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WOMEN WORKERS IN JAPAN

1968

WOMEN'S & MINORS' BUREAU
MINISTRY OF LABOR
JAPAN



Pharmasists in a clinic

Clerical workers in a bank





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Women workers in electrical equipment factories
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Foreword

This pamphlet on women workers in Japan is published periodically by the Women's and Minors' Bureau, Ministry of Labor. It tries to close up the circumstances of employment and working conditions of women through the factual information.

Data are of 1966 collected mainly from government statistics. It is hoped that this pamphlet would serve as a reference on women workers in Japan.

June 1968

Women's & Minors' Bureau,
Ministry of Labor

Contents

Foreword	
1. Outline	3
2. Employed Women	3
3. Women Paid Employees	5
4. Wages and Working Hours	10
5. Women in Trade Union	11
6. Legislation Concerning Women Workers	12
Appendix	15

1 Outline

The rapid expansion of economy and progress of industrialization in the post-war Japan has had a great impact on the employment of women workers. The number of women employees has radically increased, the range of their occupations been extended and wages improved. And with the increase of women with higher educational attainment, opportunities for professional and technical occupations have also been extended for them. The recent shortage of labor power, especially that of young generation, has caused more and more demand for women workers, and eventually quite many married women are entering into labor market.

The Labor Standards Law enacted in 1947 regulates the working hours of women workers, prohibits midnight work, and assures equal wage for equal work for both sexes and maternity protection, etc. and thereby protects working women. The Women's and Minors' Bureau was established in the Ministry of Labor in the same year and has since endeavored to improve the protection, welfare and status of working women.

2 Employed Women

In 1966 women population of 15 years and over was 38,310,000, of which 50.9% was in labor force, whereas that of men constituted 81.7% of 36,020,000 population. Recent tendency is comparative decrease of labor force for men and women in population, that is, those not in labor force have been increased every year. (Tabel 1) One reason for this tendency is that more and more people are proceeding to the higher level of education. The number of women students was also increased and the increase was over 40 percent between 1955 and 1965.

Women workers, that is, those economically active, in Japan are divided roughly into three categories; self-employed, family workers, and paid employees. The biggest portion was occupied by the paid employees, and its number in 1966 was 9,290,000, that of the family workers 7,220,000, and the self-employed 2,750,000. It was not many years ago that the family workers outnumbered the paid employees and occupied the highest percentage of all women workers.

But due to the progressive industrialization more women went to gainful employment and distribution of these two categories were reversed in 1963 and the number of family workers went downward steadily since then. (Diagram 1) Now most of family workers, 70%, belong to agriculture and forestry and are an important labor power, occupying 54% of all agricultural employees, to keep up Japanese agriculture.

Table I Population by Employment Status
(1966)

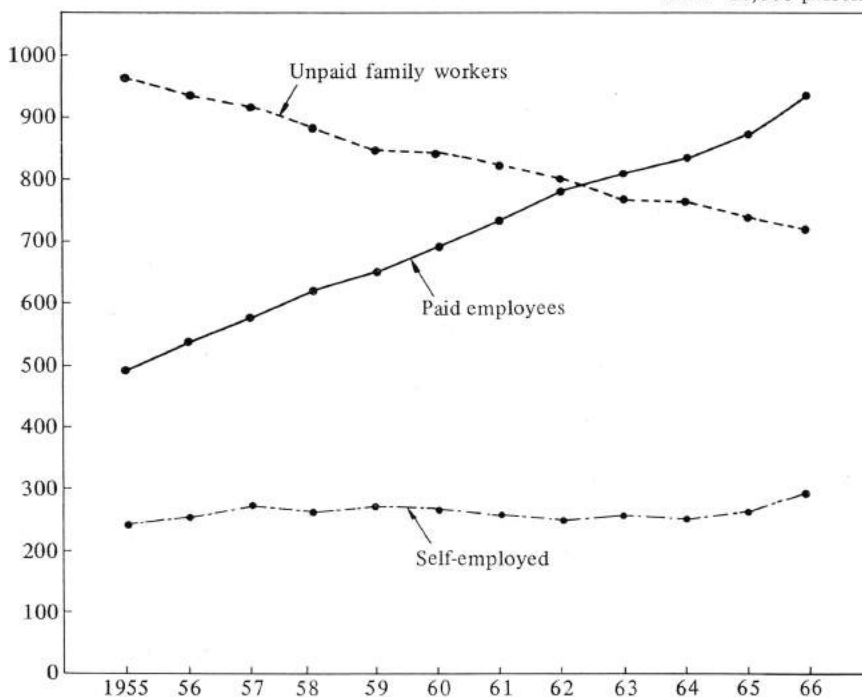
(10,000 persons)

