognizing the right of a person to give up his inheritance through registration in the domestic court if the person concerned does not want to inherit. Table 18 summarizes the reasons given by men and women for registering their resignation of inheritance in the Domestic Court. The figures given are for 1957 and concern a total number of 147,491 persons, being 48,954 men (33 per cent) and 97,537 women (67 per cent).

TABLE 18. Distribution according to the reasons given by men and women who registered the resignation of inheritance in the Domestic Court (1957) [1]

Reasons	*Men*	*Women*
	%	%
Property given as a gift in lifetime of family head	6	5
Living condition is good	23	20
The property is too small	10	8
Because of marriage or adoption	3	14
Let children inherit the property	—[2]	4
Let the eldest son (or daughter) inherit the property	32	30
To avoid too small subdivisions of the property	9	6
Other	17	13

1. General Secretariat, Supreme Court, *Annual Report of Judicial Statistics*, 1957.
2. Too small to record.

The practice according to which the eldest son inherits a larger share than the other brothers and sisters is still accepted by people in general today. However, the attitude toward the acceptance of this practice varies with age (see Table 19) but the difference in attitude between sexes is small, although women seem to be slightly more conservative—this difference may be due to an error in sampling.

According to the public opinion research on the family system conducted by the Prime Minister's Office in 1956, respondents who concurred in the opinion that the largest share should go to the eldest son or the successor in the inheritance constituted the following proportion in specific age groups of men and women.[1]

TABLE 19. Proportion of men and women who agree that the largest share of an inheritance should go to the eldest son or successor

Age group	*Men*	*Women*	*Age group*	*Men*	*Women*
	%	%		%	%
20-29	44	42	50-59	69	74
30-39	54	55	60	77	78
40-49	62	69			

It is true that the domestic life of most Japanese people cannot be maintained if the property left is divided into small portions, but the table clearly shows that, in regard to such a practical problem as inheritance, people still retain a very strong inclination to the traditional view. On this problem, too, women seem to support the tradition more than men do.

Role of women in domestic life

In the preceding sections we have examined woman's position in relation to three important matters—marriage, divorce and inheritance. In this section we shall examine more concretely her role in domestic life.

Allocation of time in the daily life of women. We shall first examine the woman's time budget or the allocation of her time in everyday life. Data for this section are to be found in a report on research on the time allocation of the nation's daily life conducted by Nihon Hoso

1. Prime Minister's Office, *Research Report on the Family System*, 1957.

Kyokai of NHK (the Broadcasting Corporation of Japan) from 1941 to 1942.[1] The research was on a large scale, covering men and women above 16 years of age in the households of salaried workers, factory workers, retailers, and farmers. Since there is no other report that can compare favourably with this, we shall use the findings of NHK. Table 20 and Diagram 4 give the time allocation of the daily life of Japanese people in terms of occupational work, housework, self-cultivation, and rest, which includes sleep, meals and so forth.

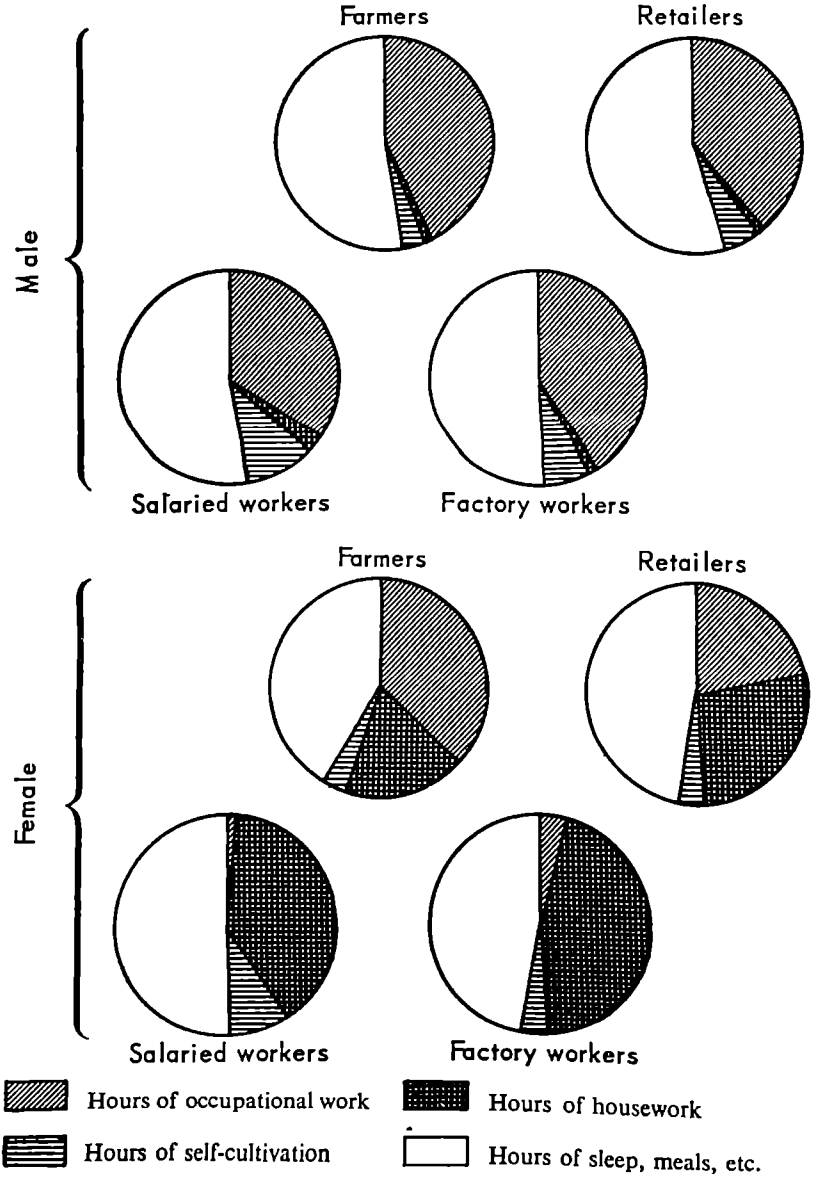
TABLE 20. Time allocation per day of four classes of people

Category	*Occupational work*		*Housework*		*Self-cultivation*		*Sleep, meals, etc.*	
	hrs.	mins.	hrs.	mins.	hrs.	mins.	hrs.	mins.
Farmers								
Male	10	46		11		48	12	15
Female	9		4	11		14	10	35
Retailers								
Male	9	39		14	1	23	12	44
Female	5	10	6	46		51	11	13
Salaried								
Male	8	39		26	2	36	12	19
Female		10	10	33	1	35	11	45
Factory								
Male	10	2		12	1	44	12	2
Female		50	11	3		51	11	17

As indicated in this table, in the households of both farmers and retailers women and men work very long hours. In the households of salaried and factory workers, women hardly work for income at all, save for a small number of them doing petty jobs at home. As for housework, women of salaried and factory-worker households spend the major part of their time at it. Even in the households of farmers and retailers, women allocate from four to six hours to household work. Thus, by adding together the hours allocated to both work and housework, we find that women in the households of all occupational groups work longer hours than men, with the result that women have very little time left for 'self-cultivation' and sleep. In particular, farming women, whose working hours total 13, have markedly reduced hours of rest. Men's working hours in any occupation are directly associated with the nature of the work and their hours for housework are prac-

1. Nihon Hoso Kyokai, *Research on the Time Allocation of the Nation's Daily Life*

DIAGRAM 4. Time allocation per day of four classes of people



tically negligible. Consequently, their total hours of work are shorter than those of women, allowing men to spend more hours for 'self-cultivation' and rest than women.

The cultural achievement of a person cannot always be equated with the number of hours allocated to 'self-cultivation', but there is some reason to think that the heavy load of long work borne by women, as shown in Table 20, deprives them of time for 'cultural activities'.

In the case of farmers and retailers, there are many women participating in occupational work. Their participation is of the nature of family work, and all of their occupational work is managed by the family head.

The patterns of time allocation seen in the table remain very much the same even today. Changes, when observed, are due largely to changes in working hours in response to business fluctuations, to the lightening of domestic work due to the introduction of electric home equipment and other modern conveniences in recent times, or to the increasing co-operation of young men in the housework. However, we should not fail to note one striking fact. Since the last world war the appreciation of women's work has increased, and there is an increasing number of married women employed outside their own homes.

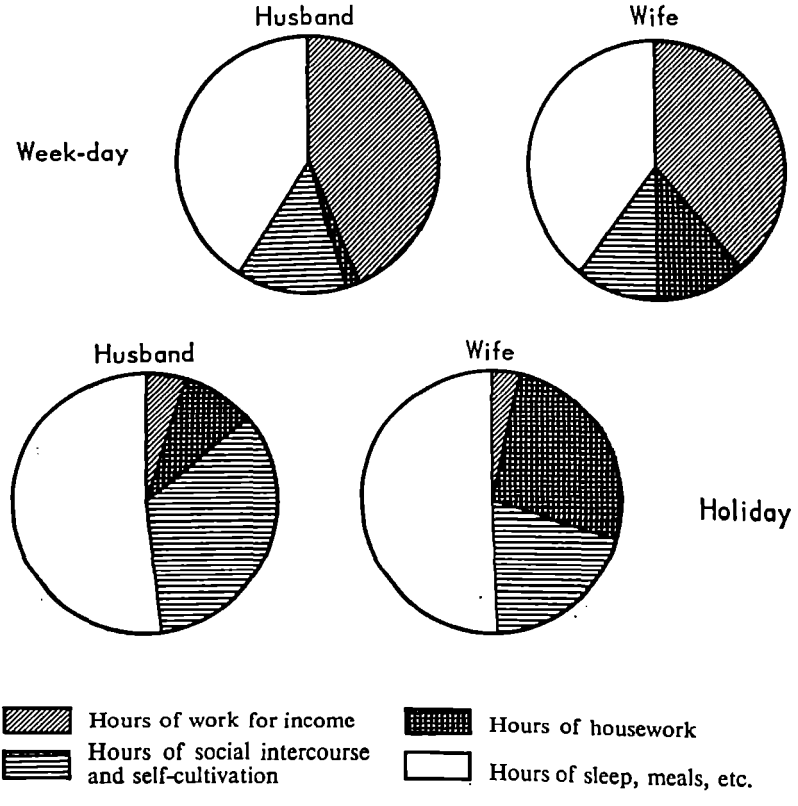
Recently a study was made of 54 households of teachers—elementary and junior high school—where both husband and wife work outside their homes.[1] The findings of this study in regard to time allocation are shown in Table 21 and Diagram 5.

TABLE 21. Time allocation per day of a school-teacher and his wife

Day	*Family member*	*Work for income*		*House-work*		*Social intercourse and self-cultivation*		*Sleep, meals, etc.*	
		hrs.	mins.	hrs.	mins.	hrs.	mins.	hrs.	mins.
Week-day	Husband	10	31		28	3	19	9	42
	Wife	9	36	2	40	2	1	9	43
Holiday	Husband		59	2	16	8	23	12	22
	Wife		43	6	22	4	49	12	6

1. Nami Inaba, 'Time Allocation in Daily Life by those who work and do not work outside the Home', *Journal of Domestic Science*, Vol. IX, No. 2, 1958.

DIAGRAM 5. Time allocation per day of a school-teacher and his wife



According to this table, both husband and wife spend a large portion of their time in work for income and consequently the time spent on housework is extremely short. Even among this group, a wife is on a week-day loaded with longer hours of housework than her husband, leaving a shorter time for social intercourse and 'self-cultivation'. Unlike week-days, holidays can be devoted to housework and the time allocated for this purpose is longer, as one might expect. Here we see that husbands, too, spend more than two hours in housework.

The tendency for men to spend more time on housework in order to help their wives is not confined solely to the group where both hus-

bands and wives work outside the home. The trend is also evident in the homes of salaried or factory workers whose wives stay at home. This is a new trend and marks a significant shift from the position in pre-war days. This may well mean that a new idea of mutual help between husband and wife is beginning to grow and to be put into practice.

Having thus discussed the question of time allocation in the daily life of women, we now turn our attention to their role and function in home life.

Housekeeping role. The housekeeping roles of women are, indeed, very complicated as these roles vary with the conditions and structure of the individual home. Here, we shall examine child education and housework as the most common and basic roles of women.

First, to what extent is a wife in her housekeeping role given the power of operation, management and decision-making in her household economy? In order to ascertain the extent to which women do participate in working out a plan in the household economy, the Ministry of Labour conducted research on a national scale and the results were reported in 1955.[1] Table 22 is one of the findings of this study.

TABLE 22. Participation of Japanese women in planning household economy (1955)

Replies showing extent of participation	*All women*	*Married women*
	%	%
Mainly I work out the plan	42	46
My opinion is always asked	31	34
My opinion is sometimes asked	14	12
I never make the plan	10	6
Other	3	2

Replies were given by 1,896 women aged above 20. Of those married women who answered, 46 per cent said 'Mainly I work out the plan' and 18 per cent answered 'I never make the plan' or 'My opinion is sometimes asked'. From these figures it may be deduced that a considerable number of women who live with their parents-in-law in the extended family after their marriage are not allowed to participate in

1. Women's and Minors' Bureau, Ministry of Labour, *On the Status of Women*, 1955.

the operation of the household economy and thus remain in the helpless position of 'the bride'.

In the operation of the household economy, there exists a wide difference in the wife's role as between rural and urban areas, i.e. as between farm and non-farm families. According to the study of the Ministry of Labour, in the homes of medium-scale and small-scale factory workers, 86 per cent of the husbands reported that they 'hand over all their wages to their wives', but in the farm families 91 per cent of the husbands control all household expenditure.

As regards the person in charge of household expenditure, the investigation by the Family Problems Study Group showed, as appears from Table 23, that there is a significant difference between farm and

TABLE 23. Persons in charge of household expenditure: comparison of farm and non-farm families

Person in charge	*Farm families*	*Non-farm families*	*Person in charge*	*Farm families*	*Non-farm families*
Family head	14	3	Family head and his wife	23	12
Wife	63	82	Other	0	3

non-farm families in a fringe area of Tokyo.[1] From this table we see that in non-farm families the extent to which the husband shares in the management of household expenditure is much less than in farm families—3 per cent and 14 per cent respectively. Cases in which management rests with the wife are far more frequent in non-farm families than in farm families—82 per cent and 63 per cent respectively. The difference which exists in this respect between farm and non-farm families in the same community is the outcome of the different situation of these two groups in regard to the way of making a living; but it may also reflect a differential evaluation of the position of wives in farm and non-farm families.

For instance, when children were asked: 'Who determines the amount spent?' and 'Who gives you petty cash?', 31 per cent of the rural children replied, 'Mother determines the amount', and 51 per cent said, 'Mother gives' them petty cash, whereas, in urban areas, the corresponding percentages were 47 and 65 respectively.[2] It may be

1. Takashi Koyama (ed.), op. cit., 1959.
2. Yaichi Nakagawa, 'The Rural Home viewed from the Standpoint of Education', *Case Study*, No. 1, 1957 (special and enlarged issue).

seen from these figures that the impression which children in their daily life have of their mother is that she holds the family purse and that this impression is stronger in urban areas.

Stated briefly, the wife in the city plays as yet a very small role in earning the cash income, but, in the management of the household economy, she has full power and nearly everything is virtually controlled by her.

Educating role. The educational function of the family is often seen by some as having been already transferred to the school, and the educational function decreases in proportion to the spread of school education. However, the role of the family in carrying out the educational function compares well with that of the school. The family plays an indispensable part in the education of children under school age and in the home training of schoolchildren. This function is performed chiefly by the mother. In a family research conducted by the present writer in 1956, 76 per cent of those taking the lead in child training were women and 55 per cent of those women were mothers.[1] Regarding the content of the training, besides the teaching of good manners, which was mentioned most frequently, warning of wrong dictions and naughty behaviour, the encouragement of learning and exhortation of compliance with parents' bidding, etc., were found to be major items of child training. The encouragement of learning was especially stressed in urban areas.

Training in housekeeping is given at the school, but the home is still the centre for this kind of training and it still has a great influence on children. According to research amongst housewives in 1958 conducted by Mrs. Suehiro,[2] the mother and the school were the most frequently mentioned agents in teaching the ways of good housekeeping and child-rearing. The findings are given in Table 24 below.

The trend observed in this table showed no variation when examined in the light of occupation of the husband, although among respondents with higher education the proportion of those who learned from school and books was larger than among other respondents. Since the sample of this research was drawn from those who reached the age of a housewife, their learning was mostly done during the pre-war period

1. From the file of the writer (unpublished).
2. Kazuko Suehiro, 'Research for the Domestic Science', 1958 (unpublished).

TABLE 24. Proportion of women who learned housekeeping and child-rearing mainly from mother and from school education

Items	*From mother*	*From school education*	*Items*	*From mother*	*From school education*
Sewing	37	64	Child-rearing	43	24
Cooking	51	35	Mental preparation for the role of housewife	50	18

and accordingly the figures in the above table may well be taken to denote the trend of pre-war days. It must be admitted that today opportunities for learning occur more frequently outside the home as the media of mass communication, such as radio and television, grow more influential and a larger number of women are engaged in workshops and in group activities promoted by women. Attention must be called to the fact that home education and training is not accepted as unconditionally as it used to be in pre-war days because it is liable to cause a conflict of new and old in the home due to the changing mode of life and the difference between the generations. Nevertheless, the wife continues to play an important role in home education and training.

The wife's role in housework. Housework represents another important task which women perform in the family. Formerly, it was generally understood that men have nothing to do with housework. This laid a heavy burden upon women. Since the last world war, the idea of 'democracy', which is penetrating gradually into home life, and technological changes in the form of modern appliances and conveniences, which are lightening housework, are being diffused and they have contributed to reduce women's burden in housework in both rural and urban areas. But it must not be forgotten that current economic conditions impose upon the housewife a much heavier financial burden that offsets the gains from technological inventions.

In relation to the housework of today, we shall first treat opinions on the question of the husband helping the wife in her housework. In 1951, the National Opinion Research Institute conducted a survey.[1] One of the questions asked was: 'Do you approve or disapprove of a man assisting in kitchenwork?' The answers were as shown in Table 25.

1. National Public Opinion Research Institute, *Research on Women and Youth*, 1951.

TABLE 25. Opinions concerning a man assisting in kitchenwork

Opinion	*Men*	*Women*	*All Japan*
	%	%	%
Approve	31	34	32
Disapprove	42	46	45
It depends on the situation	11	8	9
Don't know	16	12	14

According to this finding, nearly half of all Japanese people disapprove of a man assisting in kitchenwork. But a slightly higher percentage of women than of men approved of the man assisting in kitchenwork, and the same situation existed in replies of those who 'disapprove'. It is a striking fact that only one third (31 per cent for men and 34 per cent for women) of men and women approve of a man helping in kitchenwork; also more married or older persons disapprove of a man helping in kitchenwork than single or younger persons.

It can be seen from a review of other studies of this kind that the majority of wives are often unaware of the amount and burdensomeness of their work in connexion with housekeeping. Their minds are preoccupied with the problem of how to escape from poverty. The survey of the 'Wife's Wishes of this Year' conducted by *The Mainichi* in 1953,[1] asked this question: 'What do you desire most of your husband?' To this, Japanese wives gave the replies shown in the following table (Table 26).

TABLE 26. Wife's desires concerning husband

Wife's desire	*Percentage*
Increase of income	20
Stability of living	7
Abstinence from excessive drinking and smoking	15
Giving up too lavish spending of money	5
Keeping regular time	12
Solution of housing problem	9
Repair of house	13
Co-operation with wife	9
Saving money	3
Other	7

1. 'Wife's Wishes of this Year', *The Mainichi*, 1953.

Many wives who replied desired their husbands to improve the present financial and living conditions of their homes. 'Increasing income', 'stable living' and 'saving money'—these were desired of their husbands by 30 per cent of all women respondents. Next in importance were the problems of finding a place to live and keeping the house constantly in good repair—22 per cent of the women respondents desired these of their husbands. Thus, financial considerations and housing conditions formed the subject matter of slightly over 50 per cent of the wishes expressed. The remaining half of the replies showed that excessive drinking and smoking, lavish spending and failure to keep regular time (32 per cent in all) were things that wives would wish their husbands to do something about.

Wife's work for income. According to the traditional notions of Japan, it is absolutely right for a woman to look after domestic affairs and children, as it is for men to do outdoor work. It is just as undesirable for a wife to work outside the home in order to earn a cash income as it is for her husband to do the housework. After the last world war a large number of women entered a variety of occupations. As a result, the traditional notion of women's role as being exclusively concerned with housekeeping is changing.

Women's occupational activities will be considered in detail in a later chapter. Here it will suffice to examine the attitude of Japanese people towards married women working outside the home. If we look at the survey on women and youth, conducted by the National Public Opinion Research Institute in 1952, we see that about the same number of persons have intimated their agreement with each of the four replies, namely, 'I approve of her working outside', 'I disapprove of her working outside', 'It depends on the occasion', and 'I don't know'. (See Table 27.)

TABLE 27. Opinions concerning a married woman working outside the home [1]

Opinion	*Men*	*Women*	*All*
	%	%	%
I approve of her working outside	25	22	23
I disapprove of her working outside	27	23	25
It depends on the occasion	24	25	25
I don't know	24	30	27

1. National Public Opinion Research Institute, *Research on Women and Youth*, 1952.

The traditional notion seems to be definitely crumbling, and the majority of those who approve of married women working outside regard such work as a necessary evil, an evil which has been forced upon them by the difficulties of present-day life. The fundamental attitude is still that 'the woman's place is in the home'. On the other hand, a comparison by age shows that the younger the respondents the larger the extent of approval for women working outside the home. The post-war change has induced many women to engage in economic activities to help to support the family. According to the investigation of 1949 by the Ministry of Labour, 40 per cent of women were reported to add one-half or more to the amount of the family income by doing part-time work, by helping in the family business or by taking up a regular occupation. There were only 22 per cent who 'added nothing'. As the research was conducted at the time of the business depression, a period when any member of the family who could work at all was called upon to supplement the family income, these figures are perhaps not representative of the women of today. But one cannot overlook the fact that the wife's economic activities during that period greatly influenced the role she plays.

