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no. 1

THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN JAPAN

**WOMEN'S AND MINORS' BUREAU
MINISTRY OF LABOR
JAPAN**

1962





Status of Women in Japan, 1962

Corrigendum

P27, the 5th line of the first paragraph
on "Old Age Pension":

Original	25 years
Correction	<u>20</u> years

A woman voter
at the poll



Office of the Secretary of the Interior

Washington, D. C.

Very truly yours,
Secretary of the Interior

Enclosed for the Secretary of the Interior
are the following documents:



The Diet in session



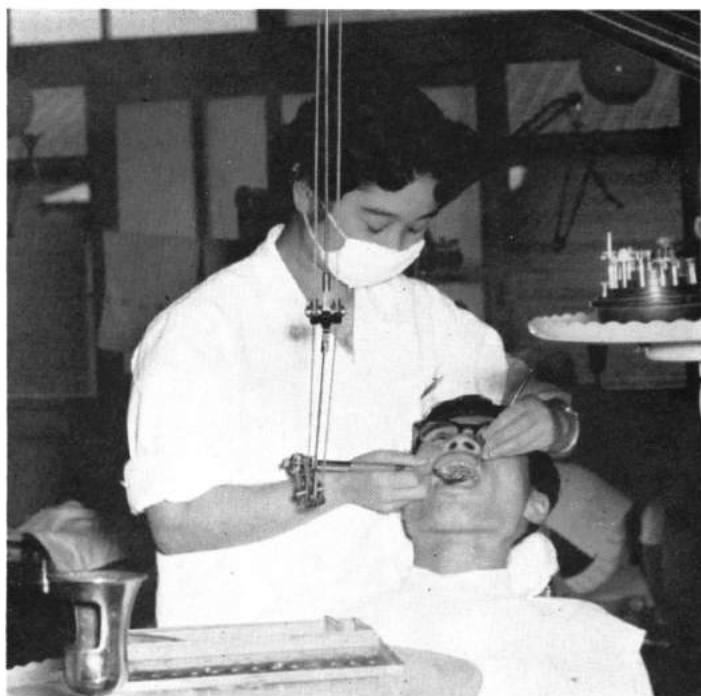
A woman voter
at the poll

Women workers in the electric apparatus industry



Key punchers

A woman dentist



Women workers in a spinning factory

Farm girls picking tea-leaves





A new apartment house in Tokyo



A farm woman ploughing with a tiller
© IENOHIKARI Institute



A housewife at work



A home-helper sent to a worker's home (See page 21) © ASAHI SHIMBUN



Welfare Center for Women Workers in Hyogo



Flower arrangement show
and
recreation room
in the Welfare Center





Opening Ceremony of the National Women's Conference, held during the Women's Week 1961



Housewives marching in demonstration parade protesting price hike

PREFACE

The Women's and Minors' Bureau in the Ministry of Labor of the Japanese Government herewith presents the "Status of Women in Japan".

This is a report on Japanese women who have had the most stimulating and challenging experiences through the postwar years. It aims to picture the various phases of the life of Japanese women who, now equipped with full citizenship and equal rights and opportunities with men, are playing ever greater role in the home and society—so different a picture from the one in the prewar Japan.

It is hoped that this report will be of some use to those who are interested in the around-the-world progress of women as citizens.

February 1962



Setsu Tanino
Director, Women's and Minors' Bureau
Ministry of Labor

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INTRODUCTION

During the years after the World War II the Japanese society experienced drastic changes in many fields and one of these changes was the freedom attained by women.

In prewar days women's position was kept decisively lower than men's both in family life and in society. But the war years more or less undermined the old order and paved the way for the emancipation of women. The shortage of manpower during the period made it imperative for women to take over the jobs hitherto performed by men and they carried out the task quite adequately, proving that there should be no discrimination in whatever form on grounds of sex.

After the war the emancipation of women has been taken up as a national responsibility. The Constitution of Japan promulgated on November 3, 1946 says in Article 14 :

"All of the 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."

Accordingly various legislative measures were enacted to place women legally on the same level as men, and several governmental bodies were established for the improvement of the actual status of women, including Women's and Minors' Bureau in the Ministry of Labor. Realizing the national expectation thus evinced, women have endeavored on their part, to improve their life and contribute to the national good through individual or organized efforts. In fact with many-sided abilities disclosed they have done a good deal in these

years.

Furthermore, under the influence of the rapid growth of the nation's economy and the speeding-up of the overall modernization of life, as attained in recent years, women's life is now going through far-reaching changes for the further improvement of their status.

On the other hand, however, there are not a few unsettled problems left for women. It is impossible to remove overnight the age-old social customs and prejudices, and we have had yet only a short time for women to get over them and for men to admit women into the fields where they monopolized the privileges. The manifold problems confronting women will be solved only step by step, and to this end women of Japan are making ever persistent efforts.

I. WOMEN AND POLITICS

Elections

The Election Law was revised in December 1945, and one of the major objectives of the action was the establishment of equal rights of men and women in the political field. Accordingly the franchise for all elections, both national and local, was first granted to women of 20 years and above, thus realizing the aim of the woman suffrage movement continued for the past seventy years. The women of Japan exercised their newly acquired right to vote for the first time on April 10, 1946, in the general election for the House of Representatives, and since that time they have taken part in eight elections for the House of Representatives and five for the House of Councillors (the Upper House) of the Japanese Diet.

In all these elections, the percentages of women voters at the polls have been approximately 60—70 per cent of the total number of eligible women voters. Though these percentages have been lower than those of men voters, the difference has been narrowing with each election, until in the recent November 1960 general election, the difference was found to be only five per cent. Furthermore in the local elections very little gap can be seen between the voting rates of men and women; generally speaking, the voting rate seems to rise as the electoral area is farther removed from the center. For example, in the April 1959 local elections for village and township mayors and assemblymen, the

percentages for both men and women were over 90 per cent, and the difference between men and women was less than 0.4 per cent.