		Women	Men
Population, over 15 years		3831	3602
Labor Force		1949	2942
Employed	Total	1926	2921
	Agriculture	598	516
	Non-agriculture	1327	2403
Self-employed	Total	275	702
	Agriculture	95	338
	Non-agriculture	180	364
Unpaid family workers	Total	722	243
	Agriculture	490	152
	Non-agriculture	232	91
Paid employees	Total	929	1973
	Agriculture	13	26
	Non-agriculture	916	1947
Unemployed persons		23	21
Not in labor force		1880	658

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

Diagram 1 Trend of Employed Women

Unit: 10,000 persons



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

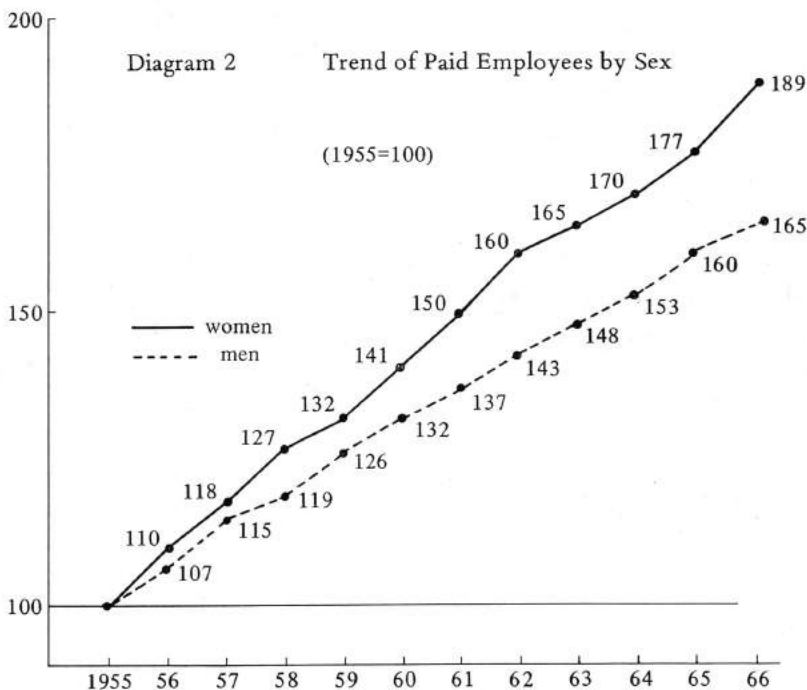
3 Women Paid Employees

The number of the women paid employees was 9,290,000 in 1966, almost doubled in 10 years and occupied 32% of the total number of paid employees. During most of these 10 years the yearly increase of women exceeded 400 thousands except for a few lag years. (Table II, Diagram 2)

Table II Trend of Paid Employees
(1955 - 1966)

Year	Total	Women	Men	(10,000 persons)
				Women employees as a percentage of all employees
1955	1690	492	1198	29.1
56	1823	539	1284	29.6
57	1957	580	1377	29.6
58	2050	626	1424	30.5
59	2158	650	1508	30.1
60	2273	695	1578	30.6
61	2379	738	1641	31.0
62	2496	785	1711	31.5
63	2578	811	1767	31.5
64	2669	835	1834	31.3
65	2783	873	1911	31.4
66	2902	929	1973	32.0

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



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

The average rate of labor force participation of women in 1966 was 24.2%. That is to say, one out of every 4 women of 15 years and over was working as a paid employee.

The highest participation rate of paid employees by age groups was 55.7% of 20-24 years, followed by 31.8% of 15-19 years, 24.8% of 25-29 years. That is, women in gainful employment is high in the young age brackets under 30 years. (Table III)

Table III Labor Force Participation Rates of Women by Age
(1966)

	Population 15 years of age and over	Paid employees	(10,000 persons) Paid employees as percent of population
Total	3831	929	24.2
15~19 years	563	179	31.8
20~24	442	246	55.7
25~29	423	105	24.8
30~39	793	169	21.3
40~54	862	184	21.3
55~64	390	39	10.0
65 years and over	360	8	2.2

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

Age, Marital Status

As a tendency more and more matured women are entering into labor market and it makes the average age of women employees higher. The average age of women workers in 1966 was 28.3 years and that of men 33.5 years. While men did not indicate any change women's age extended 3 years in 10 years.