Women's economic activities are now not restricted to the occupational field, for their growing concern with investments is also a remarkable trend of recent times. The legal code of pre-war days laid down that women were incompetent to deal with property and they did not take any positive interest in the management of property. Even when a stockholder's name happened to be that of a woman, this did not in most cases represent her ownership nor her own will; her name appeared because her father or husband, who was the real holder, used her name. Today many women study the stock market for themselves, and invest in stocks and make money in preparation for their daughter's marriage or for their own use. Large joint-stock companies are now issuing periodicals for women investors and the number of copies is increasing rapidly every month. Though this phenomenon is still confined to urban districts, such publications indicate the very significant change that has occurred in recent times.

The wife and freedom

In home life, what is the degree of freedom given to a woman who fulfils the role of housewife, mother or wife? A study was made of

residents in Nagoya city and its vicinity in 1956 to find the reason or reasons why it is thought to be fortunate or unfortunate to be born a man or a woman, as the case may be. Of all male respondents, those who mentioned 'being free' as the reason why they think it 'fortunate' to be born a man made up 63 per cent in the urban area and 55 per cent in the rural area; none of the urban or rural women gave this as a reason. Moreover, 30 per cent of the urban women and 27 per cent of the rural women gave 'because a woman is not free' as one of the reasons why they think it 'unfortunate to be born a woman'.[1]

How, then, is the freedom of women expressed in their home life? Let us first examine whether or not wives in charge of the family expenditure are given money to manage. A report of the Ministry of Labour on 'life and opinion of the wife'[2] shows that 46 per cent of the urban wives said that money was given to them to manage and 41 per cent of the rural women reported likewise. Forty per cent of the urban women and 42 per cent of the rural women answered 'No' to this question. The difference between 'Yes' and 'No' for both urban and rural areas is not striking.

As regards self-improvement, we learn from the same report that many women (more than 50 per cent) desired to improve themselves but, for various reasons, a majority of them could not afford the time and money. As to the reason, the largest proportion (41 per cent) of them answered: 'I am too busy to spare the time', and the second largest (29 per cent): 'I have a small child' or 'I have too many children.' Women's growing desire to learn something other than housekeeping denotes their awakening to the need for self-improvement. But in actual life they are, indeed, occupied with the household chores and the care of children, and they have little time left to enjoy the freedom of their own self-improvement.

'Woman keeps the house' was a phrase in common usage and, as this expression shows, women have been confined to the home. Their social activities outside the home were not considered necessary. Even today, in theory such a social norm is no longer binding but, in actual fact, women's participation in social activities is in many instances disliked by other members of the family. In Tokyo, 47 per cent, i.e. the largest proportion of women, when asked, 'What would your family think if

1. National Public Opinion Research Institute, *Research on the Women's Consciousness of Citizenship*, 1951.
2. Ministry of Labour, *Life and Opinion of the Wife*.

you were busy running about on the work of a women's association or an election campaign?', replied definitely that their family 'would hate it'. It was only 33 per cent who answered that their family 'would support it'.[1] Nevertheless, such organizations as the Parent-Teacher Association and other civic associations offer an excellent opportunity for the development of leadership among women, and contribute much towards changing the traditional view on women.

From the aforementioned research on the status of women in Nagoya city we learn that when the question concerning 'the reason why it is thought fortunate to be born a woman' was asked, 30 per cent of urban women and 52 per cent of rural women mentioned 'the pleasure of bearing and rearing children'. We note also that 52 per cent of the urban women and 16 per cent of the rural women answered, 'Because I like housework'.[2] These two functions—child-bearing and housework—are considered by women themselves to be important in making women's life worth while, and as they regard them as their pleasure, they may find their freedom in the home.

Women's status as observed in the customs of life

However great and substantial changes in laws and regulations may be, the ways and customs of the people do not, for their part, change easily in a nation like Japan. To be sure, changes in law do have an educational value in modern society. Therefore, some important aspects of the customs of Japanese society which have a bearing on the status and position of women must be described and analysed.

Appellation of the husband. When a wife speaks of her husband to a third person, she speaks of him as *shujin* (master). In the old patriarchal family, the husband was, indeed, the 'master of the *iye*' because the office of the headship of the household was assigned to him; whence came the appellation, *shujin*. In the context of present-day Japanese society, a term with such a social derivation may sound highly inappropriate now that the old family system has, from the legal standpoint, been abolished. Today, in the private letters of women or in their contributions to the reader's columns of magazines and news-

1. National Public Opinion Research Institute, *Research on the Women's Consciousness of Citizenship*, 1951.
2. Ministry of Labour, op. cit.

papers, the term 'my husband' instead of *shujin* is very often intentionally used. But in their daily conversation *shujin* is still widely used. Although there are other terms in use today to designate the husband, the word *shujin* is still used very frequently (*shujin* is used to the extent of 50 per cent in terms of frequency). This practice should not be taken too seriously nor should the use of this term be taken to show the submissive position of the wife. Many wives use it unconsciously as a customary pronoun for 'husband'. Mrs. Suehiro found in her study of the question that there was no correlation between women's satisfaction with their present position and the use of *shujin*.

Addressing the wife. There are some individuals who pay special attention to the word a husband uses in calling to his wife. One such person argues: 'If husband and wife do not address each other by their first names, they cannot create a human relationship based on the equality of the individuals concerned. A husband who calls to his wife by using such a mean word as *Oi, Oi* (Hey, Hey) is a disgrace. This is an example of the feudalism that stands in the way of our democratic progress.' According to Mrs. Suehiro's research referred to above, the largest proportion (30 per cent) of husbands address their wives by their given names and 15 per cent say *Oi, Oi*. Nowadays, young couples are creating the custom of addressing each other by name.

Equality in meal taking. In the patriarchal family system, the existing patriarch, whether the husband's father or the husband himself, and the eldest son who was to be patriarch in the coming generation, were served better meals, while the wife, daughters and other sons had to be content with poor meals. If the husband was fond of a drink at supper, the wife had to prepare *saké* and some eatables, see to the warming of the *saké*, and wait on him while he leisurely enjoyed his supper. If nice food was sent as a present from a distant place, it was first offered to the spirit of ancestors and then to the patriarch's table. If this procedure was not conformed to, the wife was reproached.

A report by Mrs. Suehiro shows that, today, those wives whose families in their childhood offered nice food first to the father or grandfather make up 49 per cent, as compared with 30 per cent who adhere to this practice at the present time. On the other hand, those who grew up in a family where there was equal sharing of nice food with no priority for any specific member of the family amount to only

14 per cent, whereas at present 38 per cent practise equality in regard to meals. In the case of farming families, 50 per cent still adhere to the old custom.

Dress of wife. It has been a long-standing custom that a woman, when marrying into another family, should be provided with an ample bride's outfit, comprising *kimonos* (Japanese attire) and other necessaries of life in such a quantity that they could be used throughout her lifetime. At the marriage ceremony, this outfit was displayed to the parents and relatives of the bridegroom. The quality and quantity of the outfit was one of the conditions according to which the bridegroom's family and relatives evaluated the bride. Since she was not a member of the bridegroom's family by birth, necessaries of life for her own use, if they ran short, had to be supplemented by her own family. *Kimonos*, in particular, were regarded as her own personal property and had to be provided by herself or by her own parents. When the husband had a new *kimono* made for his wife, it signified that her position had been established. In other words, this signified that the bridegroom's family had admitted her as a member of the family. Mrs. Suehiro made a study as to who bore the expense when a new *kimono* was provided for the wife for the first time after marriage. According to her study, about 60 per cent of wives had a new *kimono* provided within two years of marriage and for about 80 per cent of these the husband or his family bore the cost. In the light of this figure, we see that the bride is no longer regarded as alien to the bridegroom's family for as long a period as was formerly the case. That is to say, the recent trend is that upon marriage she is immediately received as an integral member of the bridegroom's family and her position in his family is duly recognized.

Relations with other 'iye'. When an *iye* maintained social relations with other *iye*, it was expected that the patriarch would represent his family group or *iye*. Any invitation to his *iye*'s ceremonial functions—such as occasions of coming of age, marriage, funeral services and ancestral worship—was made in the name of the patriarch, and it was the patriarch who received and entertained the guests. In an obituary notice of the patriarch's death, the name of the heir—generally the eldest son—was entered at the top of the list of mourners. Though the wife's name was also entered, the status of chief mourner was given to

the eldest son. In relations with other families, the wife often represented her husband, but she was never permitted to represent the *iye*. The role usually allotted to her when guests were invited, was merely to keep busy cooking in the kitchen or to wait on the guests. Only the patriarch or other similarly situated male members of the family received the guests.

What is happening today in regard to such a custom? According to Mrs. Suehiro's research, 49 per cent of the women respondents answered that it is chiefly the husband who entertains the guests on such occasions as New Year's Day, a festival or a Buddhist service, whereas 28 per cent answered that the wife herself entertains the guests and roughly 12 per cent replied that both husband and wife would do so. A comparison between these respondents and their parents shows that the change between the two generations has been small. When the answers were analysed in accordance with the husband's occupation, it was found that guests are received by both husband and wife most frequently among professional families, and least frequently among farmers' families.

Husband and wife going out together. According to the old Japanese custom, the husband and wife never sat together in the drawing room, nor were they seen together in places of recreation or culture. In the survey by the Ministry of Labour, in which respondents were asked if the wife went with her husband to the cinema or other place of amusement, only 3 per cent in rural areas answered 'Yes', and 22 per cent of Tokyo women answered 'Yes'. In contrast, those who replied 'Absolutely not' to the same question amounted to 21 per cent in Tokyo and as much as 60 per cent in rural areas.[1]

Expression of conjugal affection. In the patriarchal family of the past, the focus of married life was on the security of the family as a whole, rather than on that of the individual. Here, conjugal affection was overshadowed by the *iye*. Moreover, as people were taught to restrain from giving any outward demonstration of their feelings and affections, they were less inclined to express their affection. Accordingly, the idea of a husband and wife going out together for recreation became a subject for ridicule. A number of husbands went so far as to imagine that

1. Women's and Minors' Bureau, Ministry of Labour, *The Life and Opinions of Housewives*, 1957.

they could gain personal credit by speaking ill of their wives to others, even though in their own private life they were tender to their wives.

What changes have occurred in regard to conjugal affection? In addition to the reform of laws and regulations and the change in ideas, the growing influence of the media of mass communication results in people in general becoming acquainted with the customs of other countries and with the manners of the whole world, and this contributes to remove the psychological barriers imposed by society. Formerly, 'the affection of husband and wife' was not even to be spoken of in the presence of others. But this is no longer the case. In this regard, the survey by the Department of Domestic Science, Ochanomizu Women's University, shows that 26 per cent of those questioned do not hesitate in the frank expression of conjugal affection in public, as compared with 40 per cent who can express such affection only if nobody sees them.[1]

The turn of getting up, going to bed and taking a bath. Where the status of the members of a group is firmly determined by considerations of age and sex, there emerges a pattern of ceremonial behaviour and observance which recognizes differences in status. In the traditional Japanese family there were many of these ceremonial relationships and patterns of etiquette prescribing who should go to bed first in the evening, who should get up first in the morning, and who should take a bath first. These patterns of etiquette were observed. The wife was expected to get up first and not after her husband so that she might make herself neat and presentable to him. The saying was that she must 'get up early so that he might not catch sight of her dishevelled appearance'. She was expected to make preparation for her husband and other members of the family to begin their day's work. Likewise, she could not go to bed earlier than her husband; if she did, she was called 'an idle wife'. In taking a bath the proper turn was strictly observed, and the idea of a woman taking a bath before a man was inconceivable.

How far have these patterns of etiquette changed? Some studies on this matter have been made, and their findings may be summarized as follows. In rural areas rather more than 50 per cent of the wives are regularly the first of all the members of the family to rise in the morn-

1. Yoshitomo Ushijima *et al.*, *Psychology of Married Life*, Tokyo, Makishoten, 1954.

ing, as compared with only 4 to 5 per cent of husbands who get up first. The vast majority of husbands, or family heads, especially in rural areas, go to bed first. In most urban families, this priority is not given to any specific member of the family. In the matter of taking a bath, the majority of husbands enjoy priority in rural areas.

The priorities noted above are, of course, partly influenced by various considerations of convenience as well as by the complexity of modern life. Thus, in urban society these traditions are in fact rapidly becoming obsolete.

Care of health. The wife who served the other members of the family well in the patriarchal family did not hesitate to torture herself by working very hard. She withstood physical pain, she remained patient, and she rarely went to bed even when she was suffering from sickness. The period of child-birth was an exception. Even this period was often cut short, for a bride in that event was praised and was appreciated by her parents-in-law as a hard worker. There were, it is said, many rural women who resumed work in the fields after only two or three days' rest. As much was taken for granted as being in accordance with custom, unreasonable demands were made of the wife as well as of other members of the family. A wife, especially a bride, who failed to conform to such customs was blamed most severely.

Since the last world war there has been an organized effort to correct any custom that affects the physical well-being of people. Education in the care of health in the home has made a great advance with the development of preventive medicine. Nevertheless, the wife is still apt to work too hard with the result that her health suffers. This is perhaps due, in a measure, to the difficulty encountered in getting other members of the family to take up the role hitherto filled by the wife and also to the wife's sense of moral obligation derived from the old days.

According to a study that bears on this problem, 55 per cent of the women questioned replied that 'they don't dare to work when ill'; 31 per cent 'dare to work when ill'; and 10 per cent acknowledged that they have in the past seriously impaired their health by working too hard when sick. The reasons why so many wives are careless about their own health may be seen from Mrs. Suehiro's study. Of 41 per cent (31 per cent plus 10 per cent) of all those wives who dare or have dared to work when in ill-health, as many as 74 per cent stated that they did so 'because no one else does the housekeeping', and 22 per

cent did so 'because I feel sorry for other members of the family if I am in bed'.

Now, as to the number of days mothers stay in bed after child-birth, 80 out of 100 mothers reported that they rest from two to three weeks, but 3 out of 100 mothers rest only three days. Especially on farms, this lying-in period is very short; nearly one-half of all the respondents rest for less than one week after child-birth.

Generally speaking, the care of health has considerably improved in workshops, but the practice and knowledge of better care of health has not spread fully into the home. Greater efforts should be made to protect the health of mothers.

Attitude towards the position in the family

In the circumstances described above, how do wives feel about their own position in the family?

In the survey of 1955 by the Ministry of Labour, 70 per cent of those questioned answered, 'the further improvement of women's position in society is necessary', and only 18 per cent replied, 'the position as it now stands is satisfactory'. The younger or the more educated the respondents, the higher the proportion of responses which stated, 'improvement is necessary'.[1]

In Mrs. Suehiro's investigation,[2] the women questioned were asked about their position in two respects, namely, in the family and in society. As seen from Table 28, the vast majority held the opinion that 'women's position has to be improved further' in society. But, in regard to the position of women in the family, a considerable number of the women questioned said that they are 'satisfied with their position as it stands now'.

TABLE 28. Women's opinions on their position in the family and in society

Opinion	*In the family*	*In society*
	%	%
Women's position has to be improved further	37	79
Women's position as it stands now is satisfactory	55	14
Other	8	7

1. Women's and Minors' Bureau, Ministry of Labour, *On the Status of Women*, 1955.
2. Kazuko Suehiro, 'Research for the Domestic Science', 1958 (unpublished).

By cross-combination of the opinions in Table 28, we obtain another distribution as in Table 29.

TABLE 29. Women's opinions on their position in the family and in society (cross-combined)

Opinion	*Percentage*
Women's position has to be improved both in the family and in society	49
Women's position has to be improved in society but it is satisfactory in my family	37
I don't know about women's position in society but it is satisfactory in my family	4
Women's position in society is satisfactory, but it has to be improved in my family	1
Other	9

Comparison in the light of the husband's occupational background reveals that the wives of professional and clerical workers give the highest rate of those who are satisfied with their present position in the family (60 per cent) and the wives of agricultural workers give the lowest rate (42 per cent). As to women's position in society, the need for improvement is insisted on by many wives of agricultural workers as well as by those of professional and managerial workers. This may be regarded as reflecting the present position of women in contemporary Japanese society.

Subjectively, a feeling of satisfaction with the position of women is not always determined by the position a woman holds in her own life. Under the patriarchal family system with prescribed status, the members of the family of lower status found pleasure in fulfilling their assigned roles whatever hardship might be imposed upon them. Accordingly, women, though objectively their position was far from satisfactory, were able to find a pleasure in living. Now, when people have become conscious of the equality inherent in the individual, the person assigned to a lower position often finds his inferior status very frustrating. According to the survey of the Ministry of Labour, a wife's satisfaction with her present life tends to be associated with the following circumstances: the husband assists with the housework; the husband and wife often go out together; the husband esteems her housework highly; the husband and wife enjoy their daily life; the husband and wife together manage the household economy; the

husband and wife both have a good knowledge of the family estate, etc. Each of these circumstances is a concrete situation according to which we can accurately assess the position of women in the family.

Mrs. Suehiro cross-tabulated the data yielded by the aforementioned research. In terms of women's consciousness of their position in the family and in terms of their feeling of satisfaction with their daily life, the data have been cross-combined. (See Table 30.)

TABLE 30. Women's consciousness of their position in the family and the feeling of happiness in daily life (cross-combined)

Reply	*Percentage*
My position in my family is satisfactory and my daily life is happy	31
My position in my family is satisfactory and my daily life is commonplace	32
My position in my family has to be improved but my daily life is happy	18
My position in my family has to be improved and my daily life is commonplace	19

The objective position of women and their consciousness of it are the subject of the greatest concern in regard to family relations and home life. But, as there is a very wide difference between rural and urban areas, further consideration is necessary. Therefore, in the following chapters, we shall consider rural women and urban working women separately. We shall focus our attention on concrete conditions of living and their influence on the position of women in these two different areas.

IV. The position of women in the rural community

As we have already pointed out, there is in regard to family life a sharp difference between rural and urban communities. Since the rural family in contemporary Japanese society still retains most of its traditional character, women's position in the rural area represents the closest approximation to that of the past. In this chapter we shall make an effort to describe the actual state of women's position and to ascertain its recent trend.

As already stated at the beginning of this report, Japan was almost entirely shut off from the outer world until 1859. In this isolated Japan, more than two hundred *Daimyos* and *Shyomyos* (senior and junior feudal lords) each maintained an almost self-contained clan government within his fief. In the domain of a feudal clan, the common people were mostly farmers and fishermen—their trades being handed down from generation to generation. An area in which the people lived was known as a *buraku*, or a village community and it comprised from a few to scores of houses. The people of the *buraku* co-operated with one another in many phases of community life. In those days, people in village communities constituted roughly 80 per cent of the total population of Japan; the remaining 20 per cent were warriors, merchants and craftsmen who lived mostly in scattered castle-towns or in country towns.

Warriors formed the highest class and, according to the status prescribed by the shogunate government, merchants and craftsmen were ranked below farmers but, because of the nature of their trade and because they lived in the castle-town or the country town, their level of culture and wealth was in general higher than that of farmers. However, as the farmers produced rice they were the financial cornerstone of the clan government. Therefore, in the policy of the clan

government, farmers were of the greatest importance. However, no effort was made to improve the living conditions of farmers; rather, they were kept on bare subsistence level or, as was frequently the case, on the verge of starvation.

In 1859, Japan abolished seclusionism and reopened her doors to the outer world for purposes of trade. Subsequently, with the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate, clan government was dissolved in 1871. Over the span of some seventy years, from 1871 to 1940, Japan emerged from being a society based on agriculture *per se* to become one based on a capitalistic economy. This was a period of epoch-making industrial and social upheavals. During this period, machines were introduced and the means of transportation and communication were revolutionized; the movement of people and goods became easy. There was also an unparalleled development of commerce and industry and the proportion of the population living in villages dropped from 80 per cent to below 50 per cent. In such a radical social change, what transformations have occurred in the mode of life of rural women?

Changes in production of economic goods

Japan is surrounded by the sea and, in addition, has a large proportion of mountainous area. Therefore there are, besides farm villages, sea-shore villages and mountain villages scattered over the country. These villages all have their own unique characteristics.

In sea-shore villages, fishing is the chief occupation. Even here other forms of production are carried on. In most of these villages, there are plots of land upon which are planted sweet potatoes, barley and vegetables for home use. As a subsidiary to fishing, the farm work is done by women. An example of women engaged in fishing is to be seen in the *amas* or women divers. They obtain seaweed or shell-fish by diving into the sea, but nearly all those who sail out to sea for the purpose of fishing are men.

Fishing, whether it is done by a single family or by a group of families, is men's work. Before the men sail out for fishing the women are busy helping their husbands to get ready for sailing; when the fishing boats return, the women are equally busy with the unloading of the fish, drying nets and coiling ropes. Sometimes the processing of the catch is also women's work. When this processing becomes

specialized through the division of labour, women become paid labourers employed by the fish dealer. Prior to the establishment of the co-operative sale of fish through the fishermen's association, the women of the fishermen's families used very frequently to peddle their goods. In recent years, the small coastal fisheries have been rapidly declining in size and number. In some instances, however, the business has developed into off-shore fishing. In other instances, the business has developed into ocean fishing made possible by the mechanization of the fishing vessels. More rapidly than in the case of farming, the fishing industry has been mechanized and has become a capitalistic enterprise; as it has become so, the women have been excluded from the fishing business. They are made to stay at home.