The number of eligible voters, both men and women, has been increasing steadily with the swell in population, but in each of the years, the number of eligible women voters has been about 10 per cent more than that of men, and for this reason, despite their lower voting rate, the number of votes cast by women sometimes exceeded that of men voters. This means that the political situation can be greatly influenced by women population. As a matter of fact, however, several surveys indicate that not a small number of women use their ballots under the influence of the political inclination of the male mem-

Table 1. Voting Rates and Number of Successful Women Candidates in General Elections of House of Representatives

Elections	Voting Rates		Women elected (in 467) (1)
	Male	Female	
22nd General Election (Apr. 10, 1946)	78.5	67.0	39
23rd " " (Apr. 25, 1947)	74.9	61.6	15
24th " " (Jan. 23, 1949)	80.7	67.9	12
25th " " (Oct. 1, 1952)	80.5	72.8	12
26th " " (Apr. 19, 1953)	78.4	70.4	9
27th " " (Feb. 27, 1955)	79.9	72.1	8
28th " " (May 22, 1958)	79.8	74.4	11
29th " " (Nov. 20, 1960)	76.0	71.2	7

Source: Election Division, Local Autonomy Agency.

Note: (1) 466 seats in total, up to 26th General Election

Table 2. Voting Rates and Number of Successful Women Candidates in General Elections of House of Councillors

Elections	Voting Rates		Women elected (in 250)
	Male	Female	
1st General Election (Apr. 20, 1947)	68.4	54.0	11
2nd " " (Jun. 4, 1950)	78.2	66.7	12
3rd " " (Apr. 24, 1953)	67.8	58.9	15
4th " " (July 8, 1956)	66.9	57.7	15
5th " " (Jun. 2, 1959)	62.6	55.2	13

Source: Election Division, Local Autonomy Agency.

bers of their family or community leaders. Thus political education for women is much needed as yet, though there are ample signs denoting that women are becoming more and more conscious in using their voting rights.

Women in Public Office

The discrimination between the sexes regarding the right to hold public office was completely eliminated after the war, and the revised Election Law granted women of 25 years and above the right to be elected in all elections.

The number of women legislators elected for the National Diet has indicated fairly big fluctuation through the successive elections thereafter, that is, the seats in the House of Representatives greatly decreased from 39 at the first election they participated to 7 (2.8 per cent of the total membership) at the latest one, while in the Upper House the number increased from 11 to 13 (5.2 per cent of the total). At any rate, women have been occupying 20 or more seats in the National

Diet all through these years since 1946. In the local autonomous bodies women are also active as members of local assemblies, though the percentages are still smaller than in the National Diet.

Furthermore women have entered various appointive or commissioned public offices, which were opened to women after the war. Thus in 1960 women constituted 15 per cent of the total membership of the Boards of Education, 25 per cent of Mediation Commissioners of the Family Courts, and 24 per cent of Public and Child Welfare Commissioners. Also, a considerable number of women have been appointed or commissioned to be Civil Liberties Commissioners, Social Education Commissioners, members of Advisory Committees on Employment Security, etc.

The number of women in political parties is not definitely known, but each big party has the women's department which carries out their programs for political education of women from the standpoint of the respective political creed.

There are not many women who have been seated in the cabinet ; one woman has served as Welfare Minister (July to December, 1960), and several have been appointed parliamentary vice-ministers.

II. WOMEN AND EDUCATION

Under the prewar educational system, although there was no discrimination in the compulsory education, co-education was seldom seen in the higher levels, and women were not admitted to the public universities except for a very limited cases, though some private schools

accepted women in certain departments. In 1947 the new educational system was initiated based on the Basic Law of Education incorporating the principles of co-education and equal opportunities of education for boys and girls. Under this new system compulsory education was extended from six to nine years, six years for elementary school and three years for junior high school; and every child, without discrimination as to sex, was made entitled to advance into a senior high school or three years and then a college or university of four years according to his or her ability.

Compulsory Education

Since the school education system was started in 1872, just after Japan threw out the feudalistic social order under Shogunate to build a modern country, the Japanese people have been quite eager to give schooling to their children, both boys and girls. Already in 1904, the percentage of school attendance of girls in primary schools was over 90 per cent of the population of the primary school age; today, under the nine-year compulsory education system, the school attendance of both sexes is virtually 100 per cent.

Senior High School

The compulsory education is followed by the senior high school of three years. Those boys and girls who desire to study while working can be enrolled in night schools, education by correspondence and other forms of study, with the same credits as in the day-time schools. The number of girls in senior high schools has been increasing every year; of the girls who completed their compulsory education in March 1960, 54 per cent advanced to the regular senior high schools and two per cent entered night classes and 36 per cent found employment. (Comparable figures for boys were 56 per cent, 4 per cent, and 36 per cent.) The ratio of boys and girls in senior high schools all through

the country was, in May 1960, 54 per cent for boys and 46 per cent for girls.

College and University

Since the initiation of the new educational system the number of women in colleges and universities has shown a surprising increase every year. As of May 1960, total enrollments of women were about 140,000, a more than five-fold increase as compared with the 1950 figure of 26,000. Ten years ago, there was only one woman for every 10 men students; today there is one woman for every four men. The number of women in colleges and universities comprises approximately three per cent of all the women of their age bracket.

As regards their curricula, by far the largest number of women major in the literary courses, followed by teacher's training courses; in these two together are approximately one-third of all the women students. Besides, there are relatively large number of women students in the home economics, and the medical, dentistry and pharmacy courses. Compared with men students, there are conspicuously few women majoring in such subjects as jurisprudence and political science, commerce and economics, and industrial science.