The highest among the percent distribution of women by age groups was of 20-24 years (26.5%) followed by 40-54 years (19.8%), and 15-19 years (19.3%), 30-39 years (18.2%), and those under 30 years occupied 57% of all women workers. (Table IV)

Table IV Paid Employees by Age-Groups
(1962-1966)

(10,000 persons)

Sex	Year	Total	15~ 19 years	20~ 24 years	25~ 29 years	30~ 39 years	40~ 54 years	55~ 64 years	65 years and over
Women	1962	785	166	228	96	136	129	24	6
	1963	811	160	238	97	145	139	26	6
	1964	835	151	251	95	151	151	29	6
	1965	873	157	251	99	158	167	34	7
	1966	929	179	246	105	169	184	39	8
Men	1962	1711	159	296	290	463	364	112	28
	1963	1767	154	309	293	487	376	117	31
	1964	1834	145	329	300	510	394	124	33
	1965	1911	152	333	310	531	417	131	37
	1966	1973	168	321	319	548	439	137	41

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

Out of 9,160,000 women workers in non-agriculture in 1966, 3,290,000 were married women with husbands and 1,000,000 divorced and widows. That is 47%, nearly half of women, were married. It is a significant increase from 35% in 1955 when single women were predominant of women workers. (Table V)

Table V Women Employees by Marital Status

(10,000 persons)

	1966 ¹⁾		1955 ²⁾	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total	916	100.0	508	100.0
Single	487	53.2	328	64.7
Married	329	35.9	106	20.9
Others	100	10.9	73	14.4

Note: 1) Non-agriculture only Source: Bureau of Statistics, Prime Minister's Office:
Labor Force Survey.

2) Source: Population Census.

The ratio of married women in gainful employment to the total number of married women over 15 years was 14.7% for those with husbands and 17.6% for the divorced and widows. (Table VI)

Table VI Marital Status of Women Paid Employees in Population
(1966)

(10,000 persons)

	Population of 15 years and over (a)	Non-agriculture paid employees (b)	b/a
Total	3831	916	23.9 %
Single	1028	487	47.4
Married	2232	329	14.7
Others	569	100	17.6

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

Distribution of women by industries

Majority of women in gainful employment belong to non-agricultural industries and the paid employees in agriculture occupy only 1.4%.

The biggest proportion of women worked in manufacturing (3,210,000), followed by wholesale, retail, finance, and insurance (2,580,000), and service trades (2,270,000), and women who worked in these three categories of industries occupied 87% of total women workers. (Table VII, Diagram 3) Women in the service trades were the second biggest of all before 1961, but it was replaced by wholesale, retail, finance, and insurance industry since then.

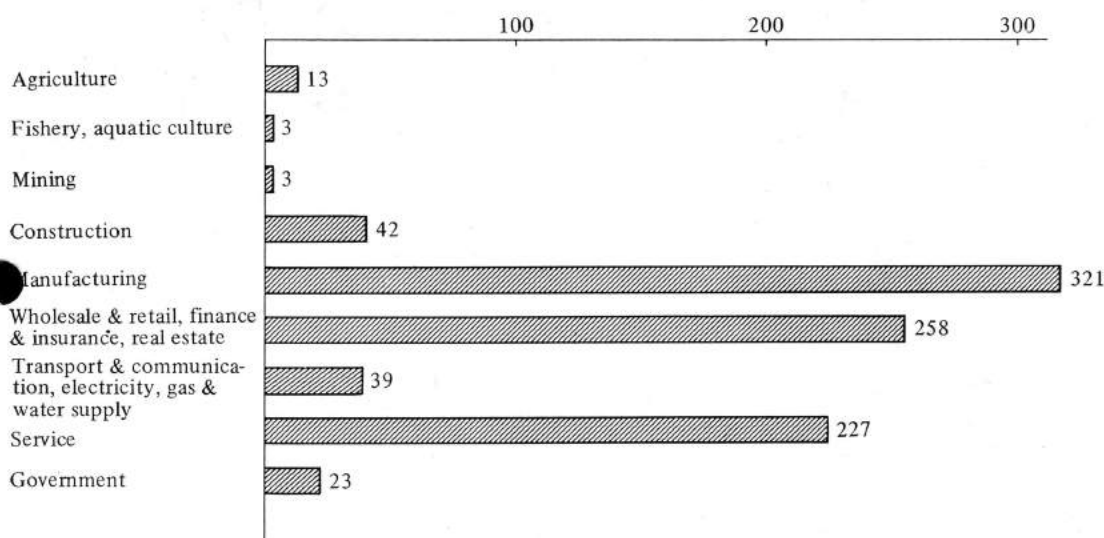
Table VII Number of Employees by Industry and Percentage Distribution