The fact that the success of the fishing industry is dependent upon the existence of a system of efficient transportation and communication, together with equally well-developed channels for the distribution and sale of fish, has led to the development of several large fishing ports. These ports perform multiple functions connected with the transportation, processing and sale of fish and related products. The rise to eminence of these fishing ports is causing the decline of the little fishing villages scattered along the ocean shores of Japan. Fishing is now a big business with salaried crews on board fishing vessels sailing to sea and returning to their homes once a week or once a month, or even once in four or five months. The picture of the fishing villages is no longer as we once knew it when all the members of a fisherman's family worked co-operatively at fishing as the family trade. Small-scale fishing by a single family or a group of families still exists but such family trade is disappearing in Japan. Because of the small capital and reserves available and the small volume of goods for sale, the small fishing business cannot maintain itself. Many of the fishing families have been squeezed out of the field of competition, and when this happens some members of the family become lost to fishing as the family trade and become salaried workers or employees. Very frequently in such a family, it is common for the husband and sons to be on board a fishing boat while the daughter is employed in a factory and the wife is doing a part-time job at home. Even after pooling all their incomes, the wife is barely able to manage her family economy. In brief, fishing is no longer the family trade to be passed on from father to son, and the working members of the family, who once formed an operational unit for

fishing, are now dispersed outside the framework of the family group. They are now involved, as individuals, in the huge organization of production.

What has occurred in the mountain villages is very similar to what has happened in the case of the fishing villages. Japan being a small mountainous island, even the steep mountain sides are cultivated, despite great difficulties, by the farmers of the mountain village. In addition to raising staple crops, men are engaged in charcoal burning and lumber work. On many occasions, as the men cut down the trees, the women assist in the carrying and stripping of the felled trees. Here, too, it is mostly women who take charge of the farming and mowing of the rice-plants. The adult men assist in tilling the soil and in the planting and harvesting of the rice. After the harvest is garnered in, the women are entrusted with the rest. With the help of old persons, the women finish the work of the autumn by harvesting beans, red beans, wheat and other crops. By bartering these crops for those of other women, they obtain barely enough varieties and quantities of food for New Year's Day.

The Meiji era accelerated the introduction of capitalistic enterprise into forestry, and, with the resulting mechanization of transport, it was no longer necessary for women to perform the back-breaking tasks involved in work in the forests. There was a time when sericulture prospered in the mountain villages, and there the silk textile industry began and passed through its early stages. Later, when motor power began to be used, the industry moved down to the towns and cities. More recently, with the advent of chemical textiles the silk textile industry in the urban areas and sericulture in the mountain areas have declined. Only 50 years ago, the wife who was gainfully employed in the early stage of the silk textile industry was known for her *Kakadenka* (petticoat) government, but today only a few remember the prosperity which women enjoyed in the past. As the silk industry declined, the daughters of families in the mountain villages concentrated in cities to become female factory workers or so-called weaving ladies. The husband and sons also sought work outside the village. The wife alone cultivated the field and took care of the aged and the infants with the help of the money sent by her husband, sons and daughters. Transportation was poor and the standard of living was low in the mountain villages but, as in the fishing villages, barter had been practised from much earlier days. When commerce and industry began to thrive in the

cities, the mountain village communities quickly became the source for the recruitment of labour power.

By comparison with the fishing and mountain villages, the farm villages in general have experienced relatively little social change. Throughout a long period of history—at least for more than a thousand years—agriculture was the chief means of livelihood in Japan, and contemporary farm families thus have a long history behind them. In the feudal society of the past, the land was passed on from father to son throughout successive generations and was cultivated by the joint work of all members of the family. As about half of the crop was levied as tribute year by year, their self-supporting household was always rather needy. The clan government restricted free planting and the free sale of crops in order to prevent the commercialization of farming. The work was entirely manual and separate farming by a single family was almost impossible. Villagers formed a group of families and together they owned in common a patch of field or mountain. From it they obtained fuel, fodder, manure and materials for thatching. Together, they used a common stream for irrigation and for drinking purposes; they exchanged their labour as a form of mutual help in planting rice, mowing weeds, hulling rice and pounding barley; and they borrowed and lent farm implements and cattle. By maintaining a closely knit system of mutual aid each family was able to procure the necessary annual harvest. Had the family been isolated from the village community—an entity in which individual families were integrated—they could not have maintained their own existence. This situation is reflected in the system of social relations of the village community. Here the families were cumulatively related with one another by marriage, by the lineage of main and branch families, or else by assuming fictitious blood relationships, such as *oyabun* (pseudo-parents) and *kobun* (pseudo-child). Solidarity between all individuals and between all family groups was the most important principle governing the social relations of villagers. Accordingly, people in the village community were members of a territorial group, and worshipped a common clan god. They were under an obligation to provide mutual help on the occasions of coming of age, marriage, funerals and ancestral worship and their family life and community life were inseparably intertwined into a single whole.

Changes in the way of life have clearly been taking place in the farming village, although the process has been slower than in the

mountain villages and fishing villages. Private ownership of property by the farmer was legally recognized early in the Meiji era. Free enterprise in agriculture and free trade in products were also instituted, and this enhanced the independence of the family. However, the influence of the rising capitalistic economy was such as to bring about the concentration of farm lands in the hands of a small number of landowners, which resulted in the maldistribution of the ownership of land. The number of tenant farmers increased rapidly. The Land Reform of 1947, soon after the end of the war, was a tragic blow for the once powerful landowners. There was a more or less equal distribution of privately owned land, and since then tenant farmers have gained the status of owner farmers. Owner farmers constituted 30 per cent of all farmers before the war, but after the Land Reform their proportion exceeded 60 per cent. Taking into account also land that was partly owned and partly leased, 94 per cent of farmers were included in the group of independent farm operators at that time.

According to the census of 1955, the number of farmer households was roughly 4,680,000, which constituted about 30 per cent of all households whose heads were working. The number of farming women was 7,800,000 or about half of the nation's working women. In contrast, the number of farming men was 7,100,000 or only about one-third of all working men. In the case of working women, 85 per cent of them are unpaid family workers, as against 60 per cent of working men who are workers on their own account.

Of all farming households in Japan, one-third own farms of less than 5,000 square metres, and another third own farms of less than 10,000 square metres. Such small-scale farming allows only 35 per cent of all farming households to support all their members at the present time when the cost of living is high. Other farming households supplement the income from farming with money sent by other members of the family who are away from home working as unskilled labourers or as salaried or factory workers.

During the last world war, when increased food production was urged, all farming women, in the absence of their husbands or sons, had to face the hardship of cultivating the land by themselves with the help of their children. Today part-time farming is common. All capable labour power is now drawn into non-agricultural enterprises and farming is done by women and feeble old men. The use of chemical fertilizers and agricultural insecticides, the progress made in

farming techniques, and the diffusion of agricultural machines which lighten farm labour are all contributing to further the trend towards part-time farming. Nowadays, the better-off farming families operate farms on a larger scale, the worse-off lower class farmers cannot maintain themselves by agriculture alone, and one or more members of the family must seek non-agricultural work outside the home.

On a holiday or in a busy farming season male members of the family who follow non-agricultural occupation are seen participating in farm work. A major portion of the work is still carried on by the female members of the family. People call this kind of family a 'housewife farming family', rather than a part-time farming family. In such a family, it is the woman who is present at meetings of agricultural cooperative unions and other associations. There is a growing number of housewives who take the lead in work of the farm. Heavy work on the part of women is somewhat reduced through the utilization of agricultural machines in the case of the richer farming families.

Another new trend that must be mentioned is seen in the growing tendency to convert farming enterprises into legal corporations in which a number of farming families are consolidated as a unit. The advocates of such incorporation are mostly farmers. These farmers insist that incorporation of this kind would possibly prevent a minute subdivision of farm lands, and it is this fragmentation that farmers fear as a result of the provisions for equal inheritance in the new law. These farmers also contend that incorporation offers the key to the democratization of farmers by leading them to abandon esteem for the *iye* in favour of a greater respect for individuals as such. In response to this demand, the government authorities have recently announced that they are examining a plan for the family corporation system. According to this official plan, the single farm family is the unit of operation, and the operator (the family head) holds the family property, but all members of the family are alike entitled to it as each is entitled to his (or her) own share in it. When any member of the family wishes to withdraw from farming, he (or she) receives what corresponds to his (or her) share. These plans—both that of the farmers and the official plan—are still tentative and neither has been tried out. The effects that any such plan would have upon the status of rural farm women remain purely conjectural.

At present farming women do not, in practice, benefit by the equal distribution of family property prescribed in the new inheritance law.

The value of their labour is not calculated in pecuniary terms so as to enable them to receive the cash reward for their labour on the farm. Being unable to earn money, women in the farm family are still economically dependent. From the time of their girlhood to their old age, they are not free from the pressing need for money for their own use. The emancipation of rural women cannot be attained until these women themselves become fully aware of their own present position and their future destiny. We are bound to admit that they have to face a great obstacle in the present state of farming operations in rural Japan.

Nevertheless, a brief survey of the past and present in regard to the position of farming women in Japan shows that conditions affecting rural women have changed considerably in a comparatively short time, and the change is still in progress. We may anticipate a brighter future for rural women, but at present they are still under the sway of the conflicting and contradictory norms which are the fruit of sudden social change in Japan.

Change in consumption in rural life

Associated with the decline of family trade and the growth of larger organizations for production is the changing role of women in regard to housework and to consumption in family life. The necessities of life were somewhat commercialized already in the pre-Meiji era. Until the close of the nineteenth century the whole process of dressmaking was in the hands of women. The planting of a fibre crop and the spinning, weaving and sewing were all done by women. As a result, when Japan expanded her textile industry in the first half of this century, articles of clothing rapidly became factory products. Today, in rural communities where a self-supporting economy has been retained the longest, the farmer's clothes, even his working clothes, are all factory made. The manual skill of sewing is now almost useless.

As for food, the women of former times were occupied day and night with the endless tasks of pounding barnyard grass, pounding rice and barley in a mortar, and mashing, mixing and boiling grains. Today, various kinds of food-stuff and food-seasonings—pickled vegetables, bean paste and soya sauce—are no longer prepared at home. They are produced in the factory and are sold at the shop. Preparation for three meals used to consume much of a woman's time, but today she no

longer has to prepare the lunches for the working members of the family who travel to and from their work and for her children who go to school. They take their lunches at the office or workshop or at school. (Schoolchildren are supplied with their lunch at school under the lunch programme.)

In this way, the production and preparation of the necessities of life are step by step being taken over by productive organizations outside the home. People of today can hardly imagine the rural life of a century ago, when nothing but salt was bought from the merchant. Old women in their seventies and eighties, who possess various productive skills which were indispensable in their younger days, are apt to complain of young women's lack of skills, and of the way their work has been made easier.

When both production and consumption lay mostly within the family, careful planning on the part of the wife was necessary in order to adjust consumption to the year's harvest. The planning was always in terms of a long-range household economy, and slight carelessness in the handling and utilization of everyday food might make it impossible to get through a lean year. The closest attention had to be given to every detail in dealing out material for food. The wife, on whom this grave responsibility was laid, was meticulous in balancing food input and output, that is to say, production and consumption. As the manager of household matters and the operator of housework in general, she was entitled to *kakaza* or the housewife's seat on the hearth, an office vested with unique authority. This role was recognized not only by the members of the family but also by the people of the village. In different regions, *kakaza* was called by various other names, but it always denoted the importance of the recognized role of the wife in the household economy.

One of the chief characteristics of the traditional family system in the rural community was that, in spite of the dominance of the patriarch over all other members of the family, the housewife's authority was greater than one might expect. In the exercise of the power of *kakaza* she took charge of the supply and distribution of clothes and foodstuff to other members of the family. In addition, she paid homage to gods, to Buddha and to the spirits of ancestors. Further, she made all arrangements in matters relating to social relationships with relatives and villagers, most of which were concerned with gifts of food. An able wife was accordingly said to increase the family fortune and to

improve intercourse with other villagers. The success with which she managed household affairs was the standard by which her competence was judged in the community. When the dipper used for the distribution of food was handed over to the new bride by the housewife, it meant that she had resigned *kakaza* on the hearth in favour of her daughter-in-law. From that time on, the bride took charge and assumed full responsibility for all household matters and was also responsible for maintaining harmonious relations with other villagers.

The Civil Code of the Meiji era did not recognize the competence of the wife in household matters. Article 804 reads: 'In everyday household matters the wife shall be regarded as a substitute for her husband.' Seemingly, the legislator intended that the family should be controlled through the authority of the husband, and saw fit to neglect the spontaneous division of household labour between men and women.

The fact that more and more new technical inventions are invading the home and doing away with female work there does not permit us to draw any hasty conclusion to the effect that women of today are exempted from dealing with household matters. On the contrary, the burden borne by rural women seems to be in no way reduced. Owing to the rising standard of living and also the fact that women are expected to play a greater part in production, women on the farm are forced to spend much longer hours both on productive labour and on household matters than are women in other occupations. These long hours of work reduce the time left for their own self-cultivation and for rest. These long hours of hard work by women have been taken for granted as a matter of long-standing custom on the farm where there was a great need for women's labour. There is, however, a growing demand for the proper evaluation of women's work in the household. This will contribute towards bringing about a reconsideration of their heavy burden.

Patterns of rural family relations

Patriarchal system and marriage. As has already been stated, the family was the unit of production and consumption. Among *samurai* (warriors) who ruled over people of other classes in the feudal society of Japan, the family system was patriarchal, the heirship was conferred upon the eldest son only, and women entered into the family of the

husband by marriage. This type of family relationship tended to prevail among the common people, but with this fundamental difference, namely, that the *samurai* family received a fief, whereas the peasant family was forced to be strictly self-supporting. Among farm families the farm was operated by manual labour, and the succession to the headship was not always reserved to the eldest son. Sometimes the eldest daughter or the youngest son was made the successor. There was also a practice of 'marriage by visiting'. In this form of marriage, the husband visited his wife in the house of her parents for a period of several years after their marriage. In another form, when the eldest son brought his wife home, the parents evacuated the house and went to live in another dwelling with their other children who were unmarried. Thus, according to the customs observed in different villages, the family system was made up of different types which varied according to conditions prevailing in the local communities and which underwent changes in different periods of history.

It was the Meiji government that, through the institution of the census registration, acknowledged the headship of the patriarch and thereby delimited the unit which was based on patrilineal descent, the members of the unit being reckoned in the order of the patriarch, his parents, wife, children, grandsons and great-grandsons. The law provided that the continuity of the family was to be preserved by means of the eldest son being the sole heir and succeeding to the headship as well as the ownership of all the family property. Politically the family unit was best adapted to the purpose of ruling and controlling the Japanese people by holding family heads responsible for all family matters. With the spread of nation-wide education, people were inculcated with the idea of the patriarchal family wherein the status of women was low.

It was only after the Meiji era that marriage customs and practices in villages became more and more like those of the upper class and of urban people. Until then, that is to say, until the end of the last century, there were a number of villages where marriage customs that had prevailed among the upper class in the dynasty of the tenth century were retained. But today the marriage customs in most of the villages are no longer archaic, although they do not completely conform to the new customs found in the cities of Japan. Rural marriages show rather the various steps in a series of changes ranging from the archaic to the modern marriage.

Owing to the fact that people of the pre-Meiji era lived in closely knit small communities, a mate was generally selected according to the young man's wish and was chosen from his own community, the selection being based on common interests. On not a few occasions, the parents did no more than give their formal consent. Since economic considerations were of the greatest importance to the well-being of the family, an additional young member of the family, whether man or woman, represented a valuable strengthening of the labour force available, and the will of the young man was accordingly recognized.

What puzzles the contemporary mind is the custom of the visiting marriage mentioned above. This requires an explanation. After a young man and woman started actual married life, several years elapsed before the bride moved into the husband's dwelling. During this period the husband visited his wife and the children born of their union were reared by the bride's family. On this point an informant, a native of a village where this custom was retained until recent times, explained that the bride did not move into her husband's house until the housewife's authority which was vested in her husband's mother was transferred to her. The period of visiting was a transitional period before the bride became the housewife. In this village, upon the bride's entry, the husband's mother retired to another house with the second and younger sons. This may well be not the sole explanation of this custom; it is in one sense a picture of the transition from the matrilocal to the patrilocal type of marriage. It may readily be imagined that, in a society where such a type of marriage was prevalent, the position of women as distinct from that of men was very different from what it is in the society of today.

After the Meiji era, the territorial limits of everyday life were extended and class differentiation assumed a manifest form. The patrilocal type of marriage became common among families of the lower class. Families of high rank in the village began to take the lead in receiving brides from distant places. In the case of the patrilocal marriage and in the case where the bride came from a distant place, the opinion of the go-between and the mature judgement of the parents came to be regarded as of the first importance, and consequently the will of the betrothed was a secondary consideration. In fact, the consent of the betrothed in regard to the chosen spouse was asked of them only later by the go-between and the parents. Marriage came to be based on the mutual consent of the parents of

the young man and those of the woman. The Civil Code of the Meiji era prescribed in effect that, though marriage is effected by the contract between the two parties concerned, the parental consent is required before a marriage can be registered; in addition the signatures of the two go-betweens were also recorded. The idea underlying this provision was that marriage based on the free will of the parties concerned was barbarous and incompatible with civilized culture. Should marriage by free will occur, it was to be regarded as a breach of good custom and morals, and should be prohibited. What was required of a bride entering the husband's family was that she should be firmly resolved to sever her relationship with her own relatives at least symbolically, to worship the ancestral spirit of the husband's family, and to give birth to children worthy of perpetuating the family lineage. It is not difficult to imagine how the patrilocal marriage in Japan and the consequent role allotted to the wife lowered the position of women in the family in the past.

Traditional custom and traditional ideologies surrounding family life, as described in Chapter III, still influence people in rural areas. In the country, women over 40 years old, even now, are imbued with the idea of self-depreciation. In the eyes of the progressive women of today, it is this attitude of obedience and devotion to their role, in which Japanese women have been trained in the patriarchal family system together with all the restrictions and binding obligations imposed upon them (this is one aspect that is often extolled by foreigners as graceful) that, in the context of the society of today, lowers and debases the status of Japanese women within and without the family.

Today, patrilocal marriage has disappeared legally. According to the new form of marriage based on the principle of sex equality as prescribed in the new Civil Code, a husband and wife are to establish a new family of their own, independent of the family of either the husband or the wife. The couple may, if they so desire, take on the surname of either side by mutual consent. In fact, for a young couple on a farm to establish a new home in accordance with their own wishes is extremely difficult because of the smallness of their parent's land holding. In the case of many farm families of today, patrilocal marriages are still the rule. On the farm, many brides and bridegrooms are still living in the framework of the extended family system. For those youths who remain in the village, the *iye* is still an indestructible

fortress of traditionalism, and the day when the new ideas of marriage will penetrate into the minds of all rural people seems still far away.

Labour and economic position of rural women

It is a common practice for women on the farm who are engaged in agriculture to remain unpaid family workers, before and after their marriage. In the past, a richer farmer kept several female servants as well as male servants. Female servants were needed because the planting of rice was customarily done by women and because they were indispensable for the cultivation of the rice fields. Men were regarded as best fitted for the heavy work, and in the same way women were believed to be fit to do the lighter work requiring minute care and attention. Therefore, after men had finished with the heavy work and long after they had left the fields, women very often remained to take care of the trifles. This meant that women had to work much longer—in fact twice as long as men on the average—and they constituted indeed an indispensable agricultural labour force. As seen already, an increasing number of women are taking an active lead in the operation of farms, thus giving rise to what is called the housewife farming family.

Unlike the operation of the small household trade or industry, which is becoming less and less a family undertaking, the operation of the family farm is essentially the work of the family as a unit. The farm land is the most important source of family income. The land belongs to the family and all available members of the family are mobilized for farm work and the income derived from their labour is used for the support of all members of the family. These are the simple characteristics that are still retained in the economy of the farm family, and from this we see that the operation of the farm and the economy of the household are closely interlinked with the family itself.

The north-eastern region of Japan is climatically unfit for intensive agriculture. The land of the region yields two scanty crops and the introduction of commercialized farming is slow in taking place. As its agriculture is less commercialized, the average income of the region is very low, and as large a proportion as 80 per cent of the women start their farm work at an early age, between 14 and 20 years. The average age at which women begin to work in the field has been rising. For example, the youngest women workers (20 to 34) started

farm work at the average age of 16; the middle age group of women (35 to 59) at the average age of 15; and the oldest group (60 years old and over) began farm work at the early age of 14. Today, women begin farm work after they are grown up. The average age of marriage too has risen—for the youngest group, the average age at marriage was 20, for the middle group, 19, and for the oldest group, 18 years.

Cultivation with the use of oxen, the pushing of hand-mowers, the carrying of bundles of rice-straw are heavy tasks even for men. A man cannot do too much of this heavy work after the age of 45 or 50. If he has a son who is over 15 years old, he generally hands over these heavy tasks one by one. When his oldest son comes of age (30 years or so), the farming of the paddy-field is handed over to him, and the father in turn takes up lighter work such as attending to the family's vegetable garden. Woman's most active age is up to 40, she hands over her household responsibilities and also her farm work to the eldest son's bride about the age of 45.

The farm family cannot maintain the smooth operation of the farm unless there is a continuous flow of human labour. This problem is particularly pressing in a region where the climate and the soil are not favourable for intensive farming. Even for those farmers who are better situated, additional human labour is always needed for maintaining co-operation with other families.