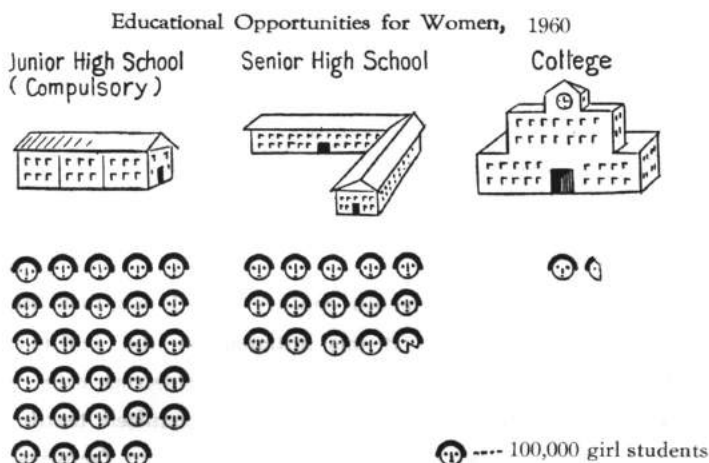
After graduation most of these women take up their career, though

Table 3. Number of Students in Colleges and Universities

Year	Male	Female	Rate of Male as against one female
1950	364, 584	40, 652	9.0
1952	434, 231	67, 681	6.4
1954	483, 398	97, 658	4.9
1956	516, 296	113, 543	4.5
1958	534, 889	118, 364	4.5
1960	569, 127	142, 491	4.0

Source: Research Bureau, Ministry of Education.

sometimes with considerable difficulties in finding employment in accordance with their qualification and abilities. According to a survey conducted in June 1959, out of all the college graduates of March that year, 82 per cent of the men and 57 per cent of the women had found employment. One out of every 20 women graduates continued their education at a still higher level, the same survey says.



Source : Research Bureau, Ministry of Education

Adult Education

In addition to school education, the new educational system emphasizes adult education for men and women. Under the Social Education Law special programs such as summer courses in universities, mother's classes, exhibitions and various types of gatherings are organized for women in general and particularly for housewives, by national and local governments.

Besides, many governmental organs and related bodies conduct under their jurisdiction various educational activities for women ; especially Women's and Minors' Bureau of the Labor Ministry carries out a

number of campaigns and other activities in its programs for the promotion of the status of women and the highlight is the Women's Week.

Also women's organizations are active in this field, and in addition, all media of mass communication, such as newspapers and magazines, and in particular radio and television, are keenly engaged in their respective programs of such activities.

III. WOMEN WORKERS

It was in the late nineteenth century that Japan took the first big stride into industrialization. It was initiated in the textile industry, both silk and cotton, followed by the heavy industries with a special encouragement by the government. The mechanized textile industry provided the first opportunity for women to work in factories, and it still remains to be one of the industrial fields where women are employed in the largest number.

During the last war the industry of the country was almost completely damaged. However, great national efforts have successfully been made towards the recovery of the industry, and at present Japan is a highly industrialized country producing all kinds of machinery as well as consumers' goods of such items as required in the modern country. But being short of natural resources the country depends much on the import of raw materials, which is apt to make the industry of the country not too stable. Another characteristic of Japanese industry is found in its structure; that is, there are so many small businesses side by side with a relatively small number of large-scale enterprises. Ap-

proximately 98 per cent of the private enterprises are found hiring less than 50 employees, and quite a big proportion of them are run solely as family enterprises without using any workers other than the family members.

Labor Force Population of Women

The number of women in labor force has been increasing each year, and in 1960 it reached 18,280,000. This figure represented 53.9 per cent of the female population of 15 years and above, and 40.5

Table 4. Women in Labor Force 1955-1960

Unit: 1,000 persons

	Population of Productive Age	Labor Force Population	Ratio of Labor Force	Constituent Ratio of Labor Force by sex
1955 Average	30,590	17,150	56.1 %	41.3 %
1956 "	31,260	17,410	55.7	41.2
1957 "	31,950	17,770	55.6	41.0
1958 "	32,610	17,830	54.7	40.8
1959 "	33,350	17,940	53.8	40.5
1960 "	33,920	18,280	53.9	40.5

Source: Labor Force Survey; Statistics Bureau, Prime Minister's Office.

Table 5. Number of Employed Persons, 1960
(by Status of Employment)

Unit: 1,000 persons

	Male	Female
All employed	26,640	18,080
Self-employed	8,080	2,760
Family Workers	3,310	8,620
Employees	15,230	6,680

Source: Monthly Report on the Labor Force Survey; Statistics Bureau, Prime Minister's Office.

Table 6. Employed Persons in Agricultural and Nonagricultural Industries
(by Status of Employment and Sex)

Unit: 10,000 persons

		Female			Male		
		Self Em- ployed	Family Workers	Paid Em- ployees	Self Em- ployed	Family Workers	Paid Em- ployees
All Industries	1955	248	972	465	824	435	1,141
	1960	276	862	668	808	331	1,523
Agriculture & Forestry	1955	89	746	19	470	327	34
	1960	105	650	22	441	237	37
Nonagricultural Industries	1955	159	225	446	354	107	1,107
	1960	171	212	646	366	95	1,486

Source: Labor Force Survey; Statistics Bureau, Prime Minister's Office.

Table 7. Number of Employed Persons, 1960
(by Industries)

Unit: 1,000 persons

	Female	Male
All Employed	18,080	26,640
Agr. & Forestry	7,780	7,140
Fisheries	130	490
Mining	50*	490
Construction	300	2,050
Manufacturing	3,090	6,030
Wholesale, etc.	3,490	4,510
Transportation, etc.	320	2,080
Services	2,740	2,750
Government	190	1,100

Note: Figures marked with * are subject to large sampling error.