(10,000 persons)

Industry	sex		Absolute figures				Percentage distribution			
			Women		Men		Women		Men	
	Year		1966	1955	1966	1955	1966	1955	1966	1955
Total			929	492	1973	1198	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agricultural			13	17	26	270	1.4	3.5	1.3	2.3
Non-agricultural			916	475	1947	1171	98.6	96.5	98.7	97.7
Fishery, aquatic culture			3	2	19	19	0.3	0.4	1.0	1.6
Mining			3	4	29	42	0.3	0.8	1.5	3.5
Construction			42	17	220	119	4.5	3.5	11.2	9.9
Manufacturing			321	180	685	375	34.6	36.6	34.7	31.3
Wholesale, retail, finance, insurance			258	112	353	199	27.8	22.8	17.9	16.6
Transport, communication, electricity, gas, water supply			39	21	271	162	4.2	4.3	13.7	13.5
Service trades			227	122	251	153	24.4	24.8	12.7	12.8
Government			23	17	119	102	2.5	3.5	6.0	8.5

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

Diagram 3 Number of Women Paid Employees by Industries
(1966) (Until: 1,000 persons)



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

Women workers by occupations

In 1966 the highest percentage of women workers in occupational distribution was of clerical workers (28.8%) followed by craftsmen and production process workers (24.4%) and service trades (15.4%), and nearly 70% of women were concentrating on these three occupations. Significant increase was observed in clerical workers which were far less than craftsmen and production process workers in 1955. This remarkable change is perhaps due to the expansion of office works according to the progress of industries under the technological development and the automatization of office. Also radical change was observed for mining & quarrying and agricultural, forestry and fishery workers. The former decreased into less than half and the latter decreased 24% in 10 years. Ten percent of women workers were in sales and 9% in professional & technical occupations (mainly teachers and nurses). (Table VIII)

Table VIII Paid Employees by Occupations
(1966)

(10,000 persons)

Occupation	Absolute figures		Percentage distribution	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Total	929	1973	100.0	100.0
Professional & technical workers	79	125	8.5	6.3
Managers & officials	5	114	0.5	5.8
Clerical & related workers	268	380	28.8	19.3
Sales workers	93	163	10.0	8.3
Farmers, lumbermen & fishermen	15	44	1.6	2.2
Workers in mining & quarrying occupations	1	17	0.1	0.9
Workers in transport & communication occupations	24	174	2.6	8.8
Craftsmen & production process workers	227	691	24.4	35.0
Laborers	74	154	8.0	7.8
Service workers	143	111	15.4	5.6

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

4 Wages and Working Hours

The average wage of women workers working in enterprises employing 30 regular workers and over in 1966 was 24,867 yen and that of men 51,856 yen per month. The highest wage was earned by women in electricity, gas & water supply, that is public utility enterprises, the second finance & insurance industries, and these wages exceeded the average wage over 10,000 yen. On an average women's wages are less than half of men's wages, but this does not mean that women get half of men in equal job. Actually, in 1947 the principle of equal wage for equal work for men and women was established by the Labor Standards Law. This comparatively low wage is derived from the particular employment and wage system prevalent in the present Japanese economy. The wage is generally based on seniority of workers under the life employment system of each firm. That is to say, there is hierarchy of wages according to the age, duration of service, besides the skills of workers of that particular firm. And women workers are generally young, that is, many are in the starting stage of the wage hierarchy, and short in duration of service as well as a great number of women are engaged in unskilled works. These factors cause lower wage of women than that of men on an average. For instance, the starting wages of new graduates of various school level indicate little or at least not much difference by sex. (Table IX, X)

Table IX Wages by Industries (Major Group)

(1966)

(Establishments employing 30 regular workers and more)

Industry	Total cash earning per month		Ratio of women's wages to men's wages
	Women	Men	
Total	24867 yen	51856 yen	48.0 %
Mining	20156	48971	41.2
Construction	21445	47135	45.5
Manufacturing	22083	49686	44.4
Wholesale & retail	25600	50759	50.4
Finance & insurance	35966	76294	47.1
Transport & communication	33652	55493	60.6
Electricity, gas & water supply	39535	68674	57.6

Source: Ministry of Labor: Monthly Labor Survey.