Co-operation through the exchange of labour is absolutely essential and this takes the form of *yui* (mutual exchange of labour) and *temagari* (borrowing helping hands). At the busiest seasons of the year or during the planting and harvesting of rice, this means that a family should have an extra hand available capable of doing the whole of one man's work who can be assigned for the task of communal co-operation. Thus, if the replacement of a worker by a new member of the family is not forthcoming or if the succession to the *iye* is threatened or interrupted, the second or third, or even the last son who is ordinarily expected to leave the family (or even in some instances a daughter who is expected to marry out of the family) has to fill the gap in the interrupted succession. Even if there is no more land available for reclamation in order that a son may set up his branch family and even though the family has no immediate prospect of being able to compensate him for his sacrifice, the farm family—whose first consideration is to meet the threatened crisis in the family economy and in the *iye*—resorts to this kind of practical solution in

order to prevent any interruption in the cyclic succession of labour. Since a shortage or a lack of labour is a menace to the continuation of their existence, the problem involved in ensuring the easy and smooth provision of supplementary human labour is always a critical one for farm families. It is in this way that the manual operation of a small-scale farm is intertwined with the village community, the family group, inter-family relations, ancestor worship, and respect for the family lineage.

The problem of the second or third or subsequent son or any other member of the family, who was compelled to sacrifice part of his or her career in life in order to preserve the continuity of the *iye* but is now faced with the situation of being ejected from the farm family constitutes a serious social problem in the rural community. A daughter who did not marry at her marriageable age because she had to work as a supplementary labourer is apt to be treated as a nuisance after her younger brothers grow up. In the family system where the male line is respected, a woman is regarded as a dependant and her independence is not recognized. As one having no bearing on the continuity of the *iye*, she has no place in the family. However hard she may work, she cannot become independent because her labour is not paid for in cash.

When a family has no sons and the eldest daughter's bridegroom becomes an adopted heir, the nominal headship rests with him. Formally, he may exercise the power of the patriarch, but the real power is in the hand of his wife by virtue of her being a descendant of the family by blood. As this situation is recognized by others in the community, her opinion in matters of negotiation is listened to and she plays an active role in social relations and displays considerable activity.

The most difficult problem to solve in inter-family relationships is that which involves the bride and her mother-in-law. This is not peculiar to the farm family, but on the farm the problem assumes especially great proportions and is rendered difficult by the nature of the extended family. In the case of the farm family, the problem is all the more serious because it is connected with the cyclic succession of labour and with the system under which the eldest son, the bride's husband, is the sole heir.

The housework of today includes many related tasks, and among these are the preparation of meals, cleaning the house and keeping

it neat and orderly inside, the carrying of water for drinking and for washing and the sewing and mending of clothes, and there are many other 'invisible tasks' as Japanese women say, connected with the housework. In the country, the transporting of buckets full of fresh water from the stream to the house for washing clothes and for the daily hot bath is heavy work, and this task is apt to be given to the bride. In other words, as long as her mother-in-law is still in charge of the housework, she is expected to perform outdoor tasks of all kinds. In choosing a groom, a bride therefore always prefers one with an older mother. As for the mother-in-law, she wants to preserve and retain the housewife's authority until all her sons and daughters either become independent or marry out of the family. Since this authority is associated with the housework, she does not want to transfer *kakaza* to the new bride. By contrast with the present time, when money plays an important part and the authority of the housewife is no longer substantial, in the past when cash was extremely scarce and the household economy required the minutest supervision, her authority was indeed very substantial. Her role in the distribution of clothes and food to the patriarch and other members of the family was absolute, and others respected her authority, which was fully recognized not only within the house but also outside. For instance, when the old housewife has not as yet transferred her authority to the younger housewife or to her son's wife and the younger couple's daughter is betrothed, it is the grandmother or the older housewife who escorts the granddaughter on her way to the marriage ceremony.

Once the aged housewife transfers the care of the household to the bride, she can no longer act as freely as before. When her married granddaughter visits her and she wants to give her even one or two quarts of beans or red beans as a gift to her granddaughter's husband or parents-in-law, she has to ask the permission of the bride. Thus, the relationship between the mother-in-law and the bride not only involves the sharing of household duties and responsibilities but is also marked by dominance on the part of the one and submission on that of the other by virtue of the possession of the housewife's authority. However poor a family may be, both the aged wife and the young wife know very well the status and role of the one in relation to the other, and they act accordingly so as to maintain an orderly relationship. Once this orderly relationship is impaired, it becomes a source of tension between the two.

Criticism has often been directed at the fact that the grandmothers and not the mothers of schoolchildren are present at the meeting of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) in rural communities. From the standpoint of the farm families, the attendance of the grandmothers is taken for granted because the mothers are needed in the fields for doing the farm work. Especially during the busy season everyone capable of active labour is indispensable. The grandmother, on the other hand, stays at home doing the housework or tending the babies, and sometimes acts as a liaison officer for the family. It was therefore a matter of course that the older persons should be present at the meeting of the PTA. As a result of the growing criticism against this practice, more mothers are now present at the meeting.

In rural areas of Japan, one often sees an old woman with bent back looking after her grandchildren or preparing their meal. She has worked very hard all through her life and, even at her advanced age, she feels uneasy at the idea of relaxing because the younger members of her family are hard at work in the fields all day long. She knows well what hard labour is required of every member of the family to keep the farm work in step with the seasonal changes. Notwithstanding her inability to work hard because of her age, she is anxious to play her part. She is said to be afraid of becoming a useless and disabled member of the family, a state of mind so characteristic of a rural person in her declining years. Another worry that haunts her is the probability that she will suffer a long illness before death and will thus become a burden on the family. One often hears from the lips of an old person, 'I hope to die suddenly'. A decrepit person on the farm is an unhappy individual because there is no adequate provision for repose in the case of those who have retired from active work. In these circumstances, an old woman in particular is apt to work too hard for her age for fear of placing too great a burden on the family economy.

According to the research on rural women conducted by the Ministry of Labour, the household comprising three generations—the parents, the children and the grandchildren—accounts for 50 per cent of all rural households. Though the law relating to the family has changed and has made the nuclear family the lawful unit, in the existing conditions of rural life the rural family finds it difficult to alter practical and concrete family relationships according to the new definition. For the time being, therefore, rural people cannot help but preserve the form of the extended family. There are, indeed, many families that are, in

outward appearance at least, nuclear families, but they reflect transitional rather than substantial change in the form of family organization. In fact, it is very likely that these apparently nuclear families will come to adopt the characteristic features of extended families.

The Family Problems Study Group found that the parents of farm families who desire their sons to live with them after they are married account for above 70 per cent, and the proportion of persons who want to live with their sons and grandchildren after they grow old amount to 80 per cent in rural and rural fringe areas.[1] In practice farmers seem still to adopt traditional attitudes and they find their sense of security in the complicated pattern of family relations. Until recent times, whenever the question arose of how to improve the status of rural farm women, the future seemed rather unpromising. Discussion of the problem showed that women's grievances and dissatisfactions related to the actual conditions surrounding them and to the persistence of the traditional way of life. However, women are today beginning to reconsider their grievances and dissatisfactions. It has been said quite recently that women are not complaining of the gloomy side of rural life as much as they used to do. In fact, women today are actively making their aspirations known and they themselves take the initiative in efforts to overcome various difficulties that lie in their way. They form 'the life improvement group', a group activity promoted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Some proclaim their desire that young brides, the housewife and the aged should be provided with some money for their own use. This is perhaps a reasonable demand on the part of those who wish to ensure an economic basis for individual freedom, instead of being guaranteed only a minimum of security by the family group. Others—young wives—reported that because they were worried about their helpless mother-in-law who was no longer in charge of household affairs, they had arranged for her to rear poultry and obtain some money for her own use by selling eggs. Fortunate indeed are those old women who have such daughters-in-law; others are truly miserable for they are not provided with any money at all, in spite of the fact that they have worked hard without receiving any payment all through their active lives. For the helpless aged, the National Pension Plan is being brought into force by the Japanese Government.

1. Takashi Koyama (ed.), *Study of the Contemporary Family*, Tokyo, Kobunda, 1959.

The distribution of inherited property constitutes another problem related to the newly established family system. According to the report on the governmental public opinion survey (1956),[1] 66 per cent of farming people, when asked whether it was preferable for farm land to be inherited exclusively by a single member of the family or by all members equally, stated that they preferred single inheritance. As regards the women's share in the inheritance, 57 per cent agreed that when her husband is dead, the wife should have her share in the inheritance. As a matter of fact, however, farmers who have long been accustomed to the practice of primogeniture do not fully support the idea of giving women an economic basis by allowing them to possess property.

Young and old in the farm family

A family which is composed of several generations cannot avoid the conflict that arises out of the difference of age between the various members of the family. In their youth, the aged members were subject to the discipline of manual labour and of being self-supporting until it became part of their personality. They may have been stunned to witness the façade of the feudalistic village community crumbling before them as a consequence of the Land Reform, but now they sit by the hearth and they miss the old family relationships that were regulated in so orderly a fashion. The young members of the family who have been educated in democracy are radical advocates of the new idea and resist the traditional way of life that still persists and conflicts with the new one. Although living together under one roof, the young and the old members of the family represent the new and the old generation respectively in the society of Japan. Each of these generations has its own ideas and its own way of life and these are almost incompatible with those of the other generations. In the case of the old, their worldly wisdom and agricultural technique were acquired in the family, that is to say, they were passed down from their parents, whereas the young members of the family acquired them from a society that was moving towards democracy. Thus, the gulf between the knowledge and the way of thinking—and the system of values—of these two groups of members of one family is too great to be

1. Prime Minister's Office, *Research Report on the Family System*, 1957.

spanned, and this causes frequent troubles in the family. Moreover, some young members of families are very spiteful even when such trouble arises and in many instances the authority of the mother-in-law is overridden through the spitefulness of her daughter-in-law. However, many rural women who have been accustomed to submission to the power of their husbands are now reconsidering their position and realize the importance of making an effort to construct a better life without destroying the peace of their families. They have awakened to the dignity of the individual to such an extent that they cannot now understand the irrational mode of life in the past. They are all the more enthusiastic in women's group activities. In this respect it is said that men lag behind women because the farmer has now grown somewhat weary of the effort to put the new idea into practice. 'Nylon hosiery and women have got strong recently'—a phrase in vogue—is applicable to the rural area too. As explained hereunder, women neither give up the struggle nor complain passively any longer, but are beginning to make an effort to construct a bright family life.

Awakening to society

The village in the Edo era was an almost completely closed community —legally, economically and spiritually. In this circumscribed area, however, women had various opportunities to participate in social activities through their work for the community. In running errands for the village, giving assistance in treading out barley plants, helping in thatching, participating in the celebration of mourning and in annual festivals, and holding intimate intercourse with members of *kō*, or a sub-group of *buraku*, as a neighbourhood association, women were always in close contact with other villagers and unconsciously tried to be good villagers. Since their lives were circumscribed by *iye* or *buraku*, they had no relations with and no knowledge of society outside the village. But within the village they were fully acquainted with all the family and social relations of other villagers.

In the present century, some women have had greater opportunities for coming into contact with other cultures through the development of the textile and associated industries. But most women who were engaged in agriculture were still confined within the village community. Today, however, even if they stay in the home they can always maintain at least an indirect contact with outer society owing to the

development of mass communication media, such as newspapers, magazines, radio and television. Nevertheless, the criticism is still heard that rural women today are apt to confine themselves within the small area of the village, being occupied with farm work and with the household, and that, therefore, their vision of society at large is still limited.

Apart from this criticism, the social and economic changes that have taken place since the war—especially the Land Reform and the legal abolition of the old family system—have altered the social structure of the village community and have destroyed the framework of the *iye*. Women of the younger generation, in particular, are no longer satisfied with the self-sacrifice of their mothers and grandmothers. They are now preoccupied with the construction of a better daily life in which their individuality can be best developed. They are now discovering the self that has been buried in the family group or in the village community. Women are said to be conservative in general but, so far as young women of today are concerned, they are becoming more progressive than men. According to the inquiry into the value system of rural people conducted by the Japanese National Commission for Unesco,[1] adult women are more conservative than adult men in regard to the perpetuation of the *iye*, respect for the ranks in the family group, the practice of single inheritance, the support of aged parents by the eldest son alone and the freedom of the bride in the matter of shopping and going out. But, in the group of young people, women are definitely more progressive than men. When they see the machines that have been introduced one after the other into farm work, they feel that the hard labour on all-fours which they did in the past is unbearable. They keenly feel the necessity for working out methods of housework because this is a matter of immediate concern to them. In this regard the group activities of women are very promising for progressive women participate in them with enthusiasm in their wish to reduce the labour of housework and to rationalize daily life. With this incentive, women may in future extend their activities into the outside world.

1. Japanese National Commission for Unesco, *Research on the Value Consciousness of Rural Youth*, 1958.

V. *The social position of working women*

It is not necessary to go far back into the history of Japan to trace the migration of rural women to the cities in search of employment. The position of some of these women has undergone a change that has no parallel among women in the rural areas. Nowadays women working in the cities are not drawn exclusively from the industrial reserve of the rural areas. Reflecting the complex conditions of the post-war period —from the social, economic and other standpoints—the composition of the mass of female workers is far from simple—the change is often very great. The working of the forces affecting women workers is bewildering. Let us first attempt an analysis of the position of women in employment by tracing the stages of their exodus from the home to occupations outside.

The exodus of women to work outside the home

Capitalistic production in Japan is considered by many to have begun at the turn of the century. Prior to this, spinning factories had been founded by the government around 1870 to assist those *shizoku* (ex-warriors) who had lost their means of livelihood owing to the abolition of feudal government. According to the record of 1873, the number of women working in those factories was 404. In addition, there was an advent of women workers; women teachers in 1875, women doctors and nurses in 1885, stenographers in 1889, and telephone operators in 1889. These women received privileged treatment as persons in official services. It was after 1900 that women workers were to be seen in banks and other unofficial firms.

World War I gave an unprecedented impetus to Japan's economic

growth and the rapid development of various industries began to draw large numbers of women into various fields of employment. According to the census of 1920, 4 million, or 40 per cent of all working women, were engaged in gainful employment. In those days, the difference between men's wages and those of women was very great—a woman's wage was roughly one-third that of a man. Nurses, telephone operators and even women teachers—who were then regarded as the highest class of working women—were paid at rates far below those to which their qualifications and training entitled them. People in general kept away from these working women because they thought they were not likely to get married even after they had reached the age of marriage nor were they likely to act in a womanly way. People called them '*shokugyo fujin*', or occupation women, which was a collective term applied to all working women. The term also suggested an attitude of contempt. What seems to have lowered the prestige of all working women in those days was the fact that about 60 to 70 per cent of them were female factory workers in the cotton-spinning industry. They had received little or no education and they worked for a very low wage.

After 1927, heavy industry began to develop in Japan and, with it, the number of male factory workers increased and they soon outnumbered female workers. There were always some women who were qualified as competent mechanics and their employment was not confined to the textile industry. In 1940, female mechanics numbered 120,000, as against 820,000 female cotton-mill hands. Soon after Japan waged war against the United States of America and her allies, women were mobilized to work in the ordnance factories. Taking the place of men, who were mobilized in ever greater numbers to bear arms, women filled important roles and demonstrated their abilities in all fields of labour.

In 1945, immediately after the termination of the war, many of the important big cities of Japan were in a state of complete ruin. With many houses burnt down and the food situation pitiful, women who were released from their duties in factories returned home. But now these women had to undertake long trips to obtain food for their husbands and children. This was a burden heavier than they had experienced before and during the war. Their clothing that had barely escaped being destroyed by fire was nearly all used up in an exchange for food-stuff. In the meantime, prices increased day by day. During

the two years following the war, a surge of inflation caused the price index to rise more than 15 times as high as it was before; but in the same period wages rose only about 12 times as high. This substantial decrease in real wages endangered the economy of the household as the wage covered only 60 per cent of the necessary cost of living.

In these circumstances of the post-war period, women whose husbands, fathers or sons had been killed in battle or had not yet been repatriated and women whose families had been bombed out or were no longer paid the soldiers' pension because of its suspension after the war were all in a sorry plight. Added to this was the dissolution of the *zaibatsu* (big financial combines) and the fall of peers because of the abolition of the peerage. Consequently women, irrespective of their social standing, family origin and class background, were all obliged to dash into the labour market to seek any kind of job that would enable them to eke out a scanty existence. Thus, the Japanese family was being harassed by poverty not only during the war but also after the war. As a result, the Japanese family system was deprived of its economic foundation.

These are the most important and most immediate of the social and economic factors that resulted in the huge inflow of women into many fields of employment. We may here mention another important factor, namely the working woman's picture of herself. Whatever were the motives that led any particular woman to enter employment after the war, she had an air of composure instead of the pathetic resolution of her pre-war days. With the self-reliance which she had acquired earlier during the war she derived pleasure from earning an income with her own labour.

Another, and perhaps more powerful, impetus towards changing the view on women held by people in general, and especially by women themselves, lay in the successive legal reforms. These were as follows: in 1945 women's freedom to join a political party was restored, and women's suffrage and eligibility for both Chambers of the Diet were introduced in 1946; the equality of the two sexes was established by the New Constitution; and equal pay for equal work was prescribed for men and women alike and the protection of women was provided for in the Labour Standards Law. Whilst women themselves were still struck with admiration at these reforms, the government set up the Ministry of Labour for the improvement and protection of all workers, with, as an integral part, the Women's and Minors' Bureau. The

crucial role which the Women's and Minors' Bureau is now playing in support of working women cannot be too strongly emphasized.

Nowadays there are very few girls who spend the period between leaving school and marriage in practising the skills required of an ideal bride, as did most of the girls of the middle and upper classes of pre-war days. Only a few are contemptuous of women working outside the home and no woman is ashamed of working outside the home. Irrespective of their positions and circumstances, girls are proud of making their living by their own efforts. Associated with this sense of awakening, there is an increasing number of married women who earn a livelihood together with their husbands—though, no doubt, this is in part due to the fact that the man's income is not sufficient to maintain the standard of living to which the married couple now aspire. Women are apt to stay at work even after they are married.

Here we must remark in passing that there are still various factors checking the new trend followed by working women. They are the influence of traditionalism, social and economic conflicts, and the stagnation of politics. Many obstacles have still to be overcome and many problems remain to be solved.

A brief sketch of the female working population

Of all women aged above 14, those who are classed as in the labour force—i.e. engaged in work other than housekeeping—number about 18 million, or 54.5 per cent of all women of 14 years and over. The corresponding number and proportion in the case of the male labour force are 26 million and 83.9 per cent respectively. Thus, comparison

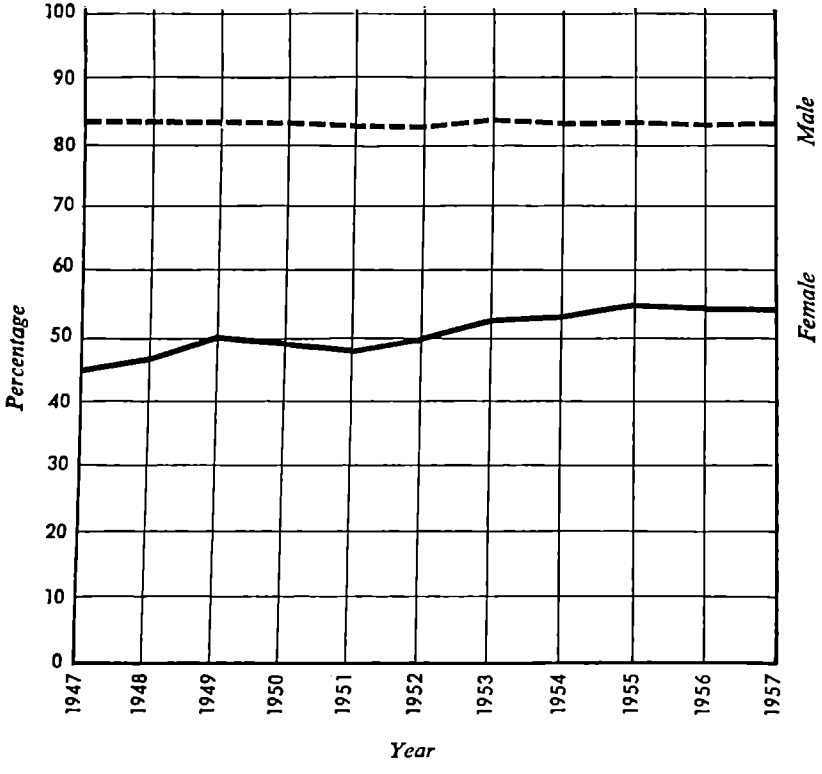
TABLE 31. Percentage of male and female workers of all persons above 14 years of age (1947 to 1957) [1]

Year	*Male*	*Female*	*Year*	*Male*	*Female*
	%	%		%	%
1947	83.9	45.1	1953	84.6	53.1
1948	83.9	47.4	1954	83.7	53.3
1949	83.6	50.9	1955	83.9	55.0
1950	83.2	49.3	1956	83.6	54.6
1951	83.2	48.8	1957	83.9	54.5
1952	83.3	49.9			

1. Ministry of Labour, *Annual Report of Labour Statistics*, 1948 to 1957.

shows that the male labour force exceeds the female labour force by a large percentage. However, closer examination shows that the proportion of women who work has gradually increased from 45.1 per cent in 1947 to 54.5 per cent in 1957 (see Table 31 and Diagram 6). This increase of 10 per cent represents a significant trend in regard to the proportion of women who work.

DIAGRAM 6. Percentage of male and female workers of all persons above 14 years of age (1947 to 1957) [1]



1. Ministry of Labour, *Annual Report of Labour Statistics*, 1948 to 1957.

Another significant feature is that the increase in the proportion of working women is associated with a relative decrease in the pro-

portion of farming women. As shown in Table 32 and Diagram 7, agricultural female workers (61.7 per cent) outnumbered non-agricultural (38.3 per cent) in 1948. Ten years later the corresponding figures were 47 per cent for the former and 53 per cent for the latter. The position was thus reversed.