Source: Monthly Report on the Labor Force Survey; Statistics Bureau, Prime Minister's Office.

per cent of the country's entire labor force. But, as is shown in Table 4, the ratio of labor force to the total female population has been

on the decline. This is to be ascribed to the facts such as the greater access of women to the higher education and the yearly increase in the old aged population. On the other hand it is characteristic of the female labor force that as much as nearly half of all the women in labor force are family workers, engaging in family enterprises with no regular payment, and of these family workers about 75 per cent are employed in the agriculture, though both of these percentages are perceptibly on the decrease in recent years.

Women in Paid Employment

The heightened productive activities of women in the postwar years may be perceived most remarkably in the increasing number of women workers in paid employment. The Labor Force Survey shows that the number of women employees which totaled 3,290,000 in 1948 rose to 6,680,000 in 1960. The percentage of women in the total number of employees went up from 15.8 per cent of 1948 to 30.5 in 1960.

The industrial distribution formula of these women workers has been much the same, with some modification, in each succeeding year since the end of the war. In 1960 2,350,000, or 35 per cent of all women employees, were in the "manufacturing" industries, 26 per cent in the "service trades", and 22 per cent in the categories of "wholesale and retail" and "finance and insurance". One third of women workers in the manufacturing industries were employed in the textile industry. These industries in all accounted for 84 per cent of all the women in paid employment. As of July 1960, 61 per cent of the employed women worked in enterprises with less than 100 workers.

Today, it is considered quite natural for girls to take up jobs after graduation from schools. However, most of these girls stay in the jobs for only a few years before they leave off on marriage or childbirth, and once they leave off there is little prospect of re-employment under the circumstances of a highly competitive labor market of the

country. According to a survey by the Ministry of Labor, as of April 1960, the average age of the female workers was 26.3 years, showing a considerable gap with the average of the male workers of 32.8 years. The proportion of youngsters under 18 years of age is 13 in every 100 women workers while it is only 5 with male workers. As for the duration of service, the average for women was 4.1 years as against 7.7 years for men. The younger age combined with the shorter service means lower education or less skill, which directly leads to limited chances of promotion as well as to the lower wage level for the female workers than for their male counterparts.

As for wages, the Labor Standard Law of 1947 which regulates the minimum standards of working conditions for both men and women workers provides for the principle of equal pay for men and women for equal work. Although violation cases of this law are seldom seen, the average wage level of female workers is, owing to their characteristics mentioned above, as yet less than half that of male workers.

Table 8. Number of Gainful Employees, 1960
(by Industry and Sex)

Unit: 1,000 persons

Industry	Female	Male	Ratio of Female Out of Total
Total	6,680	15,230	30.5 %
Agr. & Forestry	220	370	37.3
Fisheries	30*	190	13.6
Mining	50*	470	9.6
Construction	290	1,480	16.4
Manufacturing	2,350	5,220	31.0
Wholesale, etc.	1,510	2,440	38.2
Transportation, etc.	310	2,000	13.4
Services	1,740	1,960	47.0
Government	190	1,100	14.7

Note: Figures marked with * are subject to large sampling error.

Source: Labor Force Survey; Statistics Bureau, Prime Minister's Office.

In all these circumstances, however, recent trends indicate that the situation is being gradually ameliorated. Recently, more and more girls are remaining at their jobs after marriage, resulting in the lengthening of their employment period. According to the yearly survey made by the Women's and Minors' Bureau, the percentage of married women out of the total of women workers had risen from 9.8 per cent in 1953 to 19.6 per cent in 1960. As for placing female workers in positions of responsibility in the offices and factories, there still exists a deeply rooted bias among the employers in general. However, under the economic pressure resulting from the rising industrial level, female workers with ability are gradually being accepted in supervisory positions. Hereafter, as the number of women workers with higher academic training increases, it is expected that the status of the female worker would gradually improve.

Women in Profession

The emancipation of women after the war has made it possible for many women to enter into a career in profession. According to the Labor Force Survey in 1960 the number of female workers in professional and technical fields counted 760,000.

Teaching is one of the oldest profession for women. In 1959 women teachers at all levels counted 244,290 which represented 31 per cent of the total number of teachers. As to those in administrative post, in 1959 there were 140 women principals in the elementary and junior high schools established by the national and local governments, while before the war there were few women holding headship in public schools. In private colleges and universities there are as many as 4,500 women in the faculties as well as 48 presidents, but in public universities relatively smaller number of women are found in such capacities.

Nursing is another old profession for women, and there were many career women among pharmacists and doctors even before the war.

A number of women hold administrative posts in Government service, and there are increasing numbers of women lawyers, judges, architects, designers, accountants, etc. active in their respective fields, which were almost exclusively monopolized by men before the war.

Maternity Protection

The Labor Standard Law provides various maternity protection measures, in addition to the general protection on working conditions. For instance, women are kept from midnight labor with a few exceptional cases; women can take maternity leave of 6 weeks both before and after childbirth, and mothers nursing a baby less than one year old can take nursing rest, twice a day, of at least 30 minutes' duration each, during the working hours, besides the regular recess.

In 1955, a law was promulgated making it mandatory that a replacement be found for women teachers taking pregnancy leave. It specifies for the local governments to provide teachers to substitute the women teachers while they are taking maternity leave, in order to protect motherhood as well as to maintain the regular classes.

Labor Union Activities

Since the introduction of the Labor Union Law in 1945, a marked progress has been made in the labor union activities of women. As of June 1960, 5,570,000 women workers were members of the labor unions. This figure represented 28 per cent of all the women workers and 26 per cent of the total union membership. Out of all the women members 40 per cent are recruited from those working in the "manufacturing" industries, including the textile industry which occupied approximately 17 per cent. Though only a few women are as yet placed in a position to take the leadership of union activities, still we cannot

overlook the significant part union women are playing for the betterment of the working conditions and status of women workers at large.