Table X Starting Wages by Educational Attainment

(1966)

Educational attainment	Women	Men	Percent of women as against men
Lower Secondary school graduates	14060 yen	14110 yen	99.6 %
Upper secondary school graduates	16630	17550	94.8
Junior college graduates	19120	20410	93.7
University graduates	23630	24890	94.9

Source: Ministry of Labor & Ministry of Education.

Working hours

Working hours of women in 1966 were 181.4 hours and 198.1 hours for men per month. As a tendency working hours have been decreasing for both men and women, and the decreasing rate for women is bigger than for men.

5 Women in Trade Union

On the whole, the trade union in Japan is unit union in each enterprise, and generally affiliates with united local organizations or national organizations by industries. Membership of unit trade unions in Japan in 1966 was 10,310,000 of which women membership was 2,840,000. Estimated rate of membership in the paid employees was 29.7% for women and 37.7% for men. Membership rate of

women is low compared with men. (Table XI)

Many trade unions have a women's department or youths & women's department to promote specifically women's interests in the union activities.

Table XI Women Membership of Trade Unions and Estimated Rates of Membership
(1961-1966)
(As of June each year) (10,000 persons)

Year	Memberships(A)	Number of gainful employees (B)	Estimated rates of memberships in the employees A/B
1961	217	727	29.9 %
1962	237	790	30.0
1963	253	828	30.6
1964	275	858	30.9
1965	277	898	30.9
1966	284	955	29.7

Source: Ministry of Labor: Survey on Trade Unions.
Bureau of Statistics: Prime Minister's Office, Survey on Labor Force.

6 Legislation Concerning Women Workers

There are protective laws for women workers mainly in connection with maternity in the Labor Standards Law which became effective in 1947.

A. *The Labor Standards Law*, covering all industries except for industrial home work and domestic service at home regulates the minimum standards of working conditions. It establishes principle of equal remuneration for men and women and contains some special measures for the protection of women and minors. Women are chiefly protected for their maternity. Some of these measures affecting women workers are stated in the following.

(1) *Principle of Equal Pay for Men and Women*: This provision is similar in aim to that stipulated in the preamble of the Constitution of the International Labor Organization which states that equal wages should be paid to men and women for work of equal value. The article provides that "the employer shall not discriminate women against men concerning wages by reason of the worker being a women."

(2) *Working Hours and Rest Days*: As a principle the employer must not employ the worker more than 8 hours a day excluding recess or 48 hours a week, and must provide at least one rest day per week to the worker.

(3) *Prohibition of Night Work*: The employer must not employ women between the hours of 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. in principle. But this stipulation is not applied to the jobs specified by Ordinance as superintendent of a women's dormitory, air-stewardess, and not applied either to the agriculture, forestry, fishery, telephone operator, etc.

(4) *Restrictions on Hazardous and Injurious Jobs*: The employer must not employ a women in the dangerous or harmful jobs specified by Ordinances, nor in jobs which require the conveyance of heavy goods beyond 20 kg. (intermittent work, 30 kg.)

(5) *Ban on Underground Labor*: The employer must not employ women in underground labor.

(6) *Maternity Leave*: The employer must not employ a woman for 6 weeks before childbirth when she requests rest days during the period. The employer must not employ a woman within 6 weeks after childbirth. However, when the woman requests to work after 5 weeks, it is permissible to assign her to a job that doctor pronounces unharmed to her.

When the pregnant woman requires, the employer shall change her to a lighter job. The employer must not dismiss a woman who is on maternity leave during the period and 30 days thereafter.

(7) *Nursing Period*: A woman nursing a baby less than one year old may request nursing time, twice a day, each at least 30 minutes during the working hours, besides the ordinary recess.

(8) *Menstruation Leave*: The employer must not employ a woman who suffers heavily from menstruation or a woman engaged in jobs injurious to menstruation if she requests a menstruation leave.

B. *The Employment Security Law*, promulgated in 1947, provides all people with opportunities to get jobs suitable to their abilities. For the enforcement of this law 468 Public Employment Security Offices have been established all over the country, and women who got placements through these offices were 733,000 out of 1,781,000 applicants in 1966.