TABLE 32. Yearly change in percentage ratio of agricultural to non-agricultural female workers (1948 to 1957) [1]

Year	*Agricultural and factory*	*Non-agricultural*	*Year*	*Agricultural and factory*	*Non-agricultural*
	%	%		%	%
1948	61.7	38.3	1953	54.1	45.9
1949	64.8	35.1	1954	51.8	48.2
1950	62.3	37.8	1955	50.9	49.1
1951	56.4	43.6	1956	48.7	51.3
1952	55.0	45.0	1957	47.0	53.0

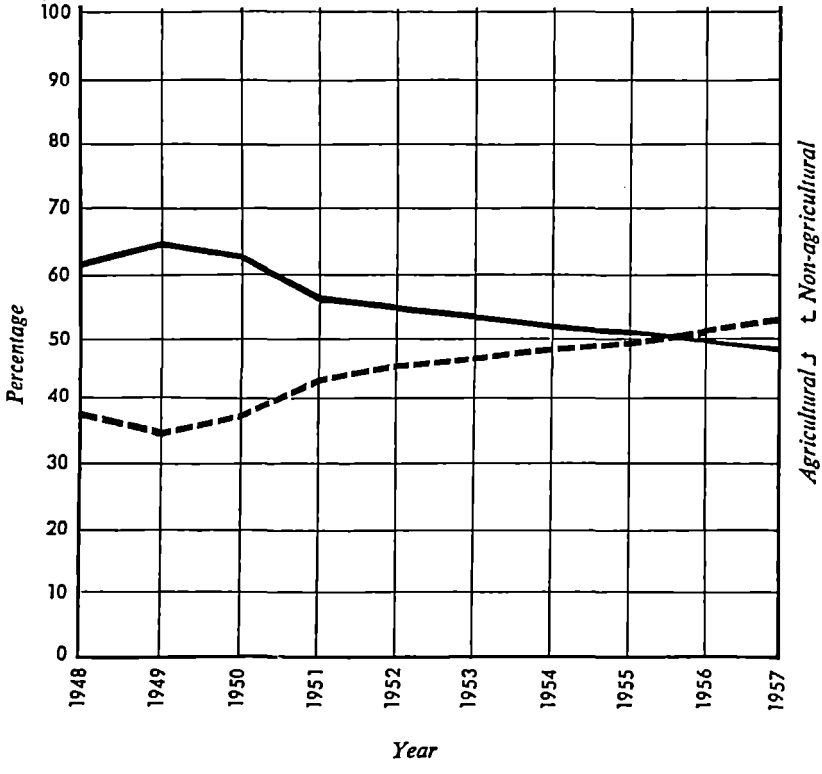
1. Ministry of Labour, *Annual Report of Labour Statistics*, 1948 to 1957.

The non-agricultural occupations into which working women enter are very varied. The census of 1950 shows that there are no occupations in which female workers are not found, other than 13 minor groups of occupation which the law forbids women to enter, for instance, the coal-mining group. By contrast, in 1930, in 52 minor groups of occupation there were no female workers.

Let us compare the difference between 1950 and 1955 in terms of the distribution of male and female workers by major occupational groups (Table 33). A comparison of these two figures shows a significant decrease in the number of workers in the primary extractive industries. This is especially the case with female workers in these industries. In all other occupations, on the contrary, there were relative increases. Though, among these other groups, male and female workers in mines and quarries and male clerical and related workers show a slight decrease, this does not affect the general trend marked by such relative decrease.

Next to farming, the largest percentage of working women are factory workers. Other large groups consist of those women working as sales ladies and clerks in department or other retail stores and those engaged in service in hotels, restaurants and private houses. It is also to be noted that, whereas the percentage of those in clerical and

DIAGRAM 7. Yearly change in percentage ratio of agricultural to non-agricultural female workers (1948 to 1957)



related works in private or in government offices shows a relative decrease in the case of men, there is an increase of 1 per cent in the case of women. The majority in the group of clerical and related workers are common clerks, but accountants and typists have been increasing in this group. For the last 30 years, female workers in this group have increased up to about twenty times the original number. Amongst female factory workers, textile workers constitute the largest group, i.e. about one-third, and they number roughly 760,000. Women classified as sales workers comprise two-thirds, or 1,100,000, of the total number of women employed in shops. Most female

TABLE 33. Distribution of male and female workers by major groups of occupation (1950 and 1955) [1]

Occupational group	*Male*		*Female*	
	1950	1955	1950	1955
Total number of workers	21 870 367	25 893 686	13 755 423	15 368 265
	%	%	%	%
Professional and technical workers	5.0	5.6	3.6	3.9
Managers and officials	3.0	3.3	0.1	0.2
Clerical and related workers	9.9	9.4	6.5	7.5
Sales workers	8.5	10.7	8.2	10.8
Farmers, lumbermen, fishermen and related workers	39.7	33.0	60.8	51.8
Workers in mine and quarry occupations	1.7	1.4	0.3	0.2
Workers in transport operating occupations	2.0	3.4	0.0	0.2
Craftsmen, production process workers and labourers	27.5	29.0	14.0	16.2
Service workers	2.7	4.2	6.3	9.4

1. Statistics Bureau, Prime Minister's Office, *1950 Population Census of Japan*, Vol. 5, Part 2; *1955 Population Census of Japan*, Vol. 3, Part 2.

workers in service are waitresses and housemaids, but the number of the latter has dropped to about half of what it was in pre-war days.

Women workers who are classified as professional and technical workers account for about 4 per cent of all female workers, and the total number is only about 600,000. The greatest proportion of them are school-teachers and the smallest are technical experts. Of all technical experts, numbering 350,000, women amount to only a little above 1,000. Reviewing all these figures of female workers in each group of occupations, one may conclude that women are now engaged in the kind of occupation that does not require special physical strength and highly specialized technical skills. We can hope from the recent development of women's higher education that women will growingly acquire specialized technical knowledge and hold positions commensurate with this knowledge in the future. As a result of the post-war legal reform, women are now entitled to occupy public office, but the number of women holding such office, and especially managerial positions, is yet very small. Of about

100,000 government workers in managerial positions, women account for a mere 1,000 or 1 per cent. The total number of persons in managerial positions in private companies is about 330,000; women comprise slightly less than 4 per cent or slightly above 12,000 in number. These women in managerial positions are chiefly in small businesses and trades. For the time being we cannot hope for a rapid increase in the number of women holding such positions. In this regard, too, however, we may anticipate a rather promising future as a result of the improvement in women's education and the progress they have made in the field of occupation.

Let us now consider the position of women in work and the way it has changed in comparison with that of men. In terms of the position in work, all workers are divided into three classes: self-employed workers with or without paid employees, wage and salary workers, and unpaid family workers. The distribution of all Japanese workers in 1955 according to this classification is shown in Table 34.

TABLE 34. Distribution of male and female workers by their position in work (1955) [1]

Sex	*Total number*	*Self-employed or paid employees*	*Wage and salary workers*	*Unpaid family workers*
		%	%	%
Female	15 368 265	11.7	33.2	55.1
Male	23 893 086	31.8	53.9	14.3

1. Statistics Bureau, Prime Minister's Office, *1955 Population Census of Japan*, Vol. 3, Part 2.

As shown in the above table, the majority of the unpaid family workers are women. But, in the case of men, the wage and salary workers account for more than half. The next largest percentage of male workers are the self-employed and they account for nearly 32 per cent. As for unpaid male family workers, the proportion is only 14 per cent. Amongst female workers, the self-employed amount only to less than 12 per cent while wage and salary workers constitute 33 per cent, the proportion next highest to that of the unpaid family workers.

The distribution of working women according to the position held has also undergone change as can be seen from Table 35 which

shows the annual change in the number of workers expressed by indices for a period of 10 years from 1948 to 1957. As regards the changing position of women in work, the largest gain over the years is shown by wage-earning and salaried workers, the next largest being in the self-employed. Unpaid family workers show the smallest change and in this case the trend remains indeterminate. As for the trend amongst male workers, the increase is largest in the group of wage-earning and salaried workers and the changes in the groups of both the self-employed and the unpaid family workers is almost negligible.

TABLE 35. Annual shift of the number of male and female workers classified by the position of the work (1948 to 1957) [1]

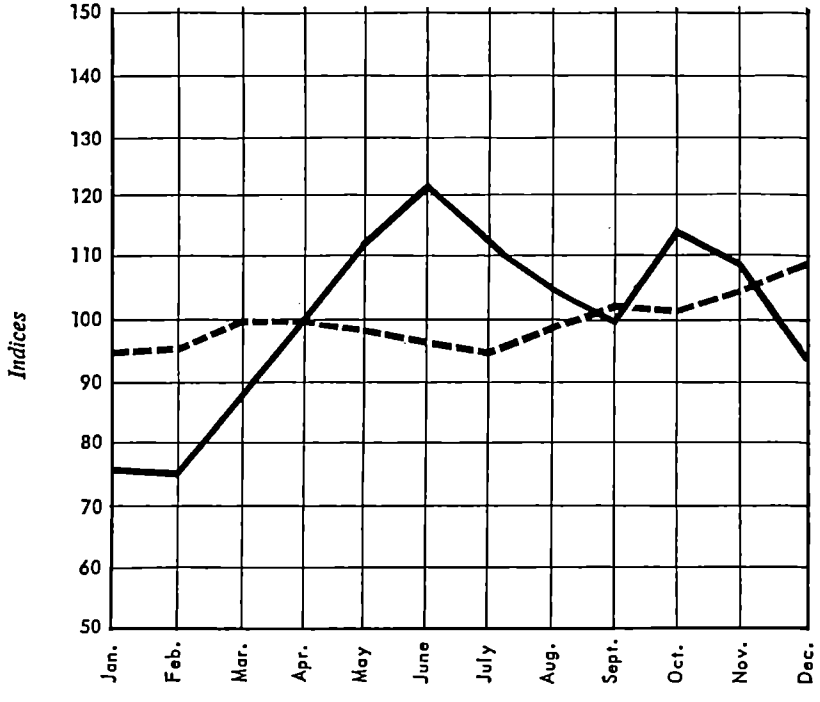
Year	*Male*[2]			*Female*[2]		
	A	B	C	A	B	C
1948	100	100	100	100	100	100
1949	104	100	108	125	98	110
1950	103	102	106	129	104	104
1951	102	108	101	125	122	101
1952	103	112	103	128	128	105
1953	104	116	112	134	134	115
1954	103	118	109	138	141	115
1955	106	124	116	152	153	116
1956	106	134	107	157	168	113
1957	105	144	103	169	183	110

1. Shown by indices with the figure for 1948 as 100.
2. A=self-employed workers; B=wage-earning and salaried workers; C=unpaid family workers.

In spite of these incipient changes in the occupational position of working women, it is clear that the majority of them are still in the group of unpaid family workers. As stated above, the greater proportion of the women in this group are engaged in farming, and a characteristic feature is that the monthly total number of those so engaged is subject to the seasonal changes in farming. In the two busiest farming seasons, one extending from May to July and the other from October to November, the number of farming women rises to its peak, whereas it drops to the minimum in January and February, i.e. the slackest farming season, or sags down in August and September, the season intervening between the two peaks. The maximum number employed in June exceeds the minimum employed in January by as much as 60 per cent.

The range of seasonal fluctuations in the number of women workers employed in agriculture becomes clearer when this group is compared with the group of non-agricultural female workers, as in Diagram 8. In making this diagram, monthly fluctuations in the numbers (in 1957) of unpaid family workers in agriculture and forestry and of wage-earning and salaried workers in work other than agriculture and forestry, both female, are converted into indices based on the average number throughout the year which is taken as 100.

DIAGRAM 8. Monthly changes in number of workers in work other than agriculture and forestry shown in indices (1957)



Note: Indices are based on the average number throughout the year, which is taken as 100.

As seen in this chart, the monthly change is not large in the case of the women workers in agriculture and forestry. The slight sagging in June and October is due in part to women turning to farming. Contrary to this is the slight rising in winter and early spring—the two slack seasons of farming—for during these seasons the surplus labour force is discharged into the labour market.

There is a close parallel between the seasonal change in the number of people engaged in farming and the number of hours of work. During the busiest farming season, farmers work on an average 49 hours per week, but they work only half as long (26 hours per week) during the slack season. As for the workers in occupations other than agriculture and forestry, the average time at work is 48.4 hours per week and remains almost constant. This figure remains unchanged throughout the year. Farming requires elasticity in the supply of labour and this is furnished by women working as unpaid family workers.

One characteristic of women who work as employees outside the home is that the vast majority of them are young, under the age of 25, and unmarried. In the survey of 1936, i.e. in pre-war days, the average age of workers was 21 years (30 years for men), but in 1949 the average rose to 23.8 (32.5 for men) and in 1954 it reached 25.4 years (32.3 for men), showing a remarkable rise as compared with the change in the average age of male workers.[1] The number of female workers who remain in the same job even after marriage is increasing, for in 1948 married female workers accounted for only 9 per cent of all female workers, whereas in 1957 their proportion rose to 17 per cent. (See Table 36.)

TABLE 36. Proportion of married female workers to all female workers (1948 to 1957)

Year	*Percentage*	*Year*	*Percentage*	*Year*	*Percentage*
1948	9.0	1954	14.2	1957	17.4
1950	9.0	1955	15.0		
1953	10.9	1956	16.2		

As for the period during which workers remain in the same job, statistics of 1945 give 3.6 years as the average in the case of female

1. Ministry of Labour, *Annual Report of Labour Statistics.*

workers, which is just half of the average for male workers. But in this case also the period has recently been growing longer.

As the statistical data show, the practice of women working outside the home is now recognized as being in the trend of the day—and this trend has become very much more marked since the last world war. When the war ended and men were released from war duties and returned to their former jobs, many of the women who had gained experience and had held certain jobs kept on working. To those already working there was added another group of women who were compelled to work outside the home in order to earn a part or the whole of the income required to support their families. This was because the income earned by one man was insufficient to maintain the household economy in post-war days. Thus, the number of women working outside the home grew even larger. According to a survey of 1948 [1] covering 1,724 female clerks and workers, employed in offices in Tokyo on a permanent basis, the reasons which they gave for working were as shown in Table 37.

TABLE 37. Reasons given for working by female workers

Reason	*Percentage*
To support the family	16
To supplement family income	38
To gain money for my own use	16
Both to supplement the family income and to gain money for my own use	14
To have a knowledge of society	5
To render service to society through my work	3
Other	6
No reason	2

The largest proportion (38 per cent) of respondents answered, 'to supplement the income of my family', and the second largest gave the serious answer, 'to support all my family'. In the main, the reasons amounted mostly to the statement, ' my husband's income alone is not enough '. Whatever their reasons may be, the fact that women have entered a variety of occupational fields is of great importance in modifying women's views on work.

1. National Public Opinion Research Institute, *Women and Work*, 1948.

Working conditions of employed women

According to the survey of 1956 on the composition and work of the mass of employees, of those women who had not been in employment for more than one year at the time of the survey, 5 per cent were found to have been self-employed, 14 per cent were unpaid family workers and as many as 74 per cent were in other forms of employment. Such a high proportion of labour turnover among working women is attributed to such reasons as that (a) their tasks are unskilled and subsidiary in nature; (b) women do not have to support all their families; (c) they do not have a high morale in their work; and (d) as a group, women are 'the last hired and the first to be fired', that is to say, they constitute a marginal labour force. The mobile and unsteady character of female workers is evident from the statistics of unemployment. In 1959 unemployed workers numbered 280,000 in the case of men and 250,000 in the case of women, and these figures, when converted into a relative index by using the unemployment figures for 1948 as the basis, turn out to be 175 for men and 278 for women. For the year 1955, a depression year in post-war Japan, the unemployment index computed by the same method was 244 for men and 322 for women.

The present high rate of unemployment among female workers is related to the low wages of working women. In spite of the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value and the categorical denial of sex discrimination embodied in the Labour Standards Law, the ratio of men's wages to women's is 6 to 4 at present. This difference between the sexes in the wage scale is, of course, affected by the level and scale of the industrial enterprise, the kind of work, the status of the worker, the level of his education, his age, and length of service. The difference in the wages paid to the two sexes is in part the result of the traditional notion which assumes and takes for granted that 'a woman's work is in the home'.

Since the beginning of the Meiji era, women's wages have always been far below those of men—generally about one-half or one-third of a man's wage. In the cotton-spinning industry (in the twenties), the average pay of women was less than one-half the men's wage. Subsequently, in the munitions industry, the discrepancy in wages between men and women was considerably reduced. Employers as a body treated men as skilled workers and women as unskilled cheap labour. This difference in the wage scales of men and women was considered as

reasonable even by the women themselves. That was the state of affairs before and during the last world war.

After the war ended, a series of legal and social changes, such as the reform of the family system, the provision of equal opportunities in education, the abolition of discrimination between men and women in the matter of wages prescribed in the Labour Standards Law, the provisions of the Labour Union Law, the development of labour movement, etc., combined with a proper assessment of the value of female labour during the war, led to a considerable improvement in the position of working women. Consequently, in a comparison of wages during and after the war, women show by far a higher ratio of increase than men. As regards the absolute amount of wages, a large number of women are concentrated in the lower wage categories.[1] In 1950, the discrepancy between men's and women's wages was smallest. Since then, it has once more grown larger, as shown in Table 38.

TABLE 38. Monthly wages of male and female workers in regular employment and the ratio between them (1948 to 1957) [1]

Year	*Monthly wage*		*Proportion of women's to men's wages*
	Male	*Female*	
	yen	yen	%
1948	6 133	2 640	43.0
1949	9 980	4 488	45.0
1950	11 143	5 184	46.5
1951	14 051	6 496	46.2
1952	16 782	7 533	44.9
1953	19 560	8 617	44.1
1954	20 825	9 252	44.4
1955	21 895	9 567	43.7
1956	23 954	10 160	42.4
1957	25 688	10 638	41.4

1. Ministry of Labour, *Monthly Labour Statistics*, 1948 to 1957; *Present Conditions of Women*, 1959.

1. As chief reasons, we may first mention the high rate of turnover in the female labour force. Most of the young, unmarried workers soon quit the job before obtaining skill in the work, with newcomers taking over their positions. Another reason is the existing system for determining the amount of the wage, in which age, the number of dependants or members of the family, etc., are important factors to be taken into consideration. Added to these reasons is the changing basis of wages. Formerly the basis of the wages was the cost of living; whereas recently it has been determined by the worker's status in the establishment, special allowances given for specific responsible jobs or positions, making up a larger part of the total wages. This leads to relatively lower wages for women, because they do not stay long in one employment and therefore are not given responsible positions.

In 1957 the discrepancy (41.4 per cent) between women's and men's wages is seen to have been greatest. Viewed differently, the discrepancy has grown larger by 5.1 per cent in the seven years from 1950 to 1957. The change in the wage and in the proportion of women's wages to men's has been caused by various factors already alluded to. The discrepancy therefore does not always reflect the application of the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value. Moreover, sex discrimination in determining the amount of the wage is not exceptional at present in the case of many newly employed men and women, though they are assigned work of equal value. According to a survey of starting wages and salaries made in 1958 by the Managers' Association of Kanto District, in respect of newly employed persons, 41 per cent of establishments even now give discriminatory starting wages and salaries to university graduates, 34.8 per cent to graduates of senior high schools and 29.5 per cent to graduates of junior high schools.[1]

It is only among government workers that there is at present almost no discriminatory treatment. A review of the major classifications of industry shows that workers in transportation, communication and related public services suffer the least degree of sex discrimination in the matter of wages, and second to them come workers in finance, insurance and real estate; the proportion of women's wages to men's being 58 per cent and 48 per cent respectively in these cases. The largest degree of discrepancy between the wages of men and women is found in the building and manufacturing industries. Comparison on the basis of the 'detailed classification' of industry shows that in tobacco manufacturing female workers are treated, in the matter of wages, almost on an equality with male workers whereas in textile production the sex differential in wages was greatest—a woman's wage being only 39 per cent of a man's.[2] Tobacco manufacturing is a government enterprise and textile production a private enterprise, but the discrepancy is attributable not only to this difference but also to the fact that in the former the average age of female workers is the highest and their services range over the longest period, whereas the contrary is true in the latter case.

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1. Managers' Association of Kanto District, *Research on the Starting Wage and Salary of the Newly Employed*, 1958.
2. Ministry of Labour, *Annual Report of Labour Statistics*, 1957.

As for the discrepancy in wages and salaries between men and women who do clerical and related work, Table 39 shows the difference by age groups. The discrepancy is small in the group of those under 18 years old, but it grows larger as the age advances. It is largest in the age groups between 35 and 60, but in the group of those over 60 years of age it again grows smaller. This implies that length of service on the one hand and the level of education on the other are related to differences in wages as between men and women.

TABLE 39. Monthly wage and salary of male and female clerical workers and the ratio between them, compared by age groups (1957) [1]

Age group	*Monthly wage and salary*		*Proportion of women's to men's wages and salaries*
	Male	*Female*	
	yen	yen	%
18	5 739	5 249	91.4
18-20	8 501	7 159	81.9
20-25	12 240	9 366	76.5
25-30	17 755	12 981	73.1
30-35	23 084	14 532	62.9
35-40	27 313	14 726	53.9
40-50	29 109	15 831	54.4
50-60	27 427	15 193	55.4
60	18 154	12 565	68.9

1. Computed from: Ministry of Labour, *Annual Report of Labour Statistics*, 1957.

It is unnecessary to say that in Japan the longer one's service, the higher the wage or salary one receives. This is also the case with female workers, as shown in Table 40. The discrepancy in wages between men and women becomes smaller the longer women stay in one service. With the exception of women workers whose length of service is less than six months, the relative position of women's wages becomes better as the length of service increases. It may safely be assumed that, even in the case of female workers, a higher value is placed on their work the longer they stay in one service.