IV. WOMEN IN FAMILY LIFE

The Status of Women in Family Law

Article 24 of the Constitution reads :

“Marriage shall be based only on the mutual consent of both sexes and it shall be maintained through mutual cooperation with the equal rights of husband and wife as a basis. With regard to choice of spouse, property rights, inheritance, choice of domicile, divorce and other matters pertaining to marriage and the family, law shall be enacted from the standpoint of individual dignity and the essential equality the sexes.”

This is the provision which initiated a completely different order in the postwar family life.

Based upon the Constitution the Civil Code was revised in 1947, and the revision effected a revolutionary change in the legal status of women in the family.

Under the old order, the head of the family had a most powerful authority on his family members, allowing little rights of any kind to women, either as a daughter or a wife.

Now the new legislation abolished the old patriarchal family system and provided women with every possible right—property rights, inheritance rights, the right of marriage and divorce, parental rights, etc.—

resulting in various changes in the way of living and pattern of family life. The following is a brief survey of the status of women in family law and the actual practice thereon.

(*Marriage*) The mutual consent of both sexes is the only requirement for contracting marriage, and the consent of the parents is necessary only in the case the parties to the marriage are minors (that is, below 20 years of age). The minimum age of marriage is 16 for women and 18 for men. (The average age of contracting marriage in 1959 was 24.3 years for women and 27.1 years for men.) The only formality required for entering into marriage is the official registration thereof, which must be conducted by the parties concerned and two or more adult witnesses, either orally or with document.

The parties to a marriage may settle their property rights before marriage by entering into contract and registering it. However, such cases are rare in actual practice. Almost in every case, the parties to the marriage leave their property rights on the "statutory property system", under which all property owned by one party previous to the marriage and all property acquired in his or her name during marriage become his or her personal property; however, any property, in regard to which it is uncertain whether it belongs to the husband or the wife, is presumed to be the property in their co-ownership. As to the expenses of the marriage life, both the husband and the wife assume a share of such expenses, taking into account their property, income and all other circumstances.

(*Divorce*) Besides the "Judicial Divorce" permitted by court trial in case certain causes exist as prescribed in the law, the legislation provides for the "Divorce by Agreement", under which a divorce can be attained when mutual agreement of both parties is formally notified to the registrar. In the "Judicial Divorce" there is no discrimination between the sexes with regard to the causes for seeking divorce. In actual practice, about 90 per cent of all the divorces are "divorces by

agreement”.

In case the parties fail to come to the agreement, either party may apply to the Family Court for mediation. The Court makes all efforts, on close contact with both parties and others concerned, to get at a conclusion for the best of the parties. In 1959, 7.5 per cent of all the divorces were “divorces through mediation” by the Family Courts. (The Family Courts are established all over the country to take care of all sorts of troubles concerning family life with very simple procedure and almost free of charge, dealing at the same time with cases of juvenile delinquency.)

There is no institution of alimony, but a woman, when divorced, may demand distribution of property from the husband, though the actual amount of such distribution is generally very small because the husbands are seldom in possession of much property.

For some time after the war, the divorce rate was conspicuously high, but before many years it began to decline and has been on the decline ever since. The number of actual cases was 69,133, or 0.74 cases per 1,000 population, in 1960.

(Parental Rights) Both parents exercise their parental authority in concert; they are absolutely equal with regard to their rights and duties to their children.

In case of dissolution of marriage, the parental rights may be taken over either by the father or the mother, or by both when there are more than two children, according to the mutual agreement or through mediation of the Family Court. In actual cases the mothers very often take over the parental rights after divorcement.

(Inheritance Rights) The prewar inheritance system based on the principle of the sole inheritance by the eldest son has been abolished. The new Civil Code provides for the joint inheritance of the children, both male and female, in equal shares, and the wife always has the right to inherit her husband's property, regardless of whether or not he has

left a will. As to the renouncement of inheritance rights a successor can renounce the right fully or partially through the permission of the Family Court, and such practice is not uncommon among farm households who desire to avoid the division of the estates.

Changing Patterns of Family Life

In recent years certain social factors have been developing to effect further changes in family life. One of the factors is the drastic decline in the birth rate. The vital statistics show that the nation's birth rate decreased from 28.1 persons per 1,000 population in 1950 to 17.5 persons in 1959. In consequence, the average childbirth expectancy per one couple dropped from more than 5 in the prewar years to 2.9 in 1957. This is attributable in a large measure to the general acceptance of the policy of family planning by means of birth control, as encouraged by the government. Also the extension of the life expectancy in the post-war years has to be noted; it is now 65.4 years for men and 70.3 for women.

On the other hand, the mode of living is changing as a result of the introduction and wider use of modern household appliances such as electric washing-machines, refrigerators, cleaners, electric pans, etc. Furthermore the mass production of various sorts of instant food, ready-made clothes and other daily necessities has much facilitated women's housework.

As the result of these changes in living conditions, women have been spared much of the time and energy spent on their housework, and now they enjoy much more free time at their disposal than a decade ago. A survey by the Women's and Minors' Bureau reveals how housewives spend their 24 hours, as shown in Table 9. And all these changing circumstances have much to do with the increasing number of married women who want to undertake gainful work, though as a matter of fact it is fairly difficult for ordinary housewives to have

Table 9. Distribution of 24 Hours spent by Housewives
(by social strata)

	Worker's wife (white collar)	Worker's wife (manual worker)	Shop- keeper's wife	Farmer's wife
Total	hours 24 : 00 (100%)	hours 24 : 00 (100%)	hours 24 : 00 (100%)	hours 24 : 00 (100%)
For physical need (sleeping, eat- ing, dressing, bathing, etc.)	10 : 15 (43%)	10 : 19 (43%)	10 : 00 (42%)	10 : 31 (44%)
For productive activities	0 : 12 (1%)	0 : 42 (3%)	6 : 16 (26%)	3 : 13 (13%)
For housework (cooking, sewing, washing, shopping, nursing, etc.)	9 : 02 (38%)	9 : 14 (39%)	5 : 07 (21%)	6 : 56 (29%)
For social and cultural affairs (reading, radio, TV, hobbies, social intercourse, etc.)	4 : 31 (19%)	3 : 45 (16%)	2 : 37 (11%)	3 : 20 (14%)

Source : Survey on Women's Leisure, 1959 ; Women's and Minors'
Bureau, Labor Ministry.

access to paid employment other than piecework which are usually poorly paid for.