C. *Vocational Training Law*, established in 1958, the purpose of this law is to foster skilled workers needed for the manufacturing and other industries by providing vocational training and conducting the trade test in order to enable workers to acquire and improve necessary skills, and thereby to assure the security of employment and the improvement of the worker's status as well as contribute to the development of the national economy.

There are 395 Vocational Training Centers in 1967, where a number of training opportunities are opened to men and women equally providing assistance for them to acquire skills necessary for jobs.

However, most women trainees are enrolled in a relatively limited group of occupations, e.g. garment and textile fabrics work, sewing and knitting machine operating, clerical work, typewriting,

and printing or a certain kind of service work such as barber and beautician.

In this respect, Women's and Minors' Bureau initiated two types of special vocational training centers primarily for widows and housewives who generally find greater difficulty in obtaining suitable jobs.

(1) *Public Vocational Training Centers for Industrial Home Work*: The aims of these centers are to provide people who are widows, housewives, physically handicapped, aged or those encountered with difficulty in doing gainful work outside their homes, with information, consultation, reference and other conveniences, and thus help to solve problems concerning industrial home work. Altogether there are 44 centers which were established in the years between 1955 and 1968. Women's and Minors' Bureau subsidized these centers with one-third of expenses and gives necessary guidance and supervision as to their management and services.

(2) *Public Vocational Training Centers for Domestic Work*: These centers are also meant for widows and others who have difficulty in finding jobs. The centers give such services as to provide them with training in domestic work; promote their placement and enlarge the field of employment fit for them. At present there are eight centers. The Bureau gave subsidy for initial expenses, management expenses, and allowances and gives them guidance as to their services. A term of training is three months and the training covers 12 subjects including general knowledge, cooking, care of infants, home administration, etc. There is great demand for the graduates of these centers who hold high public reputation and whose influence, it is expected, will contribute a good deal to improve the working conditions of domestic workers in general.

D. *The Labor Union Law*, promulgated in 1945, aims to promote the status of workers by establishing equal standing for both workers and employers in their bargaining, and to protect workers on their collective activities.

E. *Legislatures Concerning Social Security for Women Workers*: The welfare of women workers are also protected by other social insurance laws which cover all workers.

These laws assure workers of benefits for accident, sickness, unemployment, old age, etc.

Workmen's Accident Compensation Insurance Law, established in 1947, provides a worker with prompt and equitable protection against his injury, invalidity or death due to the causes of occupational accidents or diseases for which the employer has an obligation to compensate according to the stipulation of the Labor Standards Law. The law also regulates to establish the necessary institutions for the welfare of the worker in occupational accidents or diseases.

The Health Insurance Law, established in 1922, provides for the payment of benefits to insured persons and to persons supported by them in case of sickness, injury and death attributable to causes

of sources outside of their employment. This law contains maternity benefit provisions as follows:

(1) When an insured person has been confined in bed because of giving birth to a child, who is paid an amount for confinement equal to 50% of her standard monthly remuneration. When an insured person is incapable to work because of confinement, she is paid an amount equal to 60% of her standard daily remuneration for a period of 84 days, covering 42 days preceding and 42 days on and after the date of birth.

(2) When an insured person has given birth to a baby and she nurses the same baby, she is paid 2000 yen as a nursing allowance.

The Unemployment Insurance Law, established in 1947, grants an unemployment insurance benefit to the insured person when he or she is out of a job. An insured person who is out of a job and cannot be employed in spite of his or her will and ability to work, is paid 90 times in minimum, 270 times in maximum of 60% of his or her average daily wage in proportion to his or her length of service.

The Welfare Pension Insurance Law, established in 1941, provides for the payment of benefits in case of old age, invalidity, death or retirement of a worker and attributes to the stabilization of livelihood and the promotion of welfare, of a worker and his or her survivors.

Appendix

Ministry of Labor Establishment Law

(Law No. 162 of May 31, 1949)

Functions of Women's and Minors' Bureau

Article 9. The Women's and Minors' Bureau shall take charge of the following affairs:

- (1) Promotion of the working conditions peculiar to women and minor workers, and their protection;
- (2) Prohibition of employment of children;
- (3) Family labor problems and domestic servants;
- (4) Other labor problems peculiar to women and minor workers, in addition to those listed in the preceding items;
- (5) Worker's family problems, excepting, however matters assigned to other ministries by law;
- (6) Research, liaison and coordination on problems of the promotion of women's status and other women's problems, provided that such adjustment and coordination shall not preclude other ministries from carrying out such affairs as are placed there under by law.