By comparing Tables 39 and 40, we can see that the widening wage differential between male and female is associated with age and with length of service. The difference in the wage is smallest for the youngest group of workers and it gets larger during the workers' productive period and once more becomes smaller when the worker passes the age

TABLE 40. Monthly wage and salary of male and female workers and the ratio between them, compared by length of service (1957) [1]

Length of service (in years)	*Monthly wage and salary*		*Proportion of women's to men's wages and salaries*
	Male	*Female*	
Less than	yen	yen	%
0.5	10 613	6 723	63.3
0.5-1	12 652	7 133	56.3
1-2	13 054	7 695	58.9
2-3	13 948	8 514	61.0
3-5	15 794	9 708	61.5
5-10	20 134	12 474	61.7
10-15	24 677	16 431	66.6
15-20	29 892	20 352	68.1
20 and over	36 459	25 805	70.8

1. Computed from: Ministry of Labour, *Annual Report of Labour Statistics*, 1957.

of 60. This means that after 60 or 63, the age of retirement from active duties in Japan, both men and women are paid as temporary employees with a definite decrease in wages or salary.

The worker's school career also affects the amount and rate of increase of the wage or salary. In the past, the school career of women did not go beyond the level of middle school education and this was one reason for reducing their average pay as compared with that of men. Recently an ever-increasing number of women are receiving higher education and this may eventually lead to a rise in their average pay in the future but, in this connexion, it must be borne in mind that chances of getting a job are not abundant in the case of women with higher education. In the interest of those women, the traditional customs and ideas concerning working women must be changed and appropriate measures must be taken to ensure that hours of work, the nature of the work assigned to them and other circumstances are suitable for women.

As for working hours, women used to work about ten hours a day before the war. Since the enforcement of the Labour Standards Law after the war, women's working hours have now been reduced to 8 as against 8.4 hours for men, though they vary somewhat from one industry to another. Working hours are comparatively longer in the wholesale and retail trade and in manufacturing. In particular, in textile production, printing and publishing, which are all classified as

manufacturing industries, the hours are the longest of all. Comparatively shorter hours are worked in finance and insurance. The hours of work are shortest in tobacco manufactures, though this is classified as a manufacturing industry. A comparison between clerical workers and labourers shows that the latter have longer working hours than the former.

The number of days of work per month has been increasing recently for both men and women, amounting to 23.6 days for women and 24.3 days for men. The Labour Standards Law prescribes that at least one day's leave shall be given each week, but this provision is not always complied with in the case of wholesale and retail shop workers. The total number of women working in wholesale and retail shops is 277,000, but only a quarter of all these shops give periodical leave to their employees by closing the shop by arrangement with neighbouring shops or by other means. The proportion of shops doing this is, however, gradually increasing.

Protection of working women

The principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value has been applied to working women, but this does not mean that they should be given a false equality to the neglect of physical characteristics and other conditions peculiar to women. In pre-war days there were already legal provisions for the protection of working women, but they were very deficient. In spinning mills, which achieved a remarkable development after the turn of the century, 80 per cent of all workers were women. The bad working conditions and cruel treatment typical of those days were described in the *Shokko Jijyo* (Conditions of Workmen), and the *Joko Aishi* (Sad Stories of Female Factory Workers), which aroused criticism and blame on the part of intellectuals and the public in general. The Factory Law was finally enacted in 1916, and subsequently the Mining Industry Law and the Shop Act embodied some provisions for the protection of women in employment. In comparison with the protection afforded to working women by the laws of other countries, these protective measures in Japan were far below the standard level, and even these were almost wholly abolished during the war.

Impelled by the demand that arose after the confusion of thought and economics of the post-war period in Japan and by the recommendation of the Allied Powers, the Japanese Government laid down

labour standards and in 1948 passed the Labour Standards Law as a constituent law of the New Constitution. This law is based on the international labour conventions and on the Labour Charter drawn up by the International Labour Conference, fixing minimum standards for working conditions for all workers. In regard to working women this law took into consideration the following points:

1. Working women are the mothers or prospective mothers of the next generation of the Japanese people.
2. Owing to their special physical characteristics, they are more exposed to the harmful effects of labour than are men.
3. Women have to bear a twofold burden of work—in the place of work and in the home.
4. Women are likely to be given worse working conditions than men and it is difficult for them to improve these conditions by themselves.
5. It is wrong to discriminate between men and women.

To protect women from the disadvantages which the modern *laisser-faire* economy would otherwise impose upon them, special provisions were embodied in this law. Working women were for the first time protected and guaranteed a proper position by law. Based upon the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value, the Labour Standards Law pays due attention to the special physical characteristics of women and to the protection of motherhood. At present, however, the purpose of this law has not yet been fully grasped by the people, and violations of its provisions are often reported, especially in small establishments with less than 100 employees. But the number of violations is decreasing year by year. By comparison with the figures for 1949, the first year of the enforcement of the Labour Standards Law, the number of violations fell to 40 per cent (11,571 cases) in 1957.

As regards violation of the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value, there were 450 cases in 1949, whereas in 1957 there were only 30 cases or 7 per cent. The majority of the violations of various provisions of this law in 1949 related to working hours and holidays and these constituted 78 per cent of all violations, but the proportion decreased to 27 per cent in 1957. On the other hand, there has been a remarkable increase in the proportion of violations of the prohibition of night work for women. Violations relating to the giving of menstruation leave and to the restriction on placing women in perilous or harmful work have diminished notably. Failures to provide working women

with accommodation for nursing their infants were much fewer or almost non-existent in 1957.

The average number of menstruation leaves per woman was one to two a year in 1948, but it has increased to five a year in 1957. The larger the establishment, the greater the number of women who take leave, for women constitute 75 per cent, 45 per cent and 32 per cent of the staff in establishments with above 500, 100 to 499 and less than 99 employees respectively. These figures show that the smaller the scale of the establishment, the less complete is the protection of working women. What is the position with regard to the protection of motherhood? As stated already, the proportion of married women who work is increasing annually. The proportion of married women employed varies inversely with the scale of the establishment, for the proportion of married women to all women working in establishments of less than 99, with 100 to 499 and with more than 500 employees is 22 per cent, 17.7 per cent and 14 per cent respectively. Recently the number of married working women has been gradually increasing in establishments with more than 500 employees. As for the attitude of other women, they are to some extent dubious about the work of married women, because the latter are apt to be absent, to come late and leave earlier leaving a portion of their work to be done by other women who are unmarried. Moreover, they fear that irregular attendance of married women at work may be regarded as a defect of working women in general and may be criticized accordingly. This is one of the existing problems arising out of incomplete adjustment of occupational life to home life.

More difficult problems arise in regard to child-birth and the care of children in the case of women workers. In 1957, working women who were delivered of a child were about 2 per cent of all women and 12.2 per cent of all working women. This shows the trend towards a decrease brought about by the recent diffusion of planned parenthood. Nevertheless, there is a large number of women who leave their job by reason of pregnancy or child-birth. In 1957, 38.3 per cent of women who became pregnant left their job, but the proportion of women who do so is decreasing. In this case, too, the smaller the establishment, the larger the number of those who leave because of pregnancy. As for leave before and after child-birth, Article 5 of the Labour Standards Law stipulates that it is the duty of the employer to give six weeks' leave before child-birth at the request of the em-

ployee and six weeks' leave after child-birth whether the employee concerned requests it or not. Actually the length of the leave given to such employees is at present, on an average, 32.4 days before child-birth and 45.4 days after child-birth, and the period is gradually growing longer each year. The longer leave actually taken after birth is due to the need for nursing a new-born baby. This fact, combined with the larger number of pregnant women who leave their jobs, reveals the difficulty of adjusting occupational life to child care. The women who retain their job even after child-birth are, in the main, those who have a mother or other relatives to look after their babies.

According to a survey of the Ministry of Labour, 77 per cent of working women who have an infant stated that the child is cared for by other members of the family. As social facilities for the care of babies are still poor in Japan, working mothers, when there are no other members of the family to take care of their child, have no other alternative than to leave their job. According to the survey of the Ministry of Labour conducted in Tokyo, 74 per cent of the women questioned answered, 'I left the job because I was married', and 7 per cent answered, 'Because a child was born'.[1] When they were asked, 'Do you think it preferable for a working woman to keep on her job after a child is born?', as many as 54 per cent of the respondents, though they live in so highly urbanized a place as Tokyo, answered, 'She had better leave the job'. This high proportion implies that the respondents are not only still influenced by the old notion but also realize the difficulty of nursing a baby. Now once a woman leaves her job, it is definitely impossible for her to resume it unless she has some particularly valuable skill or rare special knowledge. In Japan, where there is a surplus of workers, it is very comprehensible that the employer should welcome new and low-waged female workers instead of taking back women who have left their jobs. This is one of the obstacles that stand in the way of the improvement of the occupational position of women.

There is no provision in the law concerning wages to cover the period of leave for child-birth but the child-birth allowance is paid in accordance with the Health Insurance Law. In practice, there are some establishments in which employed women are given paid child-birth

1. Women's and Minors' Bureau, Ministry of Labour, *The Life and Opinions of Housewives*, 1957.

leave under a labour agreement. But such establishments account for less than half of all establishments, though their number is gradually increasing as the proportion of married women grows higher.

It is feared that hard or protracted labour on the part of a pregnant woman may lead to an abnormal birth. Therefore, in order to protect pregnant working women, the Labour Standards Law, in addition to granting child-birth leave, provides for their transfer to lighter work at their request. Those who asked the employer for such a transfer accounted for about 12 per cent of pregnant working women, and the proportion of such women is increasing each year. They are usually transferred from physical labour to clerical work, from standing to sedentary work, from day and night shifts to day shifts only. Such cases are frequent especially in the building and manufacturing industries.

For nursing an infant, women are entitled to ask for at least 30 minutes leave, twice a day, according to the provisions of the Labour Standards Law but, in practice, the number of women who ask for such time off for feeding their baby is decreasing each year.

In this way, the legal protection of motherhood in the case of working women is being put into practice, but what is badly needed today are facilities for breast-feeding and nursing annexed to the site of the place of work. Establishments that provide facilities exclusively for breast-feeding account for only 0.4 per cent, and, adding those which have a rest-room or a dispensary used as a breast-feeding room, together, the proportion amounted only to 22 per cent in 1955. Nearly half the large-scale establishments provide such facilities, but the smaller the establishment, the smaller the number of this kind of facility.

Establishments providing facilities for nursing account for only 3 per cent even if exclusive and combined facilities are added together. As for nurseries not associated with the establishments, these number 9,350 in all Japan and the children they care for amount to a total of 650,000, but, as they are unevenly distributed, they do not always meet the needs of the working mother.

This being the state of affairs in regard to the protection of the working mother, it is very difficult for working women who are delivered of a child to stay at work. If they do so, they must be prepared for a series of hardships. Day in and day out they are distressed by psychological and physical strains. Attention must therefore

be directed to the various dangers and sacrifices at the cost of which the improvement of the position of working women is achieved. It may be very difficult for the time being to solve the problem of an overcrowded industrial reserve army, but what we must do at present is at least to work out means of increasing the facilities for the protection of motherhood so that women's culture and experience may be given proper recognition in their work.

Women and the labour union

As shown above, working women have many problems to be solved. What efforts are they making through the labour movement in order to protect or improve their position? The female factory workers who were, in practice, the main strength of the cotton textile industry, the herald of Japanese modernized industries, did not organize themselves in labour unions though they exceeded male factory workers in number. Even after World War I, when trade unionism in Japan achieved rapid development, female union members constituted only 1 per cent of all female workers. In 1946, the Labour Union Law was enforced and the Japanese workers' right to organize was recognized legally for the first time. On account of this, female union members promptly increased in number and in 1949 they accounted for 51 per cent of all female workers, but in 1950 their proportion dropped to 30 per cent.

Thus, the number of women in the labour union is indeed large, but their activities in the union and their understanding of labour problems may be said to be somewhat unsatisfactory.

First, let us consider their position as members of the staff and as members of the executive committee of the union. A labour problem peculiar to women is not only their own problem but is also one which affects the union as a whole. For its solution the co-operation is required of other members of the union who are men. On that account, women, if they are not to suffer disadvantages in their working conditions, must elect members of the staff of their own sex to the decision-making or executive organ of the union. A survey of labour unions in 1952 shows that female members of unions who were elected to senior posts, such as chairman, vice-chairman, secretary-general and treasurer, numbered two per 1,000 female members, whereas, in the case of male members, 25 per 1,000 hold such positions. Twelve per 1,000 female

members, as against 49 per 1,000 male members, are elected members of the executive committee. The ratio of women's staff-membership, however, has been decreasing yearly until in 1957 no women were found in the position of senior staff member. It is not rare now to find a union which has no woman as a member of the executive committee. Generally, women still occupy a low position in the labour union and they are not fully conscious of their own problems as working women.

Second, what steps are taken by the unions to animate women's activities? In 1957 unit labour unions in all parts of Japan were asked about union activities. In regard to women's activities, it was found that 318 (82 per cent) out of 344 unit unions whose replies were available have a special section for women, and that 207 (65 per cent) have a woman as chief of this section in order that women's special claims may be well reflected in union activities. The aim of such a section is, according to the answers received, first, to enlighten female members by giving labour education, and further to improve their health and daily life and to promote co-operation with other unions and social organs.

Third, what is the content of this education and how is it imparted in practice? Women's sections, whose activities centre around labour education, undertake group activities such as reading groups, the establishment of a union school, the opening of a labour university or participation in the lectures of such a university, etc., depending on the circumstances of each unit union. In some of these activities, however, women do not receive due consideration and this causes dissatisfaction on the part of female members. In other activities, members develop their interests in learning, sewing, the tea ceremony and flower arrangement as a preparation for married life to the exclusion of other forms of general culture. These female workers are generally less critically minded and poor in the expression of their own thought; this is perhaps one reason for the small number of members amongst women workers.

Fourth, next to education as the aim of the activities of women's sections comes the promotion of women's welfare. This is achieved by establishing or requesting the employer to establish facilities for breast-feeding and nursing and other facilities for the protection of motherhood. In addition, some women's sections endeavour to install a washroom, a stall that sells various necessaries, and other welfare facilities.

Fifth, as for other activities and services, women's sections are making an effort to solve problems peculiar to female workers by giving advice when consulted on individual problems, by hearing and settling grievances and in other ways. The main problems that women's sections are attempting to solve are those concerned with recruitment, wages, promotion, age-limits, the retirement of women and discriminatory treatment of women.

Sixth, many other miscellaneous problems have been solved through the efforts of the women's sections of many unions. These include, for example, the proper assessment of the work involved in serving tea and in other chores performed by women and the transfer of women workers who are dismissed when they pass the age of youth, as is the case with women bus-conductors.

Thus, women's position in work has been considerably improved and protected through the activities of the labour unions. Though the female labour force as a whole is still insufficiently aware of the importance of union activities, several individual unions are step by step solving problems concerning working women. This will eventually contribute to the solution of more important problems through the collective efforts of all workers.

Some other problems of working women

In the light of the foregoing sections in which we have examined recent trends in regard to the position of working women, in the main by reviewing statistical data, it will perhaps be admitted without hesitation that the working conditions of these women have been step by step bettered and that their position has accordingly improved. On the other hand, however, owing to defects and conflicts in the social, economic and other conditions prevailing in Japan at the present time, their road is not free of obstacles, as we have already seen. These obstacles are especially serious in the case of such groups of women as wives who have to work outside the home, widows or widowed mothers who have to suffer hardships, needy wives who barely manage to maintain existence by doing work at home and prostitutes who have just been emancipated from slavery but are apt to fall back into their former condition. The problems connected with these particular groups of women call for no less attentive examination than the problems of women as a whole of which they form part. Without such

examination we cannot really expect to achieve the fullest possible improvement of the position of women.

Problems of the husband and wife both working outside the home

It is a noteworthy fact that, in recent days, an increasing number of women keep to the same job after their marriage. Evidence for this is seen in the fact that, during the last 10 years, the number of married working women has doubled. This state of affairs may be regarded as the inevitable result of the difficulties occasioned, from the point of view of the household economy, by the diminishing income of the head of the household and the trend towards the nuclear family. On the other hand, however, it is associated with the decline of the old conception of the wife's role in the family according to which housekeeping or help in the family trade is the only role she was expected to fill. In the readers' column of a certain newspaper, a recent contribution by a woman says; 'It is not impossible to live on my husband's income alone, but if I also am at work outside the house, we need not worry about money, or put up with a small room, but can live in a modern apartment house with some amount of margin in the household economy.' This contribution represents perhaps the attitude that is common to many young wives who are working outside the home. The development of a capitalistic economy and the consequent raising of the national standard of living and of the level of consumption may lead a larger number of couples to earn their bread jointly.

What is the change in the position and role of the wife that takes place in these circumstances? Hitherto, housework has been regarded as unworthy of a man and the Japanese family has disapproved of the husband doing the housework. But today, if their wives have to work outside the home, many husbands help with the cleaning and cooking. According to the survey of the Ministry of Labour, only 24 per cent of husbands of such wives do not assist with the housework.[1] It seems that in the majority of these homes, the husband and wife assist each other and share the housework between them. However, it must be noted with such couples, there is a danger of family discord because the wife is very often over-fatigued and the help the one expects of the other may not be forthcoming.

1. Women's and Minors' Bureau, Minisfry of Labour, *The Life and Opinions of Housewives*, 1957.

A survey conducted by the National Public Opinion Research Institute in 1952 [1] gave the following indications of the reasons for approval or disapproval of the wife working outside the home. (See Table 41.)

TABLE 41. Reasons for and against a married woman working outside the home

Reason	*Male*	*Female*
	%	%
For		
Because of the improvement of the social position of women	24	30
Because of the economic independence of the woman	6	9
Because of the supplement to the family income	62	55
Because of the help to the family trade	8	6
Against		
Because of the need to care for children	11	16
Because of the housework	52	53
Because of worry about possible family discord	29	28
Because others may think ill of her	8	3

As this table shows, some approve of a married woman working outside the home because she not only supplements the family income but helps in the improvement of women's social position and in ensuring their economic independence. Other disapprove of her working outside because she has to bring up her child or do the housework or because she may become a source of family discord. Thus, at present, there is still a considerable weight of opinion against the wife working outside. It is characteristic of women that more women than men approve of her working outside because this helps in the improvement of women's social position or helps towards their economic independence; whereas more men than women approve of her working because she supplements the family income. The fact that there are some men who disapprove of a woman working because she is thought ill of by other people implies they are still possessed of the old notion concerning working women, though such a notion will in the long run fade away. It is noteworthy that about 30 per cent of both men and women think that a wife having work outside the home is a source of family discord. Their opinion reveals a crucial problem concerning such double-income families, but this problem cannot be solved without the ration-

1. National Public Opinion Research Institute, *Research on Women and Youth*, 1952.

alization of family life and the adjustment of the roles to be played by the husband and the wife respectively.

In a survey of the National Public Opinion Research Institute on the occupational life of women in 1954,[1] wives working outside the home were asked: 'Can you do both occupational work and housework well, or do you have to be slack about either of them?' The answer most frequently given, i.e. in 35 per cent of the cases, was, 'I am slack about the occupational work', and 7 per cent said, 'I am slack both in the outside work and in the housework.' All together, in the opinion of 65 per cent of the wives questioned there was incompatibility between occupational work and housework. Some of those questioned in this survey remarked, 'I want to leave the occupational work.' As for the reason, 58 per cent, or the highest proportion, of them said, 'It is very difficult to do both the occupational work and the housework', whereas 19 per cent answered, 'I want to switch my job' and another 19 per cent said, 'The income from my occupational work is small.' Seeing that the majority of them complain of the incompatibility of occupational work and housework, one can clearly realize how great a burden is imposed upon those working wives by the housework.

As already stated, Japanese people in general are against the husband assisting with the housework. When this opinion is acted upon in the home life of the double-income family, the result is that the wife is over-fatigued; or one of the parties fails to play the part expected by the other, thereby finally bringing about conflicts between them. The working of the wife outside the home must be based on a rationalized family life and on the adjustment of the duties to be performed by husband and wife respectively. Otherwise there will often result psychological or physiological loss that will largely offset any economic gain.

The problem of homework. Work of the nature of making, processing and repairing, which is given out by manufacturers or middlemen to be done in the home of the worker is undertaken by some groups of wives as their important role because the remuneration they receive contributes something towards the household economy. Such homework, which is mostly simple handwork, provides an indispensable subsidiary means of livelihood especially in the case of a large number of urban families. According to the survey on the household economy

1. National Public Opinion Research Institute, *Research Reports on the Occupational Life of Working Women*, 1954.

of the urban area, such work is undertaken by 24 per cent of all workers' families.

In the case of families whose chief breadwinner has lost his job or cannot work owing to sickness, such homework is not merely a subsidiary means of livelihood but the sole means. These families are mostly in extremely needy circumstances and receive the public assistance provided for by law. Nearly all of those who do such work as a sole means of living are women, mostly wives. The work usually takes the form of Western or Japanese dressmaking, knitting, the making or processing of toys and paper goods, or bookbinding. Since for all work of this type the wage paid is very low and the work continues for long hours, the health of the worker is liable to suffer. Frequently these workers cannot leave their homes because they have to take care of infants or invalids; they can do only simple work because they have no skills or experience and as, because they are so confined to their homes, they have no wide social contacts, they are apt to be contented with a very small rate of remuneration. They are all the more at a disadvantage owing to these conditions.