Despite the general tendency mentioned above, still there are no small disparities between the life of women in cities and in villages, or between the life of workers' and shopkeepers' wives.

As a whole women in cities are enjoying easier life, with much freedom and convenience, than in rural areas.

In salary-earners' households, where the husbands stay out of home for a greater part of the day, the responsibility and authority of home management as well as the matters related to the community life are mostly put on wives. The family budgets are usually in wives' hands, rather than in men's as is often the case with farm households. Aside from those who are engaged in homework, women of this group usually find ample free time to enrich their daily life.

The urban women in households running small shops and plants usually engage in the enterprises as family workers, leading quite busy

life. And yet they, especially wives, seem to have much more of the status of co-ownership of the enterprises and authority in home management if compared with those in rural households.

In recent years a marked tendency is shown, especially among urban workers, towards an increase of small-sized families consisting of the husband, wife and minor children, unlike the traditional type of the Japanese family where the husband's parents and other relatives live together. This fact, while serving to the advantage of the life of the wife, presents sometimes a certain difficulty to the family. That is,

Table 10. Income and Expenditures of Families (Workers' Households)
All Urban

Year	1955	1958	1960
Average family size	persons 4.71	persons 4.46	persons 4.38
Receipt	yen 41,953	yen 50,060	yen 59,658
Total Income	29,169	34,663	40,895
Wages or Salaries	27,080	32,262	38,185
" from head of households	24,065	28,861	34,051
" from other family members	3,015	3,401	4,134
Income from other sources	12,784	15,397	18,762
Disbursements	41,953	50,060	59,658
Total Expenditures	26,786	30,638	35,280
Total Living Expenditures	23,513	27,799	32,093
Food Expenditures	10,465	11,444	12,440
Taxes & Others	3,273	2,839	3,187
Other Expenditures	15,167	19,422	24,377
Balance between Wages or Salaries of Head of Household and Exp.	-2,721	-1,777	-1,229
Rate of the above	-10.2%	-5.8%	-3.5%
Consumer price index	100.0	103.0	107.9

Source: Consumers' Price Index, Family Income and Expenditure Survey; Division of Labor Statistics and Research, Ministry of Labor.

when the wife is sick in bed or in confinement, there is nobody to take up housekeeping work in her place, and often the husbands are found staying out of work to engage in housework, or the wives working while they are supposed to be in bed, thus causing much of unstableness in the family life. As a countermeasure to this situation, the Women's and Minors' Bureau has recently initiated a program of the Home Help Service. The project characterizes itself in the voluntary employment by individual enterprises of a certain number of home-helpers who are to be sent out to the employee's homes in case of such need. The government assumes the responsibility for the supply of qualified home-helpers as well as the training for them with special arrangement of training courses. Also it gives guidance to each enterprise to ensure the appropriate and effective operation of the project. The number of companies adopting the scheme is increasing quite rapidly in the highly industrialized areas of the country.

V. RURAL WOMEN

While Japan is highly industrialized on one part, it has as yet quite a large farm population. However, the labor force in agriculture has been on the decrease in recent years, though it still counted 33 per cent of the total labor force in 1960, while women occupied 59 per cent of the whole agricultural labor force.

Up to the end of the war, the hierarchical relationship between landowners and tenants was the absolute order governing the farm society, along with the very strict patriarchal system in family life.

The land reform which was initiated after the war incidentally transformed nearly 75 per cent of six million farm households to be the ownerfarmers which occupied only 30 per cent previously. But it did not change the major characteristics of Japanese agriculture, that is, its small scale as well as intensive farming. Some 70 per cent of the total farming households are as yet found to own less than 2.5 acres, which yield no brilliant income, and almost all of the farms have two or sometimes three crops a year, often supplemented with sericulture, market gardening, dairying, poultry, fruit farming, etc. Hence the most intensive labor on the part of farm people, both men and women.

Under these conditions the status of women in rural areas was traditionally far lower than in cities, and the hitherto acknowledged picture of farm women's life was like the following.

Farm women's, especially housewives' hard labor was a well-known fact; they worked usually 13 hours, in housekeeping and farming, according to a survey. And yet they had little or sometimes absolutely no influence on important matters of the household, such as financial matters, education of children, etc., not to say of farm management. Very often a young wife was looked upon merely as a "hand", not as a legitimate member of the family. Besides, farm women were often suffering from the complex human relations within family especially between wife and mother-in-law, as well as from the conventionalism of the local communities. Their social life was very limited; naturally they were rather unconscious of the movement outside their daily contact. Such questions as the equality of men and women, suffrage rights, the right to property, etc. were matters of little concern to them.

With overall changes in rural life, however, women's position has markedly improved in recent years, though there are wide regional disparities. The new developments in rural communities and their effects on women's life are dealt with below.

Women's Part in Agriculture

One of the changes in agriculture bearing on women's life is found in the mechanization of farm labor—one of the postwar attainments, accelerating in recent years. A good part of hand labor has been replaced by the operation of machinery or by the use of chemicals. The productivity has been raised in consequence and farm labor improved on the whole. This process has had certain effects on the women's part in agriculture, on one hand relieving women from some part of farm labor and at the same time making it possible for them to take over such parts of farming work as were previously men's part.