As for those who do homework as a subsidiary means of livelihood, their standard of living more or less approximates to that of workers in general. Since the war, the economic condition of Japan has been pressing on the household economy. In order to remove the pressure, the wives of factory workers and of government and other salaried workers have increasingly begun to do homework as a means of obtaining subsidiary income when they are free of housekeeping, though in pre-war days only needy wives did this. It is indeed one of the social problems that a large number of workers' families need subsidiary income from the homework of the wives, but, viewed from the standpoint of the national economy of Japan, the product of their work is not negligible.

At present, the total number of homeworkers exceeds 1,500,000 and they produce more than 700 kinds of commodities such as clothing, personal effects, sundries, toys, stationery, etc. It may be said that almost all the necessities of life pass through their hands. Artificial flowers and gloves, which are also made by them, are exported and bring in foreign currency to the amount of about $15 million and about $9 million respectively. Other products such as clothing, sundries, toys, etc., are also to be counted as important exports.[1]

1. Ministry of Finance, *Customs Clearance Statistics*, 1957.

The manufacturers who originally give out the work are nearly all medium- or small-scale establishments; but when employees of subcontract factories or of the middlemen who directly give out the work and the homeworkers are all added together, the number of people working under one original manufacturer is very large. For instance, there is a certain firm manufacturing gloves that hires only employees directly in its own factory, but workers in its subcontract factories and related homeworkers total up to 10,000. Because homeworkers are not in direct connexion with the original manufacturers but only with subcontract factories or middlemen, the exploitation by the intermediary falls hardly on them. Some middlemen squeeze 50 per cent out of the processing fees.

As already mentioned, needy groups of homeworkers have in their homes infants or invalids to take care of and they are obliged to confine themselves to their homes. On account of this, they have so few social contacts that they have no chance of comparing their wages with those of others or of discovering how inadequately they are remunerated. Moreover, they have no opportunities for making contact with other homeworkers. They are therefore liable to accept arbitrary terms of work proposed by middlemen and to be content with meagre wages. Another reason why their labour is cheap is that, since they have no special skills or experience, their tasks are so simple that 'everybody can do them'.

According to the survey of homeworkers in Tokyo conducted by the Ministry of Labour in 1958, 85 per cent of these workers are women; 75 per cent of these women are housewives and 13 per cent of these housewives are householders. Many of them are in their thirties or forties; the average age of the women being 40. For 70 per cent of these women, the monthly income from the homework amounts to less than $8 per head, an amount which is not enough to procure essential food-stuff.

Because their remuneration is so small, homeworkers include a high proportion of recipients of national assistance allowances. Though the proportion of such recipients among workers in general is 0.7 per cent, it is 10.2 per cent among homeworkers, which is even higher than the proportion (8 per cent) among day labourers who are usually classified as low-income earners. In view of the conditions attaching to homework, the checking of exploitation by intermediaries and the provision of better protection by social security planning are indispen-

sable to ensure the relief of female homeworkers who receive meagre wages and whose health is endangered through long hours of work and who are yet barely able to support their families. This is one of the specific problems that affect the social position of Japanese women.

Problems of the war widow and widowed mother

No less serious than the problem of homework is the problem concerning war widows and especially widowed mothers. The population census of Japan in 1955 shows that women who had been bereaved of their husbands numbered 5,270,000 and that in about a quarter of their cases the husbands had been killed in the war. The cases of the greatest distress are those of widowed mothers whose children have not reached working age. The Ministry of Welfare estimates the number of such mothers, including those who are divorced, at 1,150,000.

In the difficult economic conditions of Japan in post-war days, it has been by no means easy for these widows and widowed mothers to support themselves. Around 1950, when Japan concluded the peace treaty, measures for the protection of war widows and widowed mothers and their children began to be worked out. To extend a helping hand to them, 'the Law for relieving dependants of those killed or injured in the war, and surviving families of the war dead, etc.' was promulgated. This was of great assistance to war widows. Subsequently, 'the Law concerning the welfare fund loans for widowed mothers and their children' was promulgated. The aim of this law was to lend funds to widowed mothers for such purposes as opening a new business, making clothes for taking up new employment, learning skills with a view to finding employment, providing subsistence, repairing the house or sending children to school. In this way widowed mothers, too, became legally entitled to relief.

These measures did indeed give some relief to those whose lives were hard. However, in regard to their occupation, which counts most from the point of view of their existence, no full security has been obtained. Widowed mothers include 25 per cent who are farmers, 25 per cent who are regular workers and 25 per cent who are day labourers, domestic service workers and homeworkers. The proportion of regular workers is much lower and the proportion of day labourers, domestic service workers and homeworkers is higher than amongst workers in general. Their income is small for their age, more than half of them

earning less than $28 monthly per head, and about 14 per cent of widowed mothers are unable to meet their household expenses.

According to the age distribution of widowed mothers, the largest proportion of them are aged from 40 to 49, the second largest from 30 to 39, whereas those who are 20 to 29 years old constitute the smallest proportion. (See Table 42.)

TABLE 42. Distribution of widowed mothers by age (1957) [1]

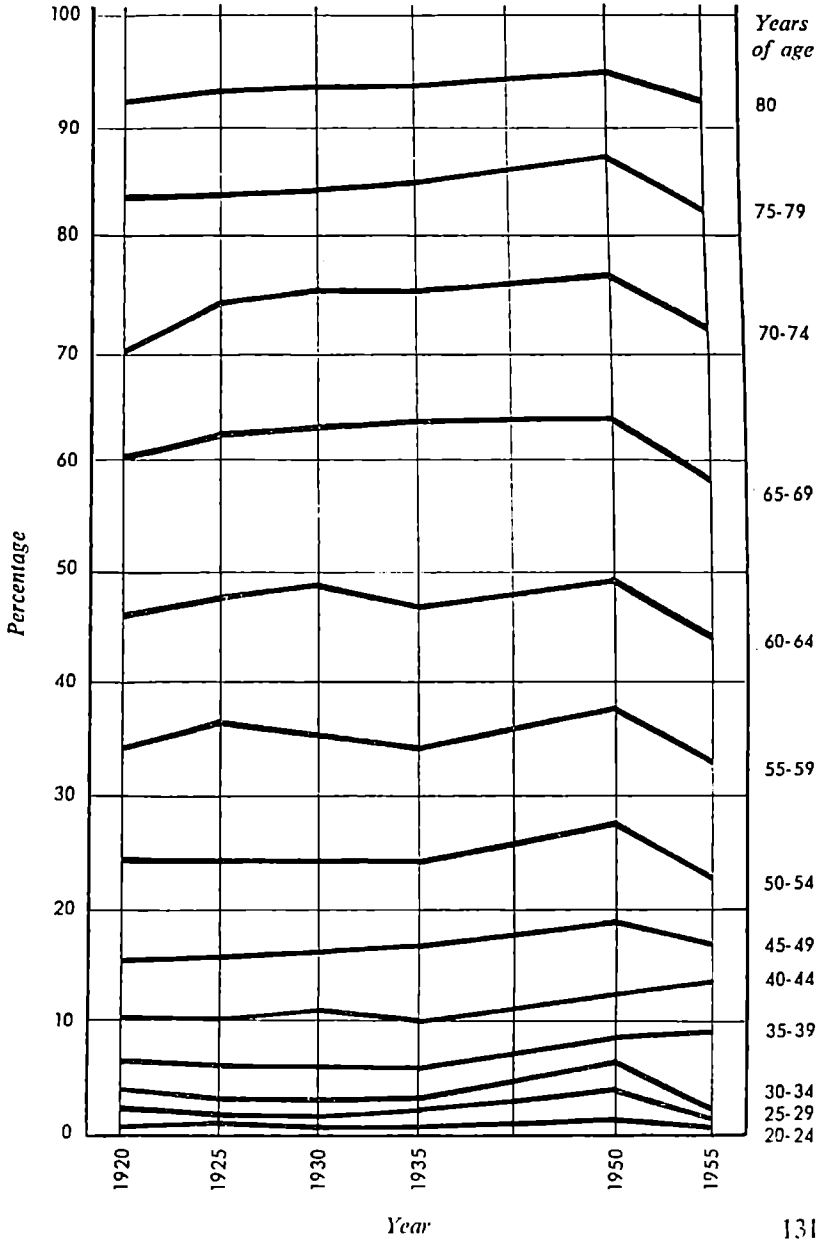
Age	*Percentage*	*Age*	*Percentage*	*Age*	*Percentage*
20-29	4.2	40-49	47.6	60	3.9
30-39	30.7	50-59	13.6		

1. Ministry of Labour, *Present Conditions of Women*, 1959.

Taking into consideration women's age of marriage and the age at which they bear their first child, it seems natural that fewer widowed mothers are in the younger age group, but on the other hand it must not be overlooked that this is partly due to their good fortune in being exempt from loss of their husband in the war. As for widowed mothers aged from 30 to 49, most of them seem unlikely to marry again because of their affection for their children. However, not a few of them lead hard lives because they are still influenced by the old notion of marriage according to which, once a woman is married, she should never have a second husband whatever may become of the first. The deprivation imposed upon widows of specific age groups becomes evident, if we trace the changes from one period to another in the proportion of widows to all women of a specific age group by means of a diagram compiled from census data ranging from 1920 to 1955. (See Diagram 9.)

Though the proportion of widows in each age group was constant before the war, it grew higher in 1950, soon after the end of the war. In 1955, however, the population of Japan recovered its stability, except in the groups of those from 30 to 44 years old which still indicated a trend of relative increase. Taking into consideration the fact that, since they are almost past the marriageable age, their proportion will remain high, we may conclude that the problem of the widows and widowed mothers will remain for long years ahead. The government did extend assistance to them, but this does not mean that their problems are solved completely. The scars of war may remain for

DIAGRAM 9. Change in the proportion of widows to all women of a specific age group (1920 to 1955)



ever in their case. The only hope for them lies in the widows' association which was recently established as a nation-wide organization. Perhaps this will give them encouragement and teach them how to live.

Prevention of prostitution

The problem of prostitution has been hotly debated. The year 1958 was memorable in the history of Japanese women, for the age-old practice of prostitution which was condemned as contrary to human dignity and as debasing women was then for the first time legally abolished and appropriate measures were taken to protect the women concerned and to set them on the way to a new life.

Licensed prostitution was condemned by some leading thinkers of the Meiji era, especially Christians, who supported a movement for its abolition, but their aims were not realized. After the war, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers issued a memorandum calling for the abolition of licensed prostitution, and in response to it the Japanese Government promulgated an imperial ordinance providing for the punishment of anyone who forced a woman into prostitution. In fact, however, prostitution spread instead of disappearing, especially because of the number of foreign soldiers stationed in Japan. Since this had a harmful effect upon education and upon the customs of the Japanese people, the practice became the subject of very severe general censure. The Council on Women's and Minors' Problems finally condemned prostitution as having a debasing effect on the position of women and made a recommendation to the government urging its prevention. For its part, the government took up the serious study of the question, instituted inquiries into existing conditions and set out to devise means of prevention. Subsequently, the bill for the prevention of prostitution was presented to the National Diet and passed unanimously in 1958. In this way, the prohibition of prostitution, a problem that had existed for many years, was at last dealt with by legislation. More than 100,000 prostitutes in more than 1,600 places such as prosperous sections of urban areas, pleasure resorts, hot-bath resorts and base camps of the Allied Forces were now compelled to disperse.

According to the survey on the present condition of prostitutes carried out by the Ministry of Labour in 1956 and 1957, 72 per cent of them are in their twenties and 21 per cent in their thirties. Their level of education is very low for 20 per cent have not completed the

compulsory education of the primary school or the junior high school. Comparing this with the rate of 99 per cent for school attendance in the case of all schoolchildren in Japan, we see that they have been in unfortunate circumstances. As regards the reason for their becoming prostitutes, 82 per cent of them mentioned economic reasons.[1] The Metropolitan Police Board also reports that of all prostitutes apprehended in 1957, 90 per cent had been brought up in extremely needy families. There are some who have degenerated because of family discord or because of their own character, but for most of them prostitution was a means of livelihood.

Regarding the result of the enforcement of the laws for preventing prostitution, the Ministry of Health and Welfare reports that, by March 1958, about 50 per cent of all prostitutes had returned to their native place whilst about 20 per cent had obtained jobs and more than 10 per cent had married.[2] However, not a few of those who have returned home or have married are in a precarious condition for the future holds no promise for them. As for those who have obtained jobs, they are now mostly in service in restaurants, tea-houses or cabarets, and not all are gainfully employed. If they are left as they are now, they may again fall back into their former condition. In order to make the Prostitution Prevention Law, which has just come into force, really effective, we must devise better measures for the protection of these women and for the solution of the problems that arise. But it must first be recognized that the basic cause of prostitution is poverty. The co-operation of people in general is also to be hoped for.

In the light of what has been said so far concerning the position of working women, it is seen that the conditions under which needy people exist are especially to the disadvantage of women. Since the position of women in general is improving, the position of these needy women will also eventually become far better than it is at present. Moreover, if adequate measures are taken to resolve the concrete problems these women face at present, they will in turn contribute much to the improvement of the social position of women in general.

1. Ministry of Labour, *Prostitutes; the Reason for their Fall and the Present State of their Renewed Life*, 1958.
2. Ministry of Health and Welfare, *White Paper on Welfare Programmes*, 1959.

VI. Women and civic activities

In the preceding chapters we have examined the present condition of rural and urban women and have stressed particularly the disadvantages suffered by some of them. Generally speaking, however, the changing social situation since the termination of the war has been very favourable to women. It is true that, before the war, the movement for the liberation of women from their position of inferiority had already made some progress, side by side with the development of modern industry in Japan, but the effective cause that rapidly brought about the liberation of women was the democratic reform of the legal, educational and other systems of Japan after the war. However, we must not overlook the fact that if women were to rest content with the existing improvement in conditions which has been brought about mainly by external forces and if they failed to make an effort themselves, the improvement of their position would remain illusory. The real improvement of their position depends so much on their awareness of their own situation and on the social activities in which they themselves engage that, in this last chapter of the report, we intend to examine the positive efforts that have been made by women themselves since the war. In this connexion, let us first examine the organized activities of women.

Women's organization

The movement initiated by women themselves for the improvement of their position dates back to the time soon after World War I. Although the liberal and democratic idea was introduced from abroad just when the Meiji Restoration had succeeded in abolishing the feudal system,

it remained a subject of mere speculation or discussion for certain progressive intellectuals, and women, in particular, who had been accustomed to the age-long life of submission found it difficult to accept. Later, sporadic claims for freedom were made by a very small group of women, but the Japanese Government gradually became more reactionary and conservative in character and their claims had no appreciable effect. World War I brought unprecedented prosperity to the capitalistic industries of Japan which participated in the war and produced munitions for the Western countries. At the same time the idea of democracy and socialism spread very rapidly. Under these influences there came into being the Shinfujin Kyokai (New Women's Association) which promoted the movement for the emancipation of women through the efforts of women themselves. Though this association was very soon obliged to close down because of the illness of senior officers, discord among them and lack of funds, it nevertheless prompted the rise of other similar organizations based on democracy or socialism and active women eventually put forward the claim for women's suffrage.

Apart from this movement, a nation-wide organization of women had been established under the recommendation and guidance of administrative officials of the Japanese Government. A local unit of the organization was formed in every administrative area of Japan. Its aim was to improve the culture of women and educate them in household management, but, in addition, it served as a pro-governmental organ supported by the nationalistic activities of Japanese women. On these lines, the Aikoku Fujin Kai (Women's Patriotic Society) was organized in 1901, and the Dai-nihon Rengo Fujin Kai (Great Japanese Federation of Women's Associations) in 1930, both on a nation-wide basis. During the last war, the Kokubo Fujin Kai (National Defence Women's Society) was established with the object of bringing all Japanese women together for the reinforcement of the national defence, and the two women's organizations mentioned above were incorporated in this society when the war entered upon its critical stage. When the war was ended, this nation-wide organization based on the nationalistic activities of local women was liquidated because of its character, and women seemed to abandon collective activities for some time; but the democratic reform of Japan that followed gradually inspired women to launch a new organized activity with the object of bringing about an awareness of their situation and the improvement of

their position. A new agency was called for to take the place of the former nation-wide women's organization in maintaining contact with the various local activities undertaken by women for the betterment of their life in local communities and the improvement of their position in those communities. Accordingly there was established in 1952 the Zenkoku Chiiki Fujin Dantai Renraku Kyogikai (National Liaison Council of Local Women's Organizations). The unitory local organization of this council is constituted by the women of a *buraku*, a sub-unit of an administrative village, in the case of rural areas, and by the women of an elementary school district in the case of urban areas. In 1958, this grew to be the largest women's organization, comprising more than 18,000 unitary local organizations. Its general goal is, needless to say, the advancement of the culture of women and the improvement of their position, but, as a means of implementing its purpose, it is now vigorously striving to oppose the revival of the old family system proposed by some reactionary political leaders and to further the movement for the prevention of prostitution.

In exclusively rural areas, the Agricultural Co-operative Union which was set up after the war as a nation-wide organization for the improvement of the economic and social position of farmers, is gradually forming local unions which comprise women's sections and, in 1951, these women's sections constituted the Zenkoku Nokyo Fujin Soshiki Kyogikai (National Women's Organization Council of the Agricultural Co-operative Union). Besides this women's organization, on a territorial basis, particular groups of women have established organizations aimed at serving their special interests such as the Widows' Organization, the Association of Housewives of the Labour Union, etc.

Besides these there are the Nihon Fujin Yukensha Domei (Japanese Women Voters' League), an organization of working women whose purpose is to promote the political activities of women, and the Shufu Rengokai (Housewives' Federation), which works for the improvement and rationalization of domestic life, both being newly founded but very active organizations. Among others there are organizations based on religious affiliations such as the Nihon Kiristokyo Fujin Kyofukai (Japanese Women's Christian Temperance Union), the Nihon Kiristokyo Joshi Seinenkai (Young Women's Christian Association of Japan), and the Zenkoku Tomonokai (National Friendship Association). These organizations were established in pre-war days

and still continue their activities for the advancement of the culture of women and the improvement of their lives. The chief organizations, with the year in which they were established, the number of their units or branches and their membership are shown in Table 43.

TABLE 43. Women's organizations (1958)

Name of organization	*Year of establishment*	*Number of units or branch organizations*	*Total membership*
Zenkoku Chiiki Fujin Dantai Renraku Kyogikai (National Liaison Council of Local Women's Organizations)	1952	18 229	6 401 654
Zenkoku Nokyo Fujin Soshiki Kyogikai (National Women's Organization Council of the Agricultural Co-operative Union)	1951	8 953	3 437 897
Zenkoku Mibojin Dantai Kyogi Kai (National Widows' Organization Council)	—	5 468	1 037 442
Nihon Kiristokyo Fujin Kyofukai (Japanese Women's Christian Temperance Union)	1923	126	7 000
Nihon Kiristokyo Joshi Seinenkai (Young Women's Christian Association of Japan)	—	99	12 000
Zenkoku Tomonokai (National Friendship Association)	1930	156	13 700
Nihon Fujin Yukensha Domei (Japanese Women Voters' League)	1945	41	5 000
Shufu Rengokai (Housewives' Federation)	1948	187	indefinite
Fujin Minshu Kurabu (Women's Democratic Club)	—	70	3 500
Nihon Daigaku Fujin Kyokai (Japanese Association of University Women)	1938	29	1 500

There are other organizations also, such as the Seikyo Fujin-bu (Parent-Teacher Association, the Rodo-Kumiai Shufu Kai (Women's Section of the Co-operative Association), the Joshi Seinen-dan (Housewives' Association of the Labour Union), the Young Women's Organizations, etc., and the proportion of women who are members of one or other of these organizations amounts to 63 per cent of all Japanese women according to the survey of the Ministry of Labour. Membership of all these organizations, especially the local organizations, is increasing year by year. What must be stressed here is the role played by the Parent-Teacher Association which was organized to

take the place of the former Parents' Association in every elementary and junior high school based on the new idea of education, for, whilst promoting the participation of mothers in education, it serves as an agency for the social training of women.

Membership alone is not a criterion for assessing the value of women's organizations. In the case of local organizations, there are not a few women who have not even glanced at the written regulations of the organization and still are members merely 'because other women of the neighbourhood are members'. In order to inspire positive group activities in the case of such women, the organization of small groups for discussion and instruction has recently been recommended. In the period immediately after the war, the activities of women's organizations mostly took the form of lectures given to audiences on such themes as 'democracy', 'the newly acquired position of women', 'new family relationships', etc., for the purpose of enlightening women in general. Such activities have recently been replaced by small group meetings so that women can talk intimately with one another on the problems they face in everyday life, thereby coming into closer association with one another, learning the life experience and thought of others as a help in renewing their own lives or in reconsidering their own attitude and behaviour in the past.

At present, women's organizations are developing great activity in every field of Japanese society—political, economic, social, cultural and so on. The concrete problems they are endeavouring to solve by their vigorous action are, as regards problems of daily life, the control of the price of rice, transport charges, the cost of electricity, public bath charges, etc., as regards social problems, the prevention of prostitution; and, as regards international problems, the prohibition of atomic and hydrogen bombs. As for problems connected with prostitution, they have succeeded in bringing about the enforcement of the Prostitution Prevention Law and the institution of protection facilities for the women concerned. They are still continuing their efforts to deal with the after-effects of the above measures.

In this way, the organized activities of women have now developed into an influential social force, and they play a very important part in moulding public opinion. These activities are not confined within the frontiers of Japan, for they are beginning to be concerned with international questions. The Japanese National Women's Commission was recently established as a non-governmental organization under the

patronage of the United Nations and the Asiatic Women's Conference of Young Women's Christian Associations and the Pan-Pacific and South-East Asiatic Women's Conference have met. These may tend greatly to broaden the outlook of women in the future.