On the other hand, with the rapid expansion of Japanese industry, an increasing number of farm people, especially family members with small farm lands, are entering factories and firms as paid workers. The statistics indicate that in 1960 about 66 per cent of the total farm households have more than one member engaged in paid employment or some independent enterprises other than farming. Not only younger sons and daughters but sometimes even the heads of the families or the eldest sons are thus leaving off farming, though in most of these cases the families keep on their farming enterprises. The consequence is that in these families the women, especially the wives are obliged to take up ever greater part in farming, in many cases even the sole management of the enterprises.

Thus with increasing participation in farming women are assuming greater authority and responsibility. But the same circumstances have necessarily increased their farm labor, so much so that even the use of machinery and chemicals has not quite solved the problem of their hard work yet.

Women in the Family

With higher standards of living attained in these years for farming

households, women's life has on the whole much improved.

Housekeeping work has been getting less toilsome as a result of the modernization of housekeeping facilities, which has been gaining much popularity among farming households. What with the installment of running water in place of wells, use of oil, gas or electricity in place of wood fuel, use of electric appliances such as washing-machines and electric pans, and other improvements in domestic facilities, farm women have been relieved from the hardship of their housework to a considerable extent.

One of the influences to this end may have come from the Home Demonstration Service, a project taken up by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in 1948 for the improvement of rural home life. At present about 1,900 officials—all women—are at work in this field all over the country. They visit homes of farmers and give advices on housekeeping problems or hold lecture meetings and demonstrate home improvement programs in rural life.

Furthermore in many districts women have succeeded in organizing cooking centers and day-nurseries on cooperative basis—noteworthy efforts on the part of farm people with a good prospect for the future.

The initiation of health center system with public nurses going round every house with expectant mother or sick people to attend and nurse them, along with the general improvement of public health programs, has helped improving the health of farm women and children to a great extent. The National Health Insurance Scheme (on the basis of the voluntary participation of communities) has worked much to the same end, making all members of the family eligible for medical treatment.

The general use of radio and television sets in rural areas has contributed in a large measure to leveling off the cultural standards in different parts of the country. Also the increasing participation of rural residents in modern industries in urban areas has been paving

the way to the modernization of the way of living and improvement of human relations in rural households.

Organization Activities

With the popularization of mass communication and adult education, the mind of farm women has gradually turned to the thoughts of their well-being in the daily life and social problems at large.

Most of the women of farm households have been organized as members of the agricultural cooperatives or regional women's clubs. Those who have children of school age are members of the P.T.A. (Parents and Teachers Association) organized in every school. The meetings of lectures and workshops held under the sponsorship of these institutions afford them much opportunities of social training. Also there are increasing number of women organized in small groups with their specific purposes. All these organizations, large or small, are contributing in their respective ways to the welfare of the community and the betterment of family life, and through the participation in organization activities women are learning much and improving the consciousness as organic members of the community, which is to be enlarged to the consciousness as members of the nation.

VI. SOCIAL WELFARE FOR WOMEN

In prewar Japan the social security as an uniform system was not established, but some public assistant schemes for the destitutes and social insurance systems such as National Health Insurance and Welfare Pension for the workers were in effect.

After the war, however, there was on one side the chaotic confusion of economy—the shooting up of inflation with acute shortage of food, housing and everything—and there was, on the other side, the nation's wish to create a welfare state. Thus the New Constitution reads :

“All people shall have the right to maintain the minimum standards of wholesome and cultured living. In all spheres of life, the State shall use its endeavors for the promotion and extension of social welfare and security, and of public health.” (Article 25)

With this end in view great efforts have ever since been made, and a number of laws and regulations have been enacted either to introduce new systems of social security or to improve existing ones. Below is given a survey of the social welfare schemes now in effect to be applicable to women.

Livelihood Protection

In 1946, the Livelihood Protection Law (amalgamating several former public assistant laws including Protection Law for Mother and Child) was established to give aids both in money and in kind to those families unable to make living. With the setting up of this law the right of people to maintain the minimum standards of living was to be fulfilled. According to a survey, of all the families receiving benefits under this law nearly one half are headed by women, mostly widowed or divorced.

Loans of Welfare Funds to Mothers and their Dependent Children

The Law Concerning Loans of Welfare Funds to Mothers and their Dependent Children came into force in 1953. This law ensures government loans for widowed and divorced mothers to maintain their business, to acquire training, to supplement their livelihood, etc., and also

for their children to attend school or to acquire vocational training.

In order to give vocational aid to widows, the Training Centers for Domestic Work and the Centers for Industrial Home Work have been set up by the Women's and Minors' Bureau. Also, the training of Home Helpers to be employed by enterprises (See Chapter IV) is mostly aimed at widows.

In addition to this law, widows are protected by several measures as stated below. Besides, they are entitled to live in the Homes for Mothers and Children, and the Tax Law provides for a certain deduction from their income tax.

Pension for the Survivors of the Dead and Injured by the War

The last war left a great number of widows. According to a survey, there were about 330,000 war widows who were more or less responsible for the maintenance of the family. These widows are safeguarded to a considerable extent by the Pension for the Survivors of the Dead and Injured by the War, which was initiated in 1952.

Old Age Pension

The Welfare Pension Scheme established in 1941 covers all workers in enterprises with more than 5 employees. Under the scheme female workers can get an annuity on attaining the age of 55 years (60 years for men) on the condition that the contribution has been paid for more than 25 years. The wife of a beneficiary is entitled to an annuity on her husband's death.

Those who are not covered by the Welfare Pension Scheme are covered by the National Pension Scheme, set up in 1959. Under this system any man or woman who has made a contribution for more than 25 years is to receive an annuity on attaining the age of 65. As a provisional measure men and women above the age of 70 are entitled to a certain amount of annuity, with no liability of contribution, and so

are widows with children. (Widows' Pension)

Children Sustenance Allowance

The Children Sustenance Allowance Law, promulgated in November 1961, provides needy fatherless children with monthly allowance. Divorced mothers or those separated from their husbands are entitled to the funds under the law, while widows with children are entitled to the Widows' Pension under the National Pension Insurance Scheme.

Child Welfare Institutions

Child Welfare Law of 1948 proclaims the nation's responsibility for the healthy development of children both in body and mind, and for the protection of mothers too. Under this law many social welfare institutions, such as Homes for Infants, Day Nurseries, Children's Homes and various institutions for handicapped children, Maternity Homes and Homes for Mother and Children have been set up, as well as governmental organs like Consultation Offices for Children.

Health Insurance

Under the Health Insurance Schemes the insured and their dependents are provided with free or at least half free medical care.

In case working women thus insured give birth to a child, they are entitled to the benefit of a certain amount for confinement expenses. Also they are paid an amount equal to 60 per cent of their daily remuneration for a period of 84 days, as well as a nursing allowance of 200 yen per month for six months.

Health Centers

Health Centers established under the Health Centers Law have much to do with the health of children and expectant mothers. The network of Health Centers was reorganized and expanded in 1947 to

set up one center for every 100,000 population, in order to give medical examination and health guidance to the community residents, free of charge, as well as to improve the sanitation of the community. Special emphasis is put on the health guidance for expectant mothers and infants, and to such activities may be ascribed much of the definite drop of the death rate of infants attained in these years.

Almost all of the health centers have a Eugenic Bureau established under the Eugenic Law of 1948. It undertakes advisory services on marriages from the eugenic standpoint, and also gives guidance on the proper method of birth control, which has caught much interest of the people in these years and actually has had a great effect on the birth rate of the nation, as we have seen already.

In 1958 Health Centers for Mothers and Children were initiated to take care of mothers and children in rural areas. Especially they are designed to extend protection to pregnant mothers, and are provided with adequate facilities for confinement. By the end of 1961 they have been established in 187 villages across the country.

VII. WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

In prewar Japan the movement of voluntary organization of women was not popular, except among a limited number of women, chiefly intellectuals, who organized themselves with particular purposes such as acquisition of women suffrage. However, these organizations were forced to disband during the war, when all adult women were united into a single national organization to cope with the demand of national defense.

And this national organization of women was dissolved with the cessation of the war, in 1945.

Ever since, the aspiration among women for the betterment of life has created a great number of women's clubs aiming at the improvement of women's status in general or the attainment of their specific purposes, and this was furthermore encouraged by the national policy to foster spontaneous civic activities of women. The number of these organizations increased year by year and now their power has become too great to be ignored.

A survey by the Women's and Minors' Bureau indicates that 63 per cent of all Japanese women above the age of 20 are members of one or more organizations—women's clubs for the most part. Also according to a report there are about 42,000 units of women's organizations in total all through the country.

Various Types of Women's Clubs

There are about 23,600 Regional Women's Clubs, whose total membership counts more than 7 million and occupies almost 65 per cent of the total membership of all women's organizations. The unit clubs in villages, towns, or cities affiliate to the prefectural federations, which in turn affiliate to the National Council of Federation of Regional Women's Clubs. Each regional club deals with problems in its own region, but the purposes common to all these organizations are to achieve the higher standard of women's status and develop the welfare of the communities.

The second largest membership is found in the women's departments of agricultural cooperatives, counting about 3 million in total in about 8,300 units. (Not all of agricultural cooperatives necessarily have a women's department.) Each unit organization affiliates to the prefectural federation which in turn affiliates to the National Council of Women's Organizations of Agricultural Cooperatives. These organizations

try to elevate the economic and social standards of rural women through the activities of agricultural cooperatives. Although they deal chiefly with local problems, the National Council adopts certain general themes to be stressed for each year and recommends them to the unit organizations; for instance, joint purchase or sale of goods, education programs on farm management, home improvement, etc.

Apart from these organizations of regional nature, there are a number of women's clubs working for specific purposes. Among the well-known organizations of this kind are Widows' Organizations, Young Women's Christian Association of Japan, Women's Christian Temperance Union, National Friendship Association, Japan Association of University Women, Japanese League of Women Voters, Housewives' Federation and others. Some of these organizations have a long history of brave struggle, though their membership is not so big. For instance, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the oldest among the Japanese women's organizations, was founded in 1886, with the purpose of promoting peace and social welfare based on Christianity, especially by prohibition of alcohol. They have always been alert in action to improve the status of women. Especially their constant efforts to abolish the licensed prostitution system of the prewar times are most highly appreciated.

The Japanese League of Women Voters has a brilliant record in the struggle for the political rights of women. Its original organization was established in 1924 by progressive women enthusiastically fighting for the acquirement of woman suffrage. They worked persistently and did not overlook the slightest opportunity to present a bill granting women the right to vote, until the organization was forced to dissolve by the government in 1940. After the war it was reorganized to engage in the political education of women with the newly attained voting rights, and also to enlarge the opportunities for women to work in public office. Now it has a membership of about 5,000 all through the country.

Besides above-mentioned organizations, there are Women's League for Protection of Human Rights, Women Lawyers' Association, Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Women's Democratic Club, Women's League for Peace and Freedom in Japan, and others, which are all national organizations.

Some of these organizations are affiliated to the international organizations, and occasionally send delegates to the respective international conferences.

Thus the activities of women's organizations are manifold according to their purposes of establishment, but they often cooperate in order to deal with common problems. For instance, they work hand in hand in the campaigns for cutting down commodity prices, for fair and clean elections, or in support of or opposition to certain actions proposed by the government or other authorities. Especially, in May 1956, the united pressure of many women's organizations successfully led to the inactment of the Prostitution Prevention Law, an epoch-making legislation in this field, aiming at punishing exploiters of prostitution and protecting the women needing rehabilitation. Also many of them are keenly interested in the issues regarding atom and hydrogen bombs and unite their activities in the campaigns for peace.

WOMEN'S AND MINORS' BUREAU, MINISTRY OF LABOR

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