In regard to the advantages that are gained through participation in women's organizations, the women concerned state that: (a) they have broadened the circle of their acquaintances; (b) friendly relations have become closer; (c) they are now able to associate with any kind of people; (d) they are now able to assess the value of the opinions of others; and so forth. They all approve of organized activities for women, for these are contributing much towards increasing the self-reliance and sociability of women.

On the other hand, however, any unreasoned optimism concerning their activities seems to be premature as yet. The local women's organizations are especially influential and have the largest membership, but, as already stated, there are in fact many members of these organizations who participate in them merely as a means of associating with their neighbours. According to a survey on reasons for participating in the local women's organization, only 42 per cent of the respondents participate actively in the organization of their own will, whereas 34 per cent regard their membership as a means of associating with their neighbours.

Another problem connected with women's organizations is that of affiliation to a political party. It might be regarded as natural that, as women's organizations gain influence and power over society at large, they should become more closely affiliated with one or other of the political parties. However, such affiliation which introduces into the organization the conflicting views of political parties should not be agreed to without due consideration. In regard to the running of a woman candidate for the Diet by treating the organization she represents as a safe constituency, opinions are equally divided. The local women's organization which is intended for all women should be neutral in the matter of political affiliation, since its purpose is to secure the co-operation of all sections of society in solving any problems of the community, whether they have a political aspect or not and thereby to benefit all women in the community. However, the very fact that the question of the political affiliation of women's organizations has become a matter for argument is evidence of their remarkable development.

Political interests of women and their holding of public office

In the past, women speaking on politics were frowned on by people in general. Such general attitudes have changed radically since women were enfranchised after the war. According to the *Public Opinion Survey on the Social Concern of Women* conducted by the Ministry of Labour in 1955, the question: 'Do you think you are disliked when you talk on politics?' was answered 'Yes' by 14 per cent of the respondents and 'No' by as many as 75 per cent.

There have been seven elections for members of the House of Representatives and four for members of the House of Councillors since women were given the vote in 1946 for the election of members of the House of Representatives. At each election, the proportion of women voters to all enfranchised women was higher than in the preceding election, as shown in Table 44, and the difference as between men and women in regard to the proportion of voting is growing smaller.

TABLE 44. Proportion of voters to all enfranchised in the election of members of the Diet, compared by sex

Year	*Election of members of the House of Representatives*			*Election of members of the House of Councillors*		
	Men	*Women*	*Difference*	*Men*	*Women*	*Difference*
	%	%	%	%	%	%
1946	78.5	67.0	11.5			
1947	74.9	61.6	13.3	68.4	54.0	14.4
1949	80.7	67.9	12.8			
1950				78.2	66.7	11.5
1952	80.5	72.8	7.7			
1953	78.4	70.4	8.0	67.8	58.9	8.9
1955	79.9	72.1	7.8			
1956				66.9	57.7	9.2
1958	79.8	74.4	5.6			

Source: Election Division, Local Autonomy Agency.

In the election of representatives in 1946, the proportion of the electorate which voted constituted 78.5 per cent in the case of men and 67 per cent in that of women, the difference between the proportions for men and women being 11.5 per cent; whereas in 1958 the proportions were 79.8 per cent for men and 74.4 per cent for women,

the difference diminishing to 5.6 per cent. This shows the ever-growing concern of women with political issues. A similar trend is to be seen in regard to the election of councillors for, at the time of the first election in 1947, the proportions were 68.4 per cent for men and 54 per cent for women, the difference being 14.4 per cent, whereas in the election of 1958 the corresponding percentages were 66.9 per cent and 57.7 per cent respectively, the difference being 9.2 per cent.

In local elections, such as the election of prefectural governors, members of prefectural assemblies, mayors, town and village headmen, and members of city, town and village assemblies, people feel more keenly the importance of the ballot as the level of local autonomy comes closer to them and the difference in the proportion of votes by sex becomes smaller.

As regards the exercise of the voter's own will and judgement in choosing candidates, the vast majority of men rely on their own will and judgement as against about a third of the women who do likewise, and those who rely on the opinions of others account for only about 2 per cent in the case of men whereas, in the case of women, the proportion rises to more than 10 per cent. Thus, while the increase in the proportion of votes cast may imply an ever-growing concern of women with political issues, there still remain the problems connected with the fact that, in many cases, the vote is not based on the voter's own free judgement.

Thus far we have considered how women utilize their right to vote and we shall now turn our attention to the women who are elected to seats. As Table 45 shows, when women, for the first time, voted for the election of representatives to the Diet, the women candidates who were elected numbered as many as 39, constituting 8.4 per cent of all those elected.

The higher proportion of women elected at the first election, as compared with those elected at later elections, may be attributed to the fact that voters were undetermined as to the value of women members, for in the second election the number fell heavily and has recently remained constantly about ten. In the election of members of the House of Councillors, 11 women were elected in 1947, but their number is gradually increasing and they now total 15. At present, 26 women in all have seats in one or other of the two Houses, this representing 3.7 per cent of all members of the Diet.

TABLE 45. Number of women elected to both Houses of the Diet and their proportion to all seats

Year	House of Representatives		House of Councillors	
	Women elected	Proportion	Women elected	Proportion
		%		%
1946	39	8.4		
1947	15	3.2	11	4.0
1949	12	2.5		
1950			12	4.8
1952	9	1.9		
1953	9	2.1	15	6.0
1955	8	1.7		
1956			15	6.0
1958	11	2.4		

Source : Election Division, Local Autonomy Agency.

As for local elections, a considerable number of women are elected to public offices in local government. At the first local election in 1949, a total of 798 women were elected members of prefectural, city, town and village assemblies. In 1957, because the number of seats on local assemblies had been cut down, their total decreased to 466, but the proportion of women elected is slowly increasing. The large number of seats held by women in prefectural assemblies is especially noteworthy. In the local election of 1957, they held 154 seats, double the number held at the previous election.

By appointment or commission, too, an ever-growing number of women have been holding public offices. Women members of the prefectural boards of education numbered 23 (11 per cent of total) in 1948 whereas their number increased to 33 (15 per cent of total) in 1958. This office was filled by election in 1948, and later it was filled by appointment, but the proportion of women members has nevertheless continued to increase. As for members of city, town and village boards of education, their total number has decreased greatly because of the amalgamations of towns and villages that have been carried out on a national scale and of the change from election to appointment in the method of filling the post. The survey by the Ministry of Education in 1958, however, shows that in the whole of Japan there are 1,076 women members of these boards (7.9 per cent of the total membership) and that the proportion of women members has been increasing.

As the duties assigned to the Board of Education include the establishment of new schools, school administration, the provision of school facilities, the selection of textbooks, the appointment and dismissal of school-teachers and other matters relating to education, science and culture, the office of member of the board is regarded as one for which women are better fitted.

In the Domestic Court, which deals with complex and delicate family relationships, the participation of women is, as a matter of course, considered very important. Therefore, many women are commissioned to the post of mediator and consultant. They numbered 5,022 in 1957, showing a rapid increase when compared with 1,345 women in 1948. The number of women working as public and child welfare commissioners increased from 22,325 in 1948 to 25,850 in1957. They account for 21.5 per cent of the total number of commissioners. In addition, 303 women (4.8 per cent) are Civic Liberties Commissioners, 43 women (9.7 per cent) are members of the Eugenics Protection Committee, 47 women (6.6 per cent) are members of the Employment Security Committee. The number of women officers in these cases is not high, but the positions are very important to women in general and the proportion of women has been growing year by year. In the case of the Agricultural Association in all the prefectures of Japan, however, only one woman was elected as a member in 1951. In 1957, when there were, in all, 1,170 members, not a single woman was elected. This perhaps reflects the attitude of rural women today, since they are still buried in tradition in their view of the position of the unpaid family worker in spite of the important part played by such workers in farming. As for the office of town and village headman, seven women were elected in 1952, breaking all previous records, but there is only one woman in office today. This shows that it is difficult for women to secure appointment. There are many other women who, in competition with men, have made a distinguished début in the public or professional field of Japanese society as is seen from the following figures:

1946. About thirty women were appointed to the principalship of public elementary and junior high schools; 65 women were appointed as policewomen by the Metropolitan Police Board.

1947. A woman was appointed as chief of the Children's Section of the Ministry of Health and Welfare—the first woman section chief in a government office. A woman was appointed as director of the

Women's and Minors' Bureau in the Ministry of Labour. Two other women were appointed as section chiefs in the Ministry of Labour.

1948. A woman held the office of parliamentary Vice-Minister of Justice. A woman was appointed as a member of the National Public Security Commission. Four women were appointed as labour standards inspectors; 24 women were appointed as prison officers.

1949. The first woman section chief of the Japan Broadcasting Corporation was appointed; 30 women passed the examination for appointments in the National Public Service; 14 women were employed as first woman senior clerk by the Central Telephone Office of Tokyo. A woman became an assistant judge. A woman was appointed public procurator.

1950. A woman passed the diplomatic service examination. For the first time a woman was certified as a public accountant.

1953. For the first time a woman received the degree of doctor of literature.

1954. A woman was appointed as an assistant professor in the Faculty of Law of Kyoto University. For the first time a woman architect received an A-class licence.

1956. The first woman judge was appointed.

Thus, unlike the state of affairs in pre-war days, leading women have, ever since the end of the last war, been laboriously paving the way that will open up the new field. Perhaps there may be a period of trial and error in fields that are new to women, but their greater culture and their accumulation of social experience will help ever greater numbers of women to gain even better positions. Doubtless, this will, in turn, contribute much to a fuller recognition of the social importance of the place attributed to women in general.

VII. Conclusion

Women's answers in the public opinion survey

The social position of Japanese women has changed notably since the end of the war. It is established by law, is founded upon the educational system and is protected by measures of social policy. Thus, so far as public measures are concerned, women are apparently provided with every means of safeguard. But when we look into their private lives, we find that many women are suffering from the evil effects of the last war, whilst others are so preoccupied with maintaining a bare existence that they pay no attention to matters with which they are not directly concerned. The legal system, indeed, has undergone radical reform, but is poorly equipped for overcoming the force of social inertia. The old, whose personalities had already become ossified before the war, cannot be expected to readjust themselves rapidly to the radical change that has occurred in their circumstances. Moreover, so long as the physical conditions surrounding the life of women today remain as they are, it is in the main hopeless to expect any new change in their attitudes.

Generally speaking, however, there is perhaps no one who will deny that the position of women has improved since the war. That this is so is confirmed by the answers given by women from time to time in public opinion surveys. When the Ministry of Labour conducted an opinion survey on the position of women in 1949, the vast majority (70 per cent) of women respondents answered that 'the position of women has improved a little', and 14 per cent replied that 'the position of women has improved considerably'. Added together these replies show that 84 per cent admitted that the position of women had improved; 12 per cent of those who replied said, 'I do not think the

position of women has improved', but these replies, which seem to be of a personal character and to be influenced by special circumstances, are of the kind that any opinion survey is apt to provoke.

As to their feelings towards their present position, it is clear that women do not feel fully satisfied. In the similar survey conducted by the Ministry of Labour in 1955, as stated already, only 18 per cent of those questioned answered that 'Women's position as it now stands is satisfactory', as against 70 per cent who answered that 'Further improvement is necessary' and, as might be expected, the better educated the respondents, the higher the proportion of those who answered 'it must be further improved'. The survey revealed also that a higher proportion of farming women than of other women answered, 'It must be further improved'. This implies that farming women are in the worst situation though, on the other hand, it might be interpreted as showing their growing awareness of the situation.

From the findings of the survey mentioned above we learn that women are not satisfied with their position as it stands now, though they admit that it has improved. What, then, are the factors that impede further improvement, and what are the prerequisites to the amelioration of their position? In the above-mentioned survey of 1949 by the Ministry of Labour, the question, 'What is the factor impeding the improvement of women's position?' was answered as shown in Table 46 below.

TABLE 46. Distribution of answers

Impeding factors	*Percentage*
Persisting feudalism and feudalistic customs	42
Lack of understanding shown to women by men and by people in general	35
Unrationalized character of housekeeping	30
Passiveness and unawareness of their own situation on the part of women	27
Instability of economic affairs	14
Low level of the education women received in the past	9
Evils of the political or social structure	2
Lack of facilities for social education	1
Lack of economic self-reliance on the part of women	0
Too many children	0

Source : Ministry of Labour, *On the Position of Women*, 1949.

According to this table, the six main factors which are considered to impede the improvement of women's position are: 'Persisting feudalism and feudalistic customs', 'Lack of understanding shown to women by men and by people in general', 'Unrationalized character of housekeeping', 'Passiveness and unawareness of their own situation on the part of women', 'Instability of economic affairs', and 'Low level of the education women received in the past'. If there are factors that are really obstacles to the improvement of the position of women, they must, as a matter of course, be eliminated first of all if the desired end is to be achieved, and we learned of six such factors from the above findings. In order to confirm the reliability of these findings, reference may be made to the survey of 1955 by the Ministry of Labour and to the investigation conducted by Mrs. Suehiro in 1958, both of which inquired what women consider to be the prerequisites for the improvement of their position. Their findings are compared in Table 47.

TABLE 47. Distribution of prerequisites mentioned in women's answers [1]

Prerequisites for the improvement of women's position	*1955*[2]	*1958*[3]
	%	%
Understanding of and co-operation with women on the part of men	31	55
Awareness of their situation and desire for improvement on the part of women	30	47
Breaking down of irrational customs that have persisted as a matter of tradition	19	30
Rationalization of domestic life	17	30
Raising of educational level of women	17	14
Economic independence of women	20	14
Economic security	11	16
Organized social activities of women	15	5
Reform of political and social structure	6	4

1. Percentage distribution of answers was calculated by dividing the number of answers to each question by the total number of respondents.
2. Based on the survey of the Ministry of Labour.
3. Based on the research of Mrs. Suehiro.

The two findings quoted in this table cannot be strictly compared, because in the two surveys different methods were used and different persons were interviewed, but, so far as the order of importance attached to any specific prerequisite is concerned, we see a close similarity between them. We see also that what is stressed by this

similarity in the affirmative form corresponds point by point to what were stressed in the negative form as impeding factors in the survey of 1949 by the Ministry of Labour.

To draw a conclusion from all the findings quoted above, it may be noted that, of the two largest groups of women, one stresses as a prerequisite to the improvement of women's position the need for understanding of women and co-operation with women on the part of men whilst the other stresses the need for the awareness of their own situation and a desire for the improvement of their position on the part of women. The two second largest groups are those of women who want either the breaking down of irrational customs or the rationalization of domestic life, though some portion of these answers may perhaps be duplicated. Coming next are women who mention the raising of the educational level of women, which shows that women are expecting much from education and are concerned about education. Two other groups of women desire either the economic independence of women or economic stability. There may again be overlapping in the replies in the case of women belonging to the two groups simultaneously. As for the desire for economic independence, perhaps this points to women's resistance to the extended family system which still persists. Lastly, there are some who stress the importance of the joint activities of women and who place their hope in the organization of women.

The above conclusion is, of itself, indicative of the direction that must be taken and of the method that must be adopted to achieve the solution of pending problems concerning women. But this conclusion is a general one. The study of case by case reveals that the actual solution of the problems involves, in addition to the factors indicated by the general conclusion, many other factors that are concerned with complicated human relationships and social circumstances so that, since these various factors are intermingled in the problems that arise one after another, their solution calls for clinical treatment.

Summary of problems concerning women

As the final summary of this report on the changing social position of women in Japan after the war, the following points may be noted:

1. Basically, the institutional reform based on the principle of equality between men and women has defined the new position of Japanese

women. This reform is bringing about changes in the attitudes and behaviour of the Japanese people, and these changes are affecting the position of women.

2. The reform of the educational system, in particular, is exercising a strong influence on the younger generations; these young people are adopting new views on the relationship between men and women.
3. In the family, the position of the wife is improving. For the solution of family discords a growing number of women resort to the Domestic Court. In regard to other problems, too, there are now many women who try actively to find means for solving them.
4. The farm family is still influenced by tradition, but young women in rural communities are beginning to take the lead in modifying the old customs governing family and community life.
5. The field of occupation is expanding for women, and their occupational position is improving in conjunction with the improvement in the level of their educational attainments. With the improvement in their education, women are participating actively in social activities. These are the brighter sides of the changing position of women.

On the other hand, however, we are compelled to recognize that there are many problems which, being related to the basic conditions of life that underlie the position of women, still remain to be solved. The main problems of this nature are as follows:

1. In theory at least, the principle of sex equality is supported by an ever-increasing number of people; in practice, however, people are slow to implement this principle in the sectors of life that matter most to women. In her role as a wife or as a bride a woman suffers many handicaps. She finds herself bound by the existing form of family organization, that is to say, by the old attitudes that have developed out of the extended family.
2. As many aspects of living conditions persist unchanged at the present time, it is difficult to alter the traditionally bound role of women. Many women are still in disadvantageous conditions. This is especially the case with women in rural communities. As members of the farm family which depends on the labour of its members, they are made to do heavy work and to work for long hours.
3. In the field of labour, there are laws and regulations that prescribe equal treatment for men and women workers. In practice, however, complete compliance with these laws is difficult, especially in small-

and medium-scale enterprises. Women workers are still, as in the past, unable to free themselves from discriminatory treatment.

4. Owing to their poverty, many women of broken or needy families are compelled to work for low wages. Measures of social protection are not fully or adequately developed so as to meet their pressing financial needs.

These, in short, are brief summary statements on the position of women in Japan. In attempting to survey such a large problem as the position of women in Japanese society, with such a long history, in so short a report as this many details must be left untouched. Moreover, the social conditions in which women actually live are dynamic and complex and thus a sweeping generalization is sometimes unavoidable. Women's way of life varies from one segment of society to another—an assessment of the present position of women may well differ from one person to another, and from one observer to another. For this reason it is well to see how women of today view their own position from various standpoints. The remaining portion of this chapter touches briefly on this crucial problem, albeit in summary form.

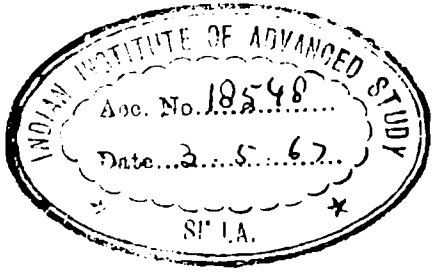
Young women are fortunate because, having been brought up under the reformed social system, a new education and a new culture have become integral parts of their lives and personalities. The older generation have absorbed into the very core of their personality what they acquired while they were young from tradition and ancient customs. They are unable, in practice, to transform their system of values in a short period of time. Understandably enough, clashes of ideas and of attitudes take place more frequently between people of different generations than between people who have the same system of values.

The reform of the legal system was intended to cover the whole territory of Japan throughout both urban and rural areas, but the way in which the reform was accepted differs from place to place, especially as between urban and rural areas. When the reformed system is applied, a sharp contrast is very frequently to be seen between women of the urban areas, who are in the main self-oriented, and those of the rural areas, who are collectively oriented. The contrast is not attributable merely to differences in ideology. What must be taken into account is the difference in fundamental conditions of life as between rural people whose lives are bound by the land and by ties of blood and urban people who are related to one another functionally in the

arena of modern industry. Another typical difference as between one region and another is that which is found to exist between women of farmers' families in a rural area and women of the families of wage-earning and salaried workers in an urban area, the former working as unpaid family workers and the latter doing housekeeping. Any discussion of the position of women that fails to take account of these differences as between generations or as between regions may prove to be nothing but an abstract theory of the position of women. Neither men who have been deprived of their position of authority nor women who have found their new-fledged freedom have as yet discovered how to adapt themselves so as to conform to the new ideas and the new system, for some men have unreasonably lost their self-confidence and some women show their pleasure in their emancipation by imitating what men did in the days when they exercised authority. The 10 years that have passed since the end of the war have, indeed, enabled men and women more or less to work out better relationships between themselves and to regain a sense of values but it may take some years yet before these relationships are definitely established.

The prerequisites for the improvement of women's position already mentioned, such as women's awareness of their own situation, men's understanding of women, the rationalization of domestic life, the breaking down of feudalistic customs, the raising of the level of education, economic stability, the organized activities of women are really valid, but the time has passed when only theoretical discussion or enlightenment is required. It is time we had worked out concrete means of solution for the actual problems that confront us in various social circumstances. The principle of equality between the sexes has been firmly established in theory, and the reform of the legal and educational systems has laid the foundation for the implementation of this principle. However, in order to make the reform really effective and to prevent frictions that may arise in the implementation of the reform, we must examine the concrete problems that confront us in the home, the factory and the office and in public and private human relationships, and we must make an effort to solve them one by one. One of these concrete problems confronts women who do not leave their work even after their marriage. The number of such women is increasing because the improvement of women's education has opened up for them a new view of married life and vocation. However, the conditions of work outside the home are not as yet so reformed as

to allow them to work as they did before their marriage. As for the problem of married life, attention must be paid to the fact that a heavier burden is borne by the wife than by the husband. Though the principle of equality between the sexes has indeed been established, the wife cannot be relieved of such a burden so long as the form of the extended family is preserved. Outstanding among other concrete problems that require immediate solution are more particularly those relating to handicapped women of needy families and female workers in medium- and small-scale enterprises who are treated with discrimination because of their sex. Viewed separately, each of these problems may be one that affects so small a proportion of women that it does not deserve wide social attention. Some persons might regard them as trifling matters concerning common people. However, if we investigate each such problem concretely and persist in our efforts to find solutions, we may expedite the far-reaching diffusion of the new ideas and their application in the fullest possible measure.



